

Access, Inclusion, and Inclusive Education Policy

1. Philosophy and alignment with IB

Rocky Mount High School believes that all students can learn and succeed when they experience high expectations, meaningful relationships, and equitable access to rich learning opportunities. Our IB Diploma Program (DP) reflects the diversity of our school community, and we value learning diversity as a resource rather than a deficit.

In line with the IB mission and learner profile, we aim to develop caring, knowledgeable, open-minded, and reflective young people who understand that people learn in different ways and at different paces. Inclusion at RMHS means that all students—regardless of language background, disability, health condition, prior attainment, or socio-economic status—are welcomed, respected, and supported to participate fully in the life of the school and the IB DP.

We recognize that inclusion is a whole-school responsibility. Access and inclusion are embedded in everyday teaching, assessment, and relationships, not just in exam accommodations. This policy should be read alongside the RMHS IB Language Policy, Assessment Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, and district student services guidelines.

2. Guiding principles

At RMHS, access and inclusion are based on the following principles:

- All students are capable of growth and achievement when barriers to learning and participation are identified and reduced.
- Inclusion is proactive: we plan learning environments and assessments with diverse learners in mind (universal design for learning), rather than reacting only when a difficulty arises.
- Support focuses on strengths and potential, not labels or perceived deficits.
- High expectations are maintained for all students; support and access arrangements remove barriers but do not lower standards or change what is being assessed.
- Decisions about access arrangements and support are collaborative, involving students, families, teachers, counselors, the IB DP Coordinator, and, where appropriate, external professionals.
- Inclusive practices and access arrangements in IB assessments reflect the student's usual way of working in class and in formative assessments.

3. Learning diversity and student profile

RMHS serves a wide range of learners, including but not limited to:

- Students with formally identified disabilities (e.g., specific learning disabilities, physical or sensory impairments, autism spectrum, ADHD).
- Students with health conditions or mental health needs that affect learning or assessment.
- Multilingual learners / English language learners.
- Students who are gifted and/or have advanced learning needs.
- Students from historically marginalized or underrepresented groups in advanced academic programs.
- Students who have experienced interrupted or limited formal schooling.

We recognize that many students may fall into more than one of these categories, and that needs can change over time. We seek to understand each student as an individual, focusing on their strengths, interests, and goals.

4. Access to the IB Diploma Program

Our commitment is that the IB DP remains accessible to a diverse range of students who demonstrate readiness, interest, and motivation, not only those with traditional “honors” profiles.

- Admissions and course selection processes for the DP are transparent and collaborative, taking into account multiple indicators (prior coursework, teacher recommendations, student reflections, family input, IEP/504 plans where applicable).
- Having an IEP, 504 Plan, English learner status, or other documented need does **not** in itself prevent access to the DP.
- Students who have participated in IB-aligned “foundations” or pre-DP courses (9th and 10th grade) and who show commitment and potential are encouraged to pursue the DP, with appropriate support and planning.
- When determining subject choices, Student Services staff and the DP Coordinator work with students and families to identify a pathway that builds on student strengths, supports areas of need, and remains consistent with IB regulations.

5. Inclusive teaching and learning practices

Inclusive education at RMHS is first and foremost about what happens in classrooms every day. All teachers are teachers of language and differentiation, and all share responsibility for inclusion.

Across IB and pre-IB courses, teachers:

- Plan units and lessons that use varied entry points, tasks, and products so students can engage with key concepts in multiple ways.
- Use scaffolds such as modeling, visual supports, graphic organizers, glossaries, sentence frames, and guided note-taking.
- Differentiate expectations and supports (not cognitive challenge) based on students’ language proficiency, prior learning, and individual needs.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration, peer support, and structured group work.
- Incorporate students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds as assets in instruction, in line with the IB Language Policy.
- Use formative assessment to monitor learning, adjust instruction, and identify emerging needs early.
- Collaborate with ESL teachers, special education staff, counselors, and the DP Coordinator to co-plan supports and interventions.

These everyday practices form the “usual way of working” that underpins any formal access arrangements in IB assessments.

6. Identification of needs and support planning

RMHS uses a combination of information sources to identify and respond to learning needs:

- Enrollment and registration data, including home language surveys and prior schooling information.

- Existing documentation such as IEPs, 504 Plans, psychological or medical evaluations, ESL levels, and district intervention plans.
- Teacher observations, classroom performance, and assessment results.
- Student and family input regarding learning history, strengths, challenges, and goals.

When a need is identified:

- A collaborative meeting (which may include the student, parent/guardian, teachers, Student Services staff, ESL staff, exceptional children (EC) staff, and the DP Coordinator) is held to clarify needs and plan support.
- Supports may include classroom-based strategies, small-group or targeted instruction, counseling or social-emotional support, and/or formal access arrangements for assessment, in line with IB and district guidelines.
- Plans are documented in the appropriate format (IEP, 504, ESL plan, intervention plan, or internal support plan) and shared with relevant staff.
- Plans are reviewed regularly and adjusted based on evidence of progress and any updated documentation.

7. Access arrangements for IB assessments

Access arrangements are changes to assessment conditions that enable students with specific needs to demonstrate what they know and can do, without changing the construct being assessed.

At RMHS:

- Access arrangements are based on documented evidence of a long-term or chronic need and on the student's usual way of working in class and in school-based assessments.
- Common examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Extra time.
 - Separate or small-group setting.
 - Use of a word processor or assistive technology.
 - Scribes or readers (under IB regulations).
 - Rest breaks.
 - Modified exam print (e.g., enlarged text).
 - Permission to use a bilingual dictionary (for eligible students).
- Access arrangements are intended to reduce or remove barriers, not to provide an unfair advantage or alter the demands of the assessment.
- Grades must reflect the candidate's level of attainment, based on the same IB standards for all candidates.

7.1 Process and timelines

- Requests for access arrangements should be identified and discussed as early as possible, ideally before the start of DP Year 1.
- The student and parent/guardian meet with the DP Coordinator and relevant Student Services staff to review:
 - The student's profile and documentation.

- The student's usual way of working in class.
- Possible access arrangements under IB regulations.
- Documentation from a qualified professional (e.g., psychologist, medical doctor, or other appropriate specialist) is required when IB regulations specify this, and should clearly describe the nature of the need and its impact on learning and assessment.
- The DP Coordinator, working with Student Services, prepares and submits requests for access arrangements to the IB by the deadlines specified in current IB Assessment procedures (e.g., typically in DP Year 2).
- School-level supports that do not require IB approval (for internal assessments and school-based tasks) are implemented in line with district policy and IB guidance, ensuring consistency with the student's usual way of working.

Prior authorization from the IB is required for certain types of arrangements and/or for their use in external examinations. **These requests for accommodations must be made to the DP Coordinator at the start of year 2 of the program (12th grade).** The school follows the most current IB Access and inclusion policy and Assessment procedures.

8. Adverse and temporary circumstances

This policy focuses on ongoing learning needs and long-term conditions. Temporary or unexpected events—such as acute illness or injury, family bereavement, or other serious adverse circumstances—are handled on a case-by-case basis.

- Students and families should inform the DP Coordinator and school administration as soon as possible when such circumstances arise.
- The DP Coordinator will work with teachers, counselors, and, where applicable, the IB, to determine appropriate short-term supports or special consideration, following IB procedures for adverse circumstances.
- Make-up work, extensions, and grading for school-based assessments will follow the RMHS IB Assessment Policy and district guidelines, with flexibility for documented extenuating circumstances.

9. Roles and responsibilities

Students

- Communicate openly with teachers, counselors, and the DP Coordinator about learning needs, concerns, and what supports are helpful.
- Use agreed supports and access arrangements responsibly.
- Uphold the IB Academic Integrity Policy when using assistive technologies or support personnel.

Parents/Guardians

- Share relevant information and documentation about the student's needs and history.
- Participate in planning and review meetings.
- Support the use of agreed strategies and arrangements at home (for example, reinforcing study routines or assistive tool use).

Teachers

- Implement inclusive classroom practices and differentiated instruction.
- Use formative assessment to identify and respond to learning needs.
- Communicate concerns or observed needs to Student Services and the DP Coordinator.
- Apply agreed supports and access arrangements consistently in classroom and school-based assessments.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect for student privacy.

Student Services staff and specialists

- Provide expertise in interpreting evaluations and developing appropriate support plans.
- Coordinate services such as special education, 504 Plans, ESL, and counseling.
- Collaborate with teachers and the DP Coordinator on implementation and monitoring.

DP Coordinator

- Ensure that inclusive education and access arrangements are implemented in line with IB policies and district expectations.
- Lead and document the process of requesting IB access arrangements, including collecting evidence and submitting requests by published deadlines.
- Provide training and guidance to staff on IB access and inclusion expectations.
- Liaise with the IB regarding questions or issues related to inclusion, access arrangements, and adverse circumstances.

School and district leadership

- Provide resources (staffing, time, and professional learning) to support inclusive practices.
- Ensure alignment of this policy with district policies and legal requirements.
- Support a school culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.

10. Professional learning

All IB faculty members engage in ongoing professional learning related to inclusive education, learning diversity, and access and inclusion in the IB Diploma Program. This includes:

- IB-approved workshops and online learning opportunities.
- School-based PD on differentiation, universal design for learning, trauma-informed practice, and culturally responsive teaching.
- Collaborative planning and reflection time to review how units, assessments, and classroom routines support diverse learners.

New IB teachers receive mentoring and support from the DP Coordinator and experienced colleagues to ensure consistent implementation of this policy.

11. Policy review

This Access, Inclusion, and Inclusive Education Policy is a living document. It is reviewed at least every three years—or sooner if IB policies or local regulations change—by a representative group including:

- School leadership.
- The IB DP Coordinator.
- Teachers (including general education, special education, and ESL).
- Student Services staff.
- Students and, where possible, parents/guardians.

Feedback from this review informs updates to ensure the policy remains meaningful, practical, and aligned with current IB expectations, district guidelines, and the needs of the RMHS community.

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