Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Enrollment Documentation Guidelines

1. Introduction & Policy Statement

The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) program at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School mandates a rigorous, compliance-driven framework for students in grades 9–12. Our mission is to ensure equitable academic access for our students while functioning as a strategic bridge to the accommodation requirements of ACT, College Board (SAT/AP), and post-secondary institutions. By upholding these stringent standards, the SAS program ensures that all school-based supports are legally defensible and prepared for the scrutiny of post-secondary testing organizations and institutions themselves. The core objectives of these guidelines are as follows:

- **Mandate Equitable Access:** Ensure that classroom accommodations strictly mitigate the impact of documented disabilities without compromising the integrity of our college-preparatory curriculum.
- **Enforce National Alignment:** Ensure that our students' accommodations are recognized in high-stakes testing environments, such as ACT, SAT, and AP tests.
- **Solidify Long-Term Success:** Provide students with a portable, data-driven record of need that facilitates a seamless transition to higher education. The "So What?" of this policy is clear: alignment with national standards is non-negotiable. Documentation that fails to meet these specific criteria will result in the denial of accommodations by national testing agencies, potentially jeopardizing a student's performance on college entrance exams and their subsequent eligibility for university-level support. Consequently, the following evidentiary requirements must be satisfied to sustain any enrollment in a SAS program at Bishop McGuinness.

2. Universal SAS Documentation Criteria

The SAS program requires objective and rigorous evidence to protect the integrity of the accommodations process for both the school and the student. Standardized documentation ensures that supports are granted based on measurable functional limitations rather than subjective preferences or diagnostic letters provided in isolation.

Professional Credentials & Diagnostic Specificity

The SAS program mandates that all evaluators possess state-licensed credentials in the area of Psychology or Psychiatry (Licensed Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or School Psychologist). Documentation will be rejected unless it is authored by a qualified professional whose license, education, and area of specialization are explicitly listed. A psychometrist or Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) are not considered qualified professionals; therefore, any psychoeducational evaluation they conduct must be signed by a Licensed Psychologist to be accepted. Furthermore, all diagnoses must be grounded in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5). A clear diagnostic statement is the foundational requirement; it establishes the legal and educational basis for support by identifying the

precise impairment that necessitates institutional intervention. Lastly, if a public school (MEEGS) evaluation finds that a student does not qualify for special education services, and is found to have no diagnoses falling under the thirteen categories of IDEA, that student is also ineligible for enrollment in the Student Accessibility Services program at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School.

The Bishop McGuinness Recency Standard

Because the functional impact of neurodevelopmental and psychiatric disorders fluctuates as a student matures, documentation must reflect current levels of functioning. The following validity periods are Bishop McGuinness Compliance Standards.

Documentation Recency Requirements

Document Type	**Validity Period**
Educational Evaluations / Cognitive Testing	Within 3 years
Physical / Medical Updates	Within 1 year

Historical Context & Functional Evidence

A diagnosis is insufficient without a documented history of impairment. The SAS program requires a comprehensive narrative including developmental, educational, and medical history. This must include:

- **Prior Supports:** Evidence of previous school-based interventions when relevant (e.g., IEPs or 504 plans).
- **ADHD Onset:** For ADHD diagnoses, documentation must provide evidence of childhood onset **before age 12**, as required for ACT/College Board compliance.
- **Teacher Observations:** Evaluators must incorporate real-world context via a **Teacher Survey Form**. This specific form is a mandatory component of the evidence battery used to validate the persistence of the impairment across multiple settings.

Standardized Testing & Functional Limitations

Bishop McGuinness strictly forbids the use of simple diagnostic letters or brief provider notes. Valid documentation must include comprehensive, individually administered, and nationally normed testing batteries. **The "Substantial Limitation" Mandate:** Testing agencies use standard and scaled subtest scores to determine if a student is "substantially limited" compared to the **average person in the general population**. It is not enough for a student to perform below their own high potential; the data must demonstrate a documented deficiency when measured against national peers. Documentation must include these scores to prove the impact of the disability on daily academic functioning.

Justification of Accommodations: Listing vs. Justifying

Evaluators must provide a direct clinical link between the documented limitation and the requested support. The SAS program requires a move beyond simply "listing" a diagnosis to "justifying" the necessity of each accommodation.

Case Example: Clinical Justification

- **Insufficient (Listing):** "The student has an ADHD diagnosis and requires 50% extended time."
- **Compliant (Justifying):** "The student's deficit in processing speed—as evidenced by a Processing Speed Index (PSI) score at the 8th percentile (Standard Score: 79)—demonstrates a substantial limitation compared to the general population. This impairment necessitates 50% extended time to ensure the student can demonstrate their knowledge under standardized conditions."

3. The Physical & Medical Condition Exception

Physical impairments and chronic medical conditions require a distinct framework due to their variable and often fluctuating nature. These conditions necessitate more frequent monitoring and data-driven updates. **There is a separate SAS Documentation Guidelines policy to follow for Physical & Medical Conditions.**

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Requirements

For cases of Traumatic Brain Injury, the SAS program enforces the ACT's specific data requirements. Documentation must include:

1. The exact **date of the accident** .
2. The **length of hospital stay** and the specific **discharge date** .
3. A complete evaluation of intellectual and neurocognitive skills to demonstrate the direct impairment of educational functioning.

Conclusion

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is committed to maintaining a rigorous environment that ensures every student is prepared for the transition to post-secondary education. By enforcing these documentation guidelines, we ensure that our students possess the objective, high-quality evidence required to secure accommodations in the high-stakes testing arena and post-secondary institutions. As such, **documentation must be submitted in its original "wet signature" hard copy form.** Compliance with these standards is the essential first step in upholding our commitment to every student's long-term academic success and accessibility.

Disclaimer: Artificial Intelligence was utilized to help draft these guidelines.