

Maria Montessori Academy INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROCEDURES

Administrative Procedures

1) Admission Procedures:

- a. Admission for students with disabilities and diverse abilities to Maria Montessori Academy is subject to all established policies and procedures. In addition, the following procedures will be applied to students requiring inclusive education, learning assistance, or enrichment:
 - i. Admission of a new student with disabilities and diverse abilities ideally begins with a meeting with the principal and parents who are expected to provide records and assessments as applicable.
 - ii. The School Based Team (SBT) will then go over the records to access the type and level of service, the equipment and the facilities required, and the availability of community support services, which would be necessary to support the student's learning at Maria Montessori Academy.
- b. The SBT will then discuss the school's ability to meet the student's diverse abilities within the context of the classroom and the school's Montessori philosophy.
- c. Acceptance will be based on the availability of all the necessary support services and the school's confidence that the student can be served adequately to provide an appropriate educational program without causing undue financial hardship or impact on other students learning. As with regular students wishing to enter Maria Montessori Academy, the minimum two full day visit requirement applies and, in some circumstances, may be extended to more than the two visits if it is necessary to help in accessing the school's ability to meet the student's needs.
- d. It must be noted that the admission process for students with disabilities and diverse abilities may follow different timelines than typical admissions. Current students within the school will be given priority in the event they are in the process of testing and/or assessments. Determination of the school's ability to provide appropriate resources (i.e., staffing, financial, space and/or ratios) will only be upon completion and final reporting.
- e. There is no specific number that the school will be able to adhere to when admitting students with disabilities and diverse abilities, as each situation and each child is unique. The school will always try to be fair while maintaining the integrity of the school's philosophy and fairness to the other students in each classroom.

2) Individual Education Plan (IEP) Procedures:

- a. The development of an IEP serves several purposes; formalizes planning decisions, processes, and connecting assessment with programming.

- i. Provides teachers, parents, and students with a record of the educational program for an individual student with disabilities and diverse abilities and serves as the basis for reporting the student's progress.
 - ii. Serves as a tool for tracking individual student learning in terms of agreed upon goals and objectives.
 - iii. Documents the relationships between any support services being provided and the student's educational program.
 - iv. Provides parents and students with a mechanism for input into the individualized planning process.
 - v. Evidence of evaluation or review, which could include revisions made to the plan and the tracking of achievement in relation to goals.
 - vi. The IEP should also document instances where services are offered but the parent or the student refuses them.

- b. The IEP reflects the complexity of the student's need:
The goals or outcomes set for that student for that school year, where they differ from the learning outcomes set out in an applicable educational program guide.
 - i. The present levels of educational performance of the student.
 - ii. A list of the adaptations/modifications to educational materials, instructional strategies, or assessment methods.
 - iii. A list of the support services required to achieve goals established for the student.
 - iv. The names of all personnel who will be providing the educational program and the support services for the student during the school year.
 - v. Evidence of evaluation or review, which could include revisions made to the plan and the tracking of achievement in relation to goals.
 - vi. The period of time and process for review of the IEP.
 - vii. Plans for the next transition point in the student's education (including transitions beyond school completion).
 - viii. Plans for the next transition point in the student's education (including transitions beyond school completion).

- c. Who develops the IEP?
 - i. The principal of the school is responsible for the implementation of educational programs (School Act Regulation 5(7)(a)), but collaboration occurs between school personnel, community agencies, parents, and student if applicable.
 - ii. Parents (and the student if possible) must be given the opportunity to be consulted in the planning process and must receive a copy of the IEP.

- d. Who must have an IEP?
- i). All students with a designated special education designation must have an IEP. An exception can be made if:
- The student with disabilities and diverse abilities requires no adaptation or only minor adaptations to educational materials, or instructional or assessment methods.
 - The expected learning outcomes established by the applicable educational program guide have not been adapted/modified for the student with special needs.
 - The student with disabilities and diverse abilities requires, in a school year, 25 hours or less remedial instruction, by a person other than the classroom.

3) Planning and Co-ordinating Community Services:

Some students will require services and supports provided by agencies in the community. It is essential that school and community services be coordinated to avoid duplication, and to ensure consensus regarding goals, consistency in interventions, and an integrated approach to service delivery. The School Based Team should be responsible for coordinating with these community services and plays a key role in keeping school staff informed of services available in the community. Much of this work will be undertaken by the Case Manager.

4) Ministry Funding for Special Education Students:

Not all students identified as special education students receive funding. The Independent Schools Branch of Special Education administers supplemental funding for Special Education Programs. The criteria for funding are very specific for each funded category. There is an auditing process in place that checks that proper procedures, documentation, and implementation are in order. Therefore, it is important that the school have a copy of all testing and/or assessment results pertaining to the student and that they be kept current. Failure to do so could result in a loss of funding. Special Education Funding is allocated according to the following:

LEVEL 1

- Physically Dependent (with multiple needs) (A)
- Deaf/ Blind (B)

LEVEL 2

- Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disability (C)
- Physical Disability/Chronic Health Impairments (D)
- Visual Impairment (E)
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (F)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (G)

LEVEL 3

Intensive Behaviour/Serious Mental Illness (H)

NON-FUNDED CATEGORIES

Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) (K)

Gifted (P)

Learning Disability (Q)

Moderate Behaviour Support (R)

5) Kindergarten Screening:

In the past few years, literacy screening of kindergarten students has been introduced so that early intervention can be implemented, if results indicate a need to do so.

6) Appeals to Decisions:

If parents/guardians are not satisfied with a decision that affects the education, health, or safety of their child, they can appeal these decisions by first bringing the matter to the principal. Further appeals can be made in writing to the MMA Board of Directors. The appeals form is found on the school's website. Further and more detailed information relating to Special Education can be found in the BC Ministry of Education Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm>

Inclusive Education:

The Principal or the Vice-Principal are responsible for supporting the program and maintaining the vision for inclusion in the school in consultation with the Board. They process new admissions, sign contracts with outside services, and provide the same services as for all new students (e.g., budgeting, staffing, staff supervision, facilities, safety, parent concerns, appropriate curriculum, etc.).

7) Inclusive Education Program (funded categories):

a) Maria Montessori Academy students are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Where deemed appropriate by the School Based Team, they will receive one-on-one instruction in the inclusive education room or in or near the classroom. Parents will be informed of the alternative delivery and offered an opportunity to meet with the inclusive education teacher.

b) Maria Montessori Academy's Inclusive Education Program is designed as an inclusive program that integrates students with disabilities and diverse abilities into their classes whenever possible, but not exclusively. Decisions on the amount of integration are based on the needs of the student.

- c) The Inclusive Education Program provides for the needs of students who qualify for funding under the Ministry of Education Independent Schools Branch Program.
- d) Classroom teachers are responsible for the students' educational program. They communicate regularly with CAs and/or EAs and the inclusive education team to determine schedules and content of lessons. Classroom teachers and the inclusive education team report to parents on the student's progress.
- e) CAs and/or EAs provide personal care and educational support for funded special education students, to promote their inclusion with peers. As deemed appropriate by the SBT, they aide with instruction on the academic curriculum to support the lessons attended with the group. They work under the supervision of the classroom teacher and the inclusive education teacher.
- f) The Case Manager is responsible for designing and guiding the implementation of the academic interventions and alternative instruction. The student, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, inclusive education teacher, CAs, and EAs work together as a team.
- g) A school counsellor must collaborate for students with an IBI or MBS IEP and attend SBT meetings and to be available to consult on the social-emotional needs of students with the SBT.

8) Inclusive Education Program (non-funded categories):

- a) The Inclusive Education Program at Maria Montessori Academy is designed as an inclusive and equitable program. Students with exceptional learning needs are included in the regular classroom. Decisions about levels of integration are based on the needs of the student.
- b) This is a flexible program that provides remedial and direct, individual instruction for students with learning disabilities or who are requiring a boost to their skills. The program utilizes technology and alternative deliveries to help students develop bypass strategies. It also supports students in developing organizational and metacognitive strategies.
- c) Classroom teachers are responsible for the students' programs. They meet with the inclusive education team, CAs, and EAs to determine schedules and delivery of service. They communicate frequently, and they report to parents.
 - d) The inclusive education team is responsible for implementing the remedial program. The inclusive education team, classroom teachers, CAs, and EAs work together as a team. A school counsellor is to be available to be included in the SBT meetings if needed.
 - e) Enrichment Program: Students designated as gifted or requiring enrichment curriculum are accommodated on an individual basis, according to their needs. They may receive an opportunity, with the inclusive education teacher, to expand their study for a particular unit. Most often they will be helped to design a framework for independent study in an area of interest.
 - f) An IEP will document services provided in the Inclusive Education Program.
 - g) Classroom teachers are responsible for writing the report cards. The inclusive education team writes a section in the report card for students they have seen regularly.

Program implementation generally occurs during the school year as follows:

Start-up:

- Connect with teachers, CAs, and EAs.
- Identify students needing inclusive education.
- Create IEPs for students new to the program.
- Determine the most suitable programs and technologies.
- Prepare inclusive education schedules.
- Meet with families and students.

Ongoing:

- Help to identify learning difficulties.
- Develop strategies to meet the needs of individual students.
- Academically support students.
- Meet regularly with classroom teachers, CAs, and EAs to discuss students' progress.
- Maintain a collaborative relationship with classroom teachers, teachers of special subjects, school administrators, and parents.
- Order and maintain inclusive education resources.
- Act as a resource for staff members.
- Administer informal and formal assessments.
- Keep adequate records of students' progress.
- Compile information in preparation for grant applications.

Year End:

- Evaluate the program.
- Participate in planning for returning students' placements and programs for the upcoming year.
- Organize student files for the next school year.

Definitions:

Adaptation – “are teaching and assessment strategies especially designed to accommodate a student’s needs so he or she can achieve the learning outcomes of

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the subject or course and to demonstrate mastery of concepts. Essentially, adaptations are “best practice” in teaching. A student working on learning outcomes of any grade or course level may be supported through use of adaptations” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. V).

Assessment - is a systematic process of gathering information in order to make appropriate educational decisions for a student. It is a collaborative and progressive process designed to identify the student's strengths and needs, set goals, and results in the identification and implementation of selected educational strategies” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. V).

Collaborative consultation “is a process in which people work together to solve a common problem or address a common concern. A successful collaborative process is characterized by the following features: it is voluntary; there is mutual trust and open communication among the people involved; identification/clarification of the problem to be addressed is a shared task; the goal is shared by all participants; each participant's contribution is valued equally; all participants' skills are employed in identifying and selecting problem-solving strategies; and there is shared responsibility for the program or strategy initiated” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. V).

Inclusion - “describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with integration and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and the promotion of interaction with others” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. V).

Inclusive Education Teacher - Is a direct-service teacher and has a formal role to play as a problem-solving unit in assisting classroom teachers to develop and implement instructional and/or management strategies. They coordinate support resources for students with diverse learning profiles, with or without designations.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) – “is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. V).

Learning Disorder - “Specific learning disorders are neurodevelopmental disorders that are typically diagnosed in early school-aged children, although may not be recognised until adulthood. They are characterized by a persistent impairment in at least one of three major areas: reading, written expression, and/or math” (American Psychiatric Association, n.d.b, para. 1).

Modifications – “are instructional and assessment-related decisions made to accommodate a student’s educational needs that consist of individualized learning goals and outcomes which are different than learning outcomes of a course or subject. Modifications should be considered for those students whose special needs are such that they are unable to access the curriculum (i.e., students with limited

Most information in this policy has been pulled from the Ministry of Education's Policy called “SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines”. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf
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awareness of their surroundings, students with fragile mental/physical health, students medically and cognitively/multiply challenged.) Using the strategy of modifications for students not identified as special needs should be a rare practice “(British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. VI).

School Based Team (SBT) is comprised of the principal or delegate (Vice-Principal), inclusive education teacher, a classroom teacher, a CA and/or EA, and sometimes a counselor. “They have a formal role to play as a problem-solving unit in assisting classroom teachers to develop and implement instructional and/or management strategies and to coordinate support resources for students with special needs within the school” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. VI).

Special Educational Needs - “are those characteristics which make it necessary to provide a student undertaking an educational program with resources different from those which are needed by most students. Special educational needs are identified during assessment of a student; they are the basis for determining an appropriate educational program (including necessary resources) for that student” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. VI).

- **Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities** - “A student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, has a learning disability or has special gifts or talents...” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 1).
- **Designated Student** - “Special Education categories have been established by the British Columbia Ministry of Education to assist school districts in identifying the needs of students and providing appropriate educational supports for them. These categories are designed to focus on the educational needs of students, rather than the cause of those needs. Identifying (“designating”) students in a Special Education category requires not only careful determination and/or review of the diagnosis, but also of the nature, impact and extent of educational services required. A diagnosis or identification of a special learning need or medical condition does not in itself automatically mean that the student will require special education services significant enough to warrant a designation in a special education category” (Burnaby School Psychologists, n.d., para. 2).