



**EXCEL Academy Public Charter School  
Prince George's County Public Schools  
International Baccalaureate (IB) Inclusion Policy**

**Philosophy of Special Education and Inclusion  
in Prince George's County Public Schools**

At EXCEL Academy Public Charter School, we believe that all students can learn. We celebrate and respect that each of our students has individual learning needs and styles. Teaching and Learning at EXCEL Academy PCS is scaffolded and differentiated to meet our students where they are socially, emotionally and academically.

Here in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), we strive to provide all students with the opportunity to access, participate in and reflect on the continuum of programs that leads to the vision of making all students college, career, and community ready. The district is committed to providing a "free, appropriate public education" by ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, are placed in a supportive learning environment fostering the development of 21st century skills for success. This philosophy is in alignment with the mission statement of our Department of Special Education, which states, our mission is:

- To provide specially designed instruction and related services through a continuum of services to children and students with disabilities from birth to age 21;
- To ensure that the rights of students with disabilities are protected and that federal and state regulatory requirements are met; and
- To provide resources to parents, guardians and families of children and students with disabilities.

As such, the Department of Special Education partners with the Department of Student Services, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Office of Professional Learning and Leadership to work collaboratively in providing the necessary support and resources at all schools for program implementation. In addition, all International Baccalaureate (IB) programs adhere to the procedures and provisions outlined in the IB Language Policy in order to meet the needs of all students including our language learners.

**Eligibility and Identification for Special Education**

In accordance with federal, state, and local mandates, we provide an appropriate educational setting for every student in the "least restrictive environment" in order to be in compliance with COMAR Regulations. These regulations include providing services to students with disabilities in a classroom setting among their nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible in accordance with their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). It is the goal to have students placed in general education classes with the use of supplemental aids and services as needed for successful progression. In the event that these supports do not produce success for the student, adjustments will be made according to instruction and/or the service delivery model.



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***Procedure for Identifying Students with Disabilities***

To be in accordance with federal law, PGCPSS defines “children with disabilities” as having any of the following types of disabilities:

- autism
- deaf-blindness
- deafness
- multiple disabilities
- other health impairment
- specific learning disability
- speech or language impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- visual impairment (including blindness)
- developmental delay
- emotional disturbance
- hearing impairment
- orthopedic impairment

A student who is suspected of having a disability could be provided with the following services for evaluation and interventions:

- School-based intervention team that would assist with necessary strategies for student success;
- A referral to an IEP evaluation team that would determine the need for formal assessment and further measures involving the parent, student, and school staff;
- In the case a 504 plan is needed, both a current diagnosis and input from all current teachers and instructional staff are used to determine educational impact of the disability and to prepare appropriate accommodations.

\*\*Parents and school staff also have the right to request a referral to the School Instructional Team (SIT) or an Initial IEP screening to determine appropriate response to intervention strategies if concerned about a student's progress.

***Eligibility and Identification of Advanced Learners***

Selection for Talented and Gifted (TAG) services is based on the assessment of a variety of objective and subjective factors which are aligned with the National Association of Gifted Children Exemplary Standards with all test scores remaining valid for two years. In PGCPSS, students are provided with multiple opportunities to be identified as TAG or an advanced learner beginning in grade one, as well as in third grade, as well as at Parent Request.



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### Implementation of Policies and Procedures

#### ***Teaching, Learning, and Assessment***

Inclusive access arrangements for an IB student must be well planned and put in place throughout the course of learning and teaching, including classroom work, formative and summative assessments. Therefore, at the beginning of the year, educators who instruct students with IEPs and/or 504 plans are provided with snapshots outlining the necessary accommodations and modifications for the student. As IB Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes are whole school, inclusive programs, it is expected that all students receiving special education services will also be taught through the IB Framework and programmes of inquiry.

#### **Role of the Teachers and Special Education Staff:**

General and Special Educator teachers adapt their instructional practices and activities in order to meet the needs of the individual students. Federal, state, and local laws mandate that the goals and objectives of an IEP will supersede the requirements of IB. Instructional practices modifications and accommodations for students identified special education students could include:

- Modifying the learning environment and activities to meet the needs of the student as outlined in the IEP or 504 plan;
- Providing individualized or small group instruction to meet the academic and behavior needs of the student, either within the general education classroom or with pull-aside resource services for specific skill development;
- Providing students with extended time on assessments and assignments;
- Allowing students access to technological devices to assist with completing tasks;
- Reducing the length of a task;
- Differentiating instruction to meet the need of all learners;
- Consulting with IEP case managers when they are unsure of the best way to modify a task to support a student's success without changing the core essence of the task; and
- Providing quarterly progress check reports outlining a student's success in the course.

#### **Role of the Student:**

- Work in conjunction with teachers to meet the goals of their IEP;
- Strive to participate and complete PYP and MYP unit tasks, assessments, and projects to the best of their ability with help from IB Coordinators, general education teachers and special education staff;



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- Use the IB Learner Profile attributes to achieve success in school;
- Advocate for additional supports and services needed to meet lesson and assessment objectives; and
- Uphold the IB Academic Honesty Policy when completing and submitting assignments and assessments.

***Special Needs Students Accessing the IB Diploma Programme***

As an IB World School, our goal is always to reflect the IB philosophy of access and equity; therefore, having an open enrollment to pursue rigorous courses is a standard practice for our programmes. The faculty encourages all students to pursue honors, advanced placement, and IB courses of study.

An IB candidate with special assessment needs is one who may require special arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate his or her level of attainment. The IB coordinator in collaboration with the special education chair, IEP case manager, school psychologist, administrator, and the IB teachers involved will review cases to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be made for both teaching and assessment. The IB Coordinator will ensure that grades awarded to a candidate demonstrate the same standards of assessment as applied to all candidates, regardless of special needs, in the IB Diploma Programme.

***Professional Development***

Professional development in PGPCS for educators of students with special needs involves but is not limited to:

- Differentiated instruction training through the use of research-based interventions and strategies;
- General educators, who need to implement modifications and accommodations, work in consultation with a special educator as an integral part of the service delivery for all special education students who are experiencing difficulty in a general education classroom;
- Assistance in completing functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and developing a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) to address areas of concern;
- Training of the IB Standards and Practices by the IB Coordinator to the general and special educators;
- Usage of formal and informal assessments;
- Official IB training opportunities for special education department staff; and
- Providing the general educator with guidance from the special education teacher on appropriate strategies for instruction, behavior management, data collection, observation, and feedback in the general education setting.

***Collaboration and Reflection***

General and special education teachers will be provided with planning time in order to review instructional practices, assessments, and projects assigned to the students. This time will be

*This policy has been created with the criteria outlined in the IB Access and Admissions Policy document.*

*The Inclusion Policy is reviewed and revised annually by PGPCS and EXCEL Academy PCS.*

*Date of Last Review: February 2022*



**EXCEL Academy Public Charter School  
Prince George's County Public Schools  
International Baccalaureate (IB) Inclusion Policy**

utilized to provide teacher feedback and reflect observations of a student's work, behavioral needs, and/or adjustments to instructional practices for students receiving services.

**Student Transition and Communication of Inclusion Policy**

As students transition from elementary to middle school and middle to high school, articulation team meetings are held with students and parents so that everyone is aware of the least restrictive environment placement for their child. Articulation team members include the parents, students, guidance counselors, a special education department representative, and when available other school-based personnel. During this time, the inclusion policy is shared with students and parents.

In addition, at the annual IEP review meetings, parents are again made aware of the inclusion policy and how their child is fairing with IB program requirements. The inclusion policy is also made available to staff when they receive the IEP snapshots, 504 plans, and at the beginning of each academic school year. A complete copy of the IEP for a special education student is available to all teachers in a secure area for seven years.