



TUSCALOOSA
MAGNET SCHOOLS – ELEMENTARY



Inclusion Policy (SENP)

Philosophical Basis for Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs

According to the International Baccalaureate, "Diversity is a positive resource about what it means to be internationally-minded and interculturally aware." Difference and diversity are central in IB World Schools where all students enrolled in IB programmes should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum." The Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Elementary embraces this philosophy of inclusion that is following all local, state, and federal policies, procedures, and practices about its Special Educational Needs Policy. While TMSE is an academic magnet school, we recognize that our students may come to us with special needs that require accommodations and/or support.

Examples of these special needs could include, but are not limited to:

- ADD/ADHD
- Autistic spectrum/Asperger's syndrome
- Specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia)
- Dyspraxia
- Communication disorders (i.e., stuttering)
- Neurological disorders (i.e., Tourette syndrome)
- Sensory impairment (i.e., visual or hearing difficulties)
- Medical conditions (i.e., asthma, epilepsy, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), urinary frequency, diabetes)
- Extended or terminal illness (i.e., Mononucleosis, Cancer)
- Mental health conditions (i.e., depression, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, anxiety)
- Gifted and talented students
- Physical disabilities affecting mobility

School responsibilities regarding Section 504

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires all schools that receive federal funds to offer 504 Services to students who qualify as having a handicapping condition that affects several areas including seeing, learning, walking, and emotional stability. The counselor at Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Elementary is the contact concerning 504 services and the referral and eligibility process for Section 504. All 504 plans are reviewed and updated annually by the counselor, parents, student, and principal.

School responsibilities regarding students with special educational needs (and all learners)

Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Elementary seeks to provide all students with full access to, and deep engagement in, the IB PYP curriculum. Because we know that all students acquire knowledge differently and at varying rates, we align our instructional practice with where the students are on the learning continuum. Furthermore, students with special needs may require adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum or differentiated instruction to ensure that there are no barriers to their learning in an inquiry and project-based program.

Differentiated instruction operates from the understanding that teachers match their teaching approaches and assessments to the students' needs. This practice takes into account the four principles of good practice (*Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes*, IBO, 2016):

Affirming identity and building self-esteem

1. Partnership classes based on student interest
2. regular counseling visits to homeroom classes
3. lunch bunch
4. self-esteem building art throughout the building
5. parent nights, hosted by families and teachers, showcasing IB curriculum*

Valuing prior knowledge

1. teacher assessment of students' prior knowledge
2. purposeful teacher planning to connect students' prior knowledge to new material

Scaffolding of learning material:

1. graphic organizer/thinking maps
2. frontloading new material in small group settings
3. anchor charts
4. projects that work through the action cycle
5. collaborative groups that employ student-led comprehension strategies
6. daily, formative assessments such as 3-2-1 or exit slips

Extending learning through:

1. assistive technology (embedded in all curricula)
2. AtL skills instruction in specials classes
3. daily opportunities for independent reading
4. library/media visits for technology and information support
5. school supported community service projects

**Partnership with parents plays a key role in creating a successful learning experience for all students. The school recognizes that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways of supporting them. All parents of children with special educational needs will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their children's education.*

Response to Intervention (RtI)

The RtI program in the Tuscaloosa City Schools provides intervention and educational support to all students not reaching their academic potential at increasing levels of intensity based on their individual needs. Teachers, counselor, parents, students, and principal meet to initiate an identified student's RtI plan; following the initiation of a plan, teachers meet with the student daily and the counselor monthly to monitor student academic and personal growth.

- ***Special Educational Needs policy revision takes place regularly, at the beginning of each academic year. It is reviewed and updated by the faculty of Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Elementary in our whole-school faculty meetings and reflects the input from parent and school district stakeholders. Our policies are available for review on our school website: <https://www.tuscaloosacityschools.com/domain/1095>***

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