



The Academy Special Education Policy

Pursuing Truth, Wisdom, Excellence

Mission Statement: The Academy serves our students to develop college ready, exemplary citizens by promoting excellence in academics, character and relationships.

Purpose

The Academy Student, Family Support Services, and Operations Department will provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive environment in which each student receives an education that inspires them toward their individual goal of graduation and to become a productive citizen. We will provide resources and services to families that enable our students to successfully face the challenges of higher education, career pursuits, and family life. The Academy strives to collaborate in the education and development of the “whole child” with the parents and the community so that each student has the ability to reach their full potential. The Academy will be such a model for excellence that outside educators will use it as a model.

Services We Can Offer

The Academy provides Special Education services to students with a variety of special needs, including, but not limited to Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Other Health Impaired (OHI- this frequently includes students with ADD or ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Serious Emotional Disability, Visual Impairment, and Intellectual Disability. Services are provided through a continuum of services from direct instruction to consultation. The Academy employs Learning Specialists, a School Psychologist, School Counselors, a Speech-Language Pathologist, a Nurse, and an Occupational Therapist. Depending on the needs of our students each year, The Academy may contract with a Teacher for the Visually Impaired, Teacher for the Hearing Impaired, or another specialist as deemed necessary. Students who demonstrate significant regression over breaks may also qualify for Extended School Year services as determined by the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) team.

Services We Cannot Offer

Incoming IEPs are reviewed by the Special Education team to determine if the needs of the student can be met at the Academy. An IEP meeting with the outgoing school and parents may need to be convened to ensure the most appropriate placement for the student. The Academy shall not be required to make alterations in the structure of its facilities or to make alterations to the arrangement or function of rooms within its facilities, except as may be required by state or federal law.

Enrollment Procedure

Spring Enrollment begins when the Open Enrollment window (August 1-January 15) closes and the lottery draw has occurred (after January 15). The Academy shall not ask applicants any questions regarding the need for special education services, including past services provided under an IEP, a Section 504 plan, or other, nor shall request for such information be included on any application

paperwork until after a student has been admitted through The Academy's enrollment process. All offers of enrollment shall be contingent on a determination that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment can be provided at The Academy in its existing programs, with or without reasonable accommodations, in accordance with The Academy's policies and applicable laws. Until such a determination is made, all applicants admitted through The Academy's enrollment process will be considered "Preliminarily Accepted".

After a student has been preliminarily accepted:

- The student shall provide The Academy with the student's most recent IEP (including eligibility IEP) or Section 504 Plan, if any, as soon as practicable.
- A screening review team consisting of the School Principal or designee, the School Special Education teacher or coordinator, and a Charter Institute Special Education Director or designee shall review the IEP or Section 504 Plan, and if deemed appropriate, confer with staff at the student's previous school, and shall make a determination whether the services and space available at the School are sufficient to deliver the program required by the IEP or to provide the accommodations required in the Section 504 Plan. A visit by the family to The Academy is required.
- If it appears the students' needs will be met in accordance with applicable laws, a non-contingent offer of admissions will be made and must be accepted within the timeline provided by The Academy.
- If the screening team cannot reach consensus that the student can be served, the School shall convene a complete IEP team to make the final determination which includes the parents and the current school.
- Every student who is admitted with an IEP or Section 504 plan from a previous school shall be placed directly in a program that meets the requirements of such IEP or Section 504 plan, unless and until a review staffing by the IEP team or Plan review meeting is held and the IEP or Section 504 Plan is changed.
- Additionally, an application for attendance at the School may be denied for a student seeking placement in the School in the same manner and for the same reasons as such application may be denied for a student without disabilities.

POLICY HISTORY

This policy supersedes any previously existing policy of The Academy of Charter Schools pertaining to the content herein.

Board Chair Signature: Jason M. J.
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