



INCLUSION POLICY
Tanglewood Middle School

SCHOOL MISSION: Tanglewood Middle School is an International Baccalaureate World School whose goal is to provide a quality education by empowering individuals to become caring, self-sufficient, globally conscious citizens, who value innovation and sustainability as a lifelong process.

Philosophy

Tanglewood Middle School believes that all students deserve a rigorous education which engages them in critical thinking and real-world problem solving. To best support all students in achieving this goal, Tanglewood Middle School provides services to students who need more support.

Categories of Services

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Tanglewood Middle School has a full inclusion program with co-teaching and content mastery as appropriate. The special education and regular education teachers may do parallel planning for what best will meet the needs of our students. The special education teacher is not a teacher aide for the regular education classroom.

Our school utilizes the following instructional services to meet the needs of our Special Education students:

Co-Teacher Services

Students receive cooperative interactive instruction from both general and Special Education teachers in the general education classroom. Most Special Education students take classes in a co-teaching setting, meaning that they take regular education courses with the support of a special education co-teacher. Students with disabilities enrolled in general-education classes receive instructional support and assistive services for them. Based on collaboration between general and Special Education teachers, the Special Education teacher consults the general education teacher on the implementation of instructional modifications and the delivery of instructional techniques for students with disabilities.

Skills for Life Learning (SLL) Self-Contained Class Services

The student is assigned to Special Education classes for most of the school day and attends those general education classes that the ARD/IEP Committee has determined to be appropriate to addressing the student's needs. Only students in Skills for Life Learning (SLL) are in self-contained classrooms. These students attend fine arts and physical education classes with general education students.

Transition Read with Essential Knowledge (TREK)

This program is for students who are diagnosed with Autism. These students receive instruction through inclusion in the general education classroom with a Special Education teacher's support. Additionally, these students take a social skills class to provide them with additional social and emotional support.

Identification

If a teacher suspects a student is failing due to a learning disability, they may refer the student to the Intervention and Assistance Team (IAT). The first step teachers take in the referral process is to discuss the child with the grade level team. Next, teachers discuss the issue with the grade level administrator and committee chairperson. Finally, teachers are asked to attend an IAT meeting.

Follow Up

During the first two weeks of school, the Special Education Department provides folders to general education teachers for each special education student currently enrolled in their class. The folder contains modifications, test information and specifics of the child's individual education plan, or I.E.P. The special education coordinator meets with grade level teams to answer questions regarding specific students.

The Special Education Department Chairperson presides at ARD meetings. Prior to the ARD, a teacher from the student's grade level team will be designated by the grade level team leader or team, to:

- Gather pertinent information from the student's teachers.
- Be familiar with information and able to present as relevant.
- Attending the ARD as representative of the team.

Principles of Practice

We have incorporated within our special needs practices the four principles of good practice identified by the International Baccalaureate Organization that promote equal access for all learners across the curriculum. We recognize that these principles are based on elements of good practice that are essential to the development of the whole person.

1. Affirming Identity and Building Self-Esteem

We have chosen to use the Learner Profile attributes in our regularly scheduled advisory/leadership team class meetings. These classes are inclusive of our entire student population, which helps develop a sense of camaraderie among the whole student body. During class time, students are encouraged to explore the various attributes and strive to identify with one or more of them. Students who exhibit strengths in a Learner Profile attribute are recognized by the campus.

2. Valuing Prior Knowledge

We recognize that it cannot be assumed that those learners who have diverse learning needs will necessarily share the same previous learning and background knowledge. If new information is to be understood, it must be linked to prior knowledge. All teachers on our campus activate prior knowledge with either formal pre-assessment or questioning strategies. In addition, our teachers engage in a process of regular collaborative planning to consider and develop the strategies necessary for activating and building background knowledge when planning units of study.

3. Scaffolding

Scaffolding provides a concrete context for understanding. Our teachers use the following strategies to foster learners' increasing independence:

- Visual aids
- Demonstrations
- Collaborative groups

4. Extended Learning

Students receive multisensory instruction explicit, direct, cumulative, intensive, and focused on language structure. Multisensory learning involves the simultaneous use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile pathways to enhance memory and learning of written language.

It is our goal to foster learners increasing independence in taking responsibility for developing strategies for their own learning.

Section 504 is a United States law which protects students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who do not receive services under special education, receive support services under Section 504. These students have 504 plans which provide the details of support required by each student. The 504 plans are managed by the student's dean and are reviewed annually. The 504 plans are provided to teachers.

EMERGENT BILINGUAL

Tanglewood provides services for language development to assist students who are Emergent Bilingual (EB). Students are classified by their language development as beginner, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high (as determined by the State of Texas standards). Students who are classified as beginner or intermediate are placed into an English Second Language class to help them acquire English language skills. All emergent bilingual students also receive instruction in the general education Language and Literature course

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Tanglewood Middle School is a neighborhood Vanguard campus providing G/T services for all Houston ISD G/T-identified students. Gifted and Talented Programs are designed for students who excel in general intellectual ability, in combination with creative/productive thinking and/or leadership ability. G/T students study the same curriculum as other students, but their work is modified in depth, complexity, and pacing compared to the work being conducted in general education classes.

At Tanglewood Middle School, all faculty are GT-certified, and all classes are GT (Gifted and Talented) since we are an IB (International Baccalaureate) school. All courses offered in all eight IB subject areas are inquiry-based and project-driven.

Responsibilities of Participants

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Explore concepts in depth and encourage independent studies or investigations.
- Expand students' time for free reading.
- Determine where students' interests lie and capitalize on their inquisitiveness.
- Encourage students to get involved in school clubs and extracurricular activities that support and extend their learning and experiences.
- Create an environment where ideas are accepted without being evaluated and criticized, and where risk-taking is encouraged.
- Help students learn to set their own learning goals, then provide them with the opportunity to work towards those goals.
- Be an active participant in your child's learning.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Encourage creative expression and thinking by allowing students to choose how to approach a problem or assignment.
- Create an environment where ideas are accepted without being evaluated and criticized, and where risk-taking is encouraged.
- Make choices in their own learning.
- Set their own learning goals, then provide them with the opportunity to work towards those goals.
- Be an active participant in their own learning.

ADMINISTRATION/TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Use thematic instruction to connect learning across the curriculum.

- Invite students to explore different points of view on a topic of study and compare the two.
- Provide learning centers where students oversee their learning.
- Brainstorm with gifted children on what types of projects they would like to explore to extend what they are learning in the classroom.
- Avoid drill and practice activities.
- Ask students higher level questions that require them to investigate causes, experiences, and facts to draw a conclusion or make connections to other areas of learning.
- Encourage students to make transformations using a common task or item in a different way.
- Create learning environments that encourage creativity and discovery using interesting literature and reference materials.
- Supply reading materials on a wide variety of subjects and levels.
- Create an environment where ideas are accepted without being evaluated and criticized, and where risk-taking is encouraged.
- Provide a learning-rich environment that includes various resources, media, tasks, and teaching methods.
- Allow children to be mobile as they move in and out of groups and tasks at their own pace.
- Provide an adult mentor via our Advisory / Leadership Team course.
- Provide alternatives for students who complete their work early.
- Allow students to make choices in their learning.
- Help students learn to set their own learning goals, then provide them with the opportunity to work towards those goals.
- Provide students with unit and lesson overviews that outline tasks to be completed, concepts to be learned and the evaluation technique so students can be active participants in their learning.

COMMUNICATION

The inclusion policy is communicated to parents through:

- Campus Website
- Parent Meetings
- ARD meetings

IB Policy Review

This policy is reviewed and updated annually by school staff and the Shared Decision-Making Committee. This policy was reviewed and approved by representatives of the school staff, parents, and community members in October 2024.

REFERENCES

Gifted & talented / home. / Home. (n.d.). <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/31858>

Multilingual programs / bilingual/ESL. / Bilingual/ESL. (n.d.).
<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/32054>

Special Education / Home. / Home. (n.d.-b). <http://www.houstonisd.org/SpecialEducation>