

# **Rhodes Academy for the Humanities and the Arts Elementary School**

*Authorized International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program*

## **Inclusion Policy 2025-2026**

## **Purpose of the Inclusion Policy**

This document outlines Rhodes Academy's commitment to providing equitable access to curriculum and academic rigor for all students, regardless of abilities or needs. It reflects our shared responsibilities, philosophies, and state and district mandates, including the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), District Code of Conduct 5300, Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework (CR-SE), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

## **Mission Alignment**

### **Rhodes Academy Mission**

Our school strives to meet the diverse needs of our community by developing successful thinkers who are safe, responsible, and respectful global citizens. We promote lifelong inquiry through effective teaching, technology, and collaboration with parents and the community.

### **International Baccalaureate (IB) Mission**

The IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who contribute to a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. IB programs encourage students to become active, compassionate lifelong learners who appreciate diverse perspectives.

## **Relevant IB Standards and Practices**

Our policy aligns with the following IB Standards:

### **Leadership and Structure (Standard B1)**

- B1.5: Develop policies and procedures supporting the IB program.

### **Resources and Support (Standard B2)**

- B2.8: Provide support for students with learning needs and their teachers.

### **Curriculum (Standards C1 & C2)**

- C1.6: Collaborative planning includes differentiation for diverse learners.
- C2.8: Curriculum encourages reflection on diversity, commonality, and perspectives.

### **Teaching and Learning (Standard C3)**

- C3.2: Engage students as inquirers and thinkers.
- C3.5: Support students to take responsibility for their own learning.

- C3.6: Address human commonality, diversity, and multiple perspectives.
- C3.9: Use diverse teaching strategies.
- C3.10: Differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning styles.
- C3.11: Incorporate various resources, including technology.
- C3.13: Engage students in reflection about their learning process.
- C3.14: Foster a respectful and stimulating learning environment.
- C3.15: Encourage varied ways for students to demonstrate learning.
- C3.16: Develop IB learner profile attributes.

### **Assessment (Standard C4)**

- C4.3: Use diverse strategies and tools to assess student learning.

## **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion**

Rhodes Academy is dedicated to ensuring all students thrive regardless of their background or circumstances, as emphasized by New York's ESSA plan. The CR-SE Framework challenges inequities and promotes equitable opportunities for students and families. Rhodes Academy maintains a status as a school in good standing.

## **Philosophy of Inclusion**

As an authorized IB Primary Years Program school, Rhodes Academy shares the IB's commitment to high-quality, challenging international education. We provide free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, emphasizing:

- Transdisciplinary, inquiry-based instruction
- Student independence, responsibility, voice, and choice
- Development of transdisciplinary skills and lifelong learning
- Engagement and international mindedness

We collaborate with district and community partners to provide supports and resources that respond to our students' diverse needs, including academic and extracurricular activities and student services.

## **Hempstead Public Schools District Goals**

The district focuses on student welfare by supporting intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth. The Board prioritizes creating environments that prepare students for a changing world and responsible citizenship. Key goals include:

- Ensuring equitable access to resources to improve student achievement.
- Tailoring learning to students' styles, interests, and aspirations.
- Protecting legal rights and enhancing student self-image through positive environments.

## **Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination**

Rhodes Academy adheres to strict non-discrimination policies per federal and state laws, ensuring no discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected categories. Access to programs, services, and employment is guaranteed fairly. Violations may result in disciplinary actions in line with district policies.

Relevant policies include: DASA, Sexual Harassment, Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention, Racial Harassment, Code of Conduct, and others, supported by federal laws such as the ADA, Title VI and IX, and the Rehabilitation Act.

## **Inclusive Practices at Rhodes Academy**

We provide holistic, inclusive education through a variety of supports and programs:

### **Special Education Services**

Individualized programs (IEPs) are developed collaboratively using assessments and goal-setting to support each student's unique needs. Hempstead's special education website and policies guide service delivery.

### **Common Language and Support**

- Special Educational Needs (SEN): Students needing extra support or challenge.
- Inclusion: Ongoing process to increase access by removing barriers.
- Differentiation: Instructional modifications tailored to student needs using varied strategies and tools such as grouping, pre-assessments, pacing adjustments, and assistive technology.
- IEP: Legal plan for specialized services.
- 504 Plan: Legal plan for accommodations for health-related learning challenges.
- Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT): Co-led classrooms by general and special education teachers providing differentiated instruction.
- Response to Intervention (RTI) / Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): Tiered framework providing universal, targeted, and intensive supports based on data-driven instruction and monitoring.

### **Additional Support Services**

- Resource Room: Specialized instruction for students with disabilities (26 students served).
- Speech Services: Individual or small group support to prevent and address communication challenges (53 students served).
- Physical and Occupational Therapy: Contracted services through the district.
- Self-Contained Classes: Small classes with differentiated instruction for specific student needs.
- Instructional Support Team (IST): Multidisciplinary team that plans interventions for students facing academic or behavioral challenges.

- Committee on Special Education (CSE): Oversees services for students with disabilities and includes parents, teachers, psychologists, and other experts.
- Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA): Supports families and advocates for children with special needs.

## **Multilingual Learners (MLL) and English Native Learners (ENL)**

The district's vision is to develop multilingual learners into confident communicators and global citizens by supporting literacy in home languages, English, and other world languages.

The mission includes ongoing professional development for teachers to facilitate language acquisition through content and engaging instruction.

### **Key Terminology**

- Mother Tongue: Language spoken at home.
- Language A: Primary language of school instruction.
- Language B: Second/foreign language being learned.
- Language Acquisition: Process of learning Language B.
- ELL/MLL: Students who speak a language other than English primarily.
- ENL: Program supporting English language acquisition.
- FLES: Foreign Language in Elementary Schools program.
- Dual Language: Instruction in two languages.
- Bilingual: Fluency in two languages.
- Translanguaging: Using multiple languages to support communication and understanding.

### **Instructional Support for MLLs**

- Mother Tongue Support through bilingual resources and community connections.
- ENL program with identification, placement, and instructional support based on proficiency levels.
- FLES Mandarin Program for grades 1-6 to develop foundational language skills.
- Newcomer Program to support recent arrivals academically and socio-emotionally with parent engagement.

### **Communication and Review of Policy**

The Inclusion Policy is published on the school website, shared with students and parents, and reviewed annually by a team of stakeholders including administrators, IB coordinators, counselors, and parent advocates.

## **Professional Learning Community Agreements**

Our staff commits to a collaborative mindset, embracing learner attributes, punctuality, active participation, preparedness, solution-oriented approaches, positivity, respect for rights, and a growth mindset using SEL strategies.

## **Staff Calming Room Agreements**

- Maintain silence and tranquility.
- Only water allowed.
- Respect privacy.
- No work or electronic devices.
- Keep the room clean and materials intact.
- Limit massage chair use to 10 minutes.
- Leave the space better than found.

## **References**

This policy is based on multiple sources including:

- International Baccalaureate Principles and Practices
- District and State Policies including DASA and ESSA
- Collaborations with IB PYP schools in Hempstead
- David Paterson School, Hempstead N.Y. 11550
- NY State Education Department guidelines and frameworks

Review of this policy occurs annually by the Building Principal, Assistant Principals, IB Coordinator, Psychologist, Social Worker, Parent Advocate, and IB Committee members.