

MRHS IB Diploma Programme Inclusive Education Policy

Philosophy and Aims

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme benefits all learners. The staff at Marvin Ridge High School is committed to ensuring that all students who choose to participate in the program have fair and equitable access to the IB Diploma Programme curriculum, which includes providing inclusive arrangements and accommodations for students with special learning needs during classroom instruction and assessment practices.

The MRHS special education and inclusive education policy integrates policies and practices from the IBO, federal legislation, and the state of North Carolina. In accordance with IBO, this policy seeks to accomplish the following aims:

- Inform community stakeholders, especially students, parents, and staff, about the policies and practices in place to help students with special needs access the IB curriculum
- Outline the accommodations that are available for students with special learning needs
- Assist parents and students to know how to access special accommodations if needed
- Clarify the responsibilities of the school, teachers, students, and parents in ensuring that all students have access to the IB Diploma Programme curriculum.

Defining Inclusive Learning Needs

Every class contains a diverse group of students who have a variety of unique needs and levels of skill, so all teachers must use frequent formative assessment to determine how to best differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Students are most successful when they take an active role in identifying their needs and monitoring their progress towards academic goals.

While all students benefit from differentiated instruction, some students need additional special accommodations that can be outlined in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans (504s), Health Plans, or Multilingual Learning Plans (ESL, see Language Policy for additional information). The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act federally mandate these special education plans.

Federal Laws and Local Policies

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a nondiscrimination statute that prohibits discrimination and is designed to assure the disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Under Section 504, an eligible student is a student who (1) has, (2) has a record of having or (3) is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning. It is the policy of the Union County Public Schools Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of disabilities in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Act.

The regulations for implementing Section 504 provide parents and/or students the following rights:

- Section 504 requires the school district to locate, evaluate and determine if a student is a qualified individual requiring accommodations necessary to provide access to educational programs.
- You have a right to receive notice in a reasonable time before UCPS identifies, evaluates or changes your child's placement.
- You have a right to periodic re-evaluation and evaluation before significant change in placement.
- You have the opportunity to review relevant educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The requirements are described in the Board's policy manual.
- You have the right to request an informal conference with the principal and the Assistance/Intervention team if you disagree with the decisions reached by the school regarding identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. If your concerns are not resolved, you may request a hearing before an impartial hearing officer by notifying the Board's Section 504 specialist in writing at the address listed below. You have the right to be represented by your counsel in the impartial hearing process and to appeal the impartial hearing officer's decision.

Questions about Section 504 Plans, eligibility and related processes, should be directed to the MRHS school-based 504 Coordinator within the Guidance Department at 704-290-1520.

Additional support related to Section 504 Plans can be provided by:

504 District Coordinator – Union County Public Schools
 400 North Church Street
 Monroe, North Carolina 28112
 704-296-1005

Exceptional Children

The primary purpose for Exceptional Children programs is to ensure that students with disabilities develop academically, mentally, physically and emotionally through the provision of an appropriate and individualized education in the least restrictive environment. Exceptional Children are students who are unable to have all their educational needs met in a regular class without receiving special education or related services. Classifications of Exceptional Children include those who are autistic, hearing impaired, (deaf or hard of hearing), mentally disabled (educable, trainable or severely-profoundly), multi-disabled, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, behaviorally/emotionally disabled, specific learning disabled, speech-language impaired, traumatic brain injured and visually impaired (blind or partially sighted). Exceptional Children programs and services are identified as both instructional programs and instructional support services, depending upon the educational needs of an individual student.

Exceptional Children's Content Sequence and Learning Outcomes

Curricula for most exceptional children follow the curricula for students in general education. Emphasis is placed on instruction in communication and language arts, social studies, healthful living, mathematics, science and career and vocational education, depending upon the needs of the student. Attention is focused upon cognitive, affective, motor and vocational development within the curricular areas. The Individualized Education Program states in writing the special education programs and services to be provided to each Exceptional Children student.

The Union County Public Schools Exceptional Children's Department is responsible for conducting Child Find for those students suspected of having a disability and providing appropriate educational

opportunities to all children with disabilities who reside in Union County. The purpose is to ensure that all eligible children with disabilities, ages three through 21, have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepares them for further education, employment and independent living.

In order to meet the goals and address the purpose, the department provides comprehensive evaluation services to determine eligibility through Child Find. Once determined eligible by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, the students' needs are addressed through the development of an individualized education program which may address cognitive, educational, physical, behavioral, communication, motor and adaptive needs of the student. Special education and related services designed to meet the students' unique needs are administered through our programs within the various schools in our system.

Questions about the need for Exceptional Children services or the programs at Marvin Ridge should be directed to the Exceptional Children's Department Chairperson, at 704-290-1520.

Questions regarding Exceptional Children's services may also be directed to the Union County Public Schools Exceptional Children's Department:

Exceptional Children Department
Old Post Office
407 North Main Street
Monroe, NC 28112
(Phone) 704-296-6370

Individual Health Plans:

A Request for Health Care Information form is to be filled out by the parent of every child with a chronic health condition and returned to the teacher or school nurse. The school nurse reviews the form and determines the need for an Individual Health Plan (IHP) which outlines how to care for an individual child with special health needs at school. If need is determined, the school nurse writes the IHP and supplies a copy to the classroom teacher(s) and other staff on a need-to-know basis. A copy is also sent home with the student for parent review and signature.

Questions regarding chronic health conditions, medications, and related matters can be addressed to the MRHS School Nurse at 704-290-1520.

Actions Taken to Implement the Inclusion Special Education Needs Policy:

Referrals regarding the possible need for a 504, IEP or IHP can be made at any time. The referral process is guided by appropriate staff members and participants, including the parent, teachers, administration, the student, and relevant staff members such as our 504 Coordinator, Exceptional Children's staff, and/or school nurse are included in these referral and eligibility determination processes. Information from medical professionals, evaluations, classroom performance, assessment data and observations are key factors in eligibility determination.

In order to ensure that all teachers are aware of students' specialized needs, Section 504 plans and Individualized Education Plans, and Individual Health Plans detailing classroom accommodations, modifications, and services, are provided to each teacher in a timely manner at the start of each semester.

Updates and revisions to students' 504, IEP or IHP plans are made at least annually and more frequently if needed and requested by an appropriate member of the team. Team members for

annual reviews include representative teachers, parents, Students are invited to participate in the development and content of their own 504 and IEP plans as well.

A review of plan types and purposes is provided for the total staff annually. Teachers sign off to document receipt of the plans and to document understanding of the plan types as well.

A system of monitoring adherence to and understanding of students' 504 and IEP plan accommodation is implemented by Union County Public Schools each semester.

Learning support and individual progress:

In keeping with the IB Program's philosophies regarding inclusion, differentiation, and the principles of good practice as described in Special Educational Needs in IB Programmes, Marvin Ridge IB Diploma Program staff provide learning support and monitor student progress in a variety of ways.

Learning support is provided by teachers at Marvin Ridge High School through daily, differentiated instruction. Teachers provide tutoring times at least twice per week to supplement classroom instruction. Classroom teachers work in collaboration with support services staff such as Exceptional Children's teachers, counselors, and/or the school nurse to ensure that students' needs are being addressed appropriately. All parents and students have access to student grades through the digital student management system. Parent contact is made when a candidate is demonstrating difficulty and plans for increased support are developed.

The International Baccalaureate Program staff at MRHS meets monthly as a group to address a variety of pertinent topics, including individualized student's learning needs. The entire teaching team working with a particular student is made aware of needs a student may be exhibiting academically, behaviorally, emotionally, or socially so that additional support may be provided across all classes. Guidance counselors also work with the IB teachers, students, and parents to communicate and coordinate support.

Inclusive Practices at Marvin Ridge High School:

Students with special education needs at MRHS are mainstreamed with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible. Students with IEPs are scheduled for an appropriate amount and method of educational service delivery time with an Exceptional Children's teacher, depending on their level of need. These services are often delivered through co-taught classes for English and Math, and/or through time in a Study Skills instructional block within the students' schedule. Students with 504 and/or IHP plans are served entirely by regular education staff and are not removed from non-disabled peers at any time for educational service delivery.

The Marvin Ridge High School IB Diploma staff share the belief that is stated in the Special Education Needs document: "Inclusion and differentiation are most successful in the context of learning communities where there is a culture of collaboration that encourages and supports problem-solving."

Actions Taken to Communicate the Inclusion and Special Education Needs Policy to Prospective and Current Students and Parents:

All Marvin Ridge High School International Baccalaureate Diploma Program policies and regulations, including the Inclusion/Special Education Needs Policy are included on our school website, referenced in prospective and current parent and student informational meetings about the program, and are communicated through the IB Parent Advisory Board. Our IB Coordinator, IB Counselor and Diploma Program teachers work to communicate directly with students and parents regarding students' needs on an ongoing basis.

The strategies and actions outlined in this policy assist the total staff and IB staff at MRHS in effectively meeting each student's unique needs.

IBO Policies Regarding Inclusive Testing Arrangements

Directly excerpted from the documents *Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures* (2020) and *Access and Inclusion Policy* (2020)

B5.1 Introduction and policy

The IB believes that all candidates must be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard examination conditions and assessment procedures would put candidates at a disadvantage, and would prevent them from being able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately, reasonable forms of access arrangements may be authorized.

Candidates may need access arrangements due to learning support requirements such as:

- learning disabilities
- specific learning difficulties
- communication and speech difficulties
- autism spectrum disorders
- social, emotional and behavioural challenges
- physical and sensory challenges
- medical and mental health difficulties, including temporary medical conditions
- additional language learning.

However, access arrangements are not restricted to students with identified challenges. They should be provided to any student who requires support and where the need can be justified based on the eligibility criteria articulated in the [Access and inclusion policy](#).

You must not inform an examiner about a candidate's personal circumstances, disability, medical condition or learning support need of any kind.

B5.2 Inclusive access arrangements not requiring authorization

Some access arrangements are permitted in examinations at the discretion of the coordinator (or head of school), without prior authorization from the IB. According to the IB Access and Inclusion Policy the following access arrangements do not require authorization:

- 3.1 A candidate is permitted to take an examination in a separate room if it is in the best interests of the candidate or other candidates in the group. All regulations governing the conduct of IB examinations must be observed. The candidate must be kept under the constant supervision of an invigilator.
- 3.2 The coordinator may arrange for appropriate seating to meet the needs of individual candidates.
- 3.3 A care assistant, or if necessary a nurse, may be in attendance if this is required for the welfare or safety of a candidate. The assistant must not be another candidate or a relative of the candidate.
- 3.4 A candidate who normally uses an aid (such as a coloured overlay, coloured filter lenses, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a radio aid, a hearing aid, a visual aid or a magnifying aid) is allowed to use the aid in examinations. This also includes use of buffers such as headsets, earplugs and individual workstations with acoustic screens for candidates

who are hypersensitive to sound. If an individual workstation is employed, all regulations governing the conduct of IB examinations must be observed. The candidate must be kept under the constant supervision of an invigilator.

- 3.5 For a candidate with hearing challenges, a communicator may be used to convey the coordinator's or invigilator's oral instructions without authorization from the IB. A communicator is able to convey information to a candidate through the use of lip-speaking, finger-spelling or sign language. This arrangement must be confined to explaining the conduct of the examination and the instructions in an examination. The communicator must not convey information about any aspect of a question in the paper.
- 3.6 If a candidate has difficulties in reading or attention, examination directions may be clarified by the invigilator or a designated reader. This arrangement must be strictly confined only to clarifying the directions and the instructions and not the content of the questions.
- 3.7 For a candidate who has colour blindness, a designated person is permitted to name colours in an examination. No other form of assistance may be given without authorization from the IB. The designated person must not be a subject teacher, another candidate or relative of the candidate.
- 3.8 A candidate may be permitted rest breaks if required to do so due to medical, physical, psychological or other conditions. The amount of time permitted for rest breaks is not counted towards the duration of the candidate's examination. Rest breaks must be supervised to ensure that the security of the examination is maintained. There must be no communication with, or disturbance to, other candidates. The amount of rest time and number of breaks permitted must be pre-determined and will depend upon the candidate's circumstances, although 10 minutes per hour is the general recommendation. During a rest break, the candidate is not permitted to read, respond to the examination paper or write notes of any kind. Candidates may be allowed to leave the room for all or part of the rest periods.
- 3.9 A candidate may be permitted the use of a prompter due to attention issues, psychological or neurological conditions. A prompter would ensure that a candidate pays attention to the examination. The use of the prompter should not disturb other candidates. The coordinator or invigilator may act as a prompter, but the examination must be conducted according to IB regulations. In all cases, the prompter may only prompt the candidate and not provide any form of assistance. The prompt may be a gentle tap on the candidate's arm or desk/table but should not be given verbally. The prompter must not draw the candidate's attention to any part of the examination paper or script. The prompter should be familiar with the candidate's behaviour so that he or she knows when the candidate is off-task. The candidate should be familiar with the kind of prompt that he or she would likely receive from the prompter. The prompter should be in a position that provides a view of the candidate's disposition rather than his or her work. The candidate should not feel as though he or she is under pressure or scrutiny.

B5.3 Inclusive access arrangements requiring authorization

In addition to the standard list of arrangements, reasonable adjustments that are uniquely planned for a candidate based on individual need can also be considered. All reasonable adjustments will need authorization from the IB. Advice may be sought from the IB for the most suitable reasonable adjustments for a candidate.

If a candidate's learning support requirement is moderate to severe, deferring one or more subjects to a future examination session may be supportive and improve access to the assessment. In these circumstances, a split examination session can be requested.

A split session is when assessment of one or more subjects is deferred to a future examination session to improve a candidate's access to assessment.

According to the IB Access and Inclusion Policy the following access arrangements do require authorization:

- 4.1 Access to modification in the presentation of the examination. Candidates with visual challenges or specific learning challenges may require modified presentation of the examinations. Candidates with total vision impairment may also need questions adapted for accessibility (without changing the learning outcome).
- 4.2 Access to additional time (see specific details policies related to this need and about how additional time is determined in the Access and Inclusion Policy)
- 4.3 Access to writing
 - 4.3.1 Candidates may require access arrangements to provide written responses. Difficulties in writing may arise due to specific learning challenges, visual challenges, visual processing challenges, fine motor challenges, attention challenges or other psychological or medical challenges.
 - 4.3.2-12: Access to graphic organizers
 - 4.3.13-23: Access to a scribe
 - 4.3.24-38: Access to a word processor and/or spellchecker
 - 4.3.39: Access to speech recognition software
 - 4.3.40-51: Access to transcriptions
- 4.4 Access to reading
 - 4.4.1-17: Access to various types of read aloud
- 4.5 Access to speech and communication
 - 4.5.1: Access to sign language interpreters
 - 4.5.2: Access to augmentative communication devices
- 4.6 Access to practice assistance: A candidate with a physical, sensory or medical challenge may require access to a practical assistant for tasks that require physical manipulation or movement.
- 4.7 Access to calculators
- 4.8 Access to extensions to deadlines
- 4.9 Access to deferral of external assessment
- 4.10 Additional opportunities to retake exams
- 4.11 Access to alternative venues

Access for additional language learners

Additional language learners are candidates whose current course of study and assessment is delivered in a language that is not their first, best or native language and whose language ability is below the level that is deemed linguistically competent. These students are also able to qualify for inclusive assessment arrangements such as extended time, use of a word processor, access to reading software or translating dictionaries.

Request for IB Inclusive Testing Arrangements

If your child has special learning needs, you should communicate these needs to the IB Diploma Coordinator as soon as possible, ideally before Year 1 begins so that all IB teachers can be prepared to meet your child's needs. The IB Diploma Coordinator will also need to initiate the process to apply for any necessary testing accommodations your child may need during internal IB assessments that

will take place over the two-year period and IB exams that will take place in May of Year 2. The application for testing accommodations typically takes place in Year 1 unless a student's special learning needs arise during the course of the program. The request for inclusive testing arrangements must take place at least 6 months prior to IB exams (November 15).

To qualify for official testing accommodations for IB exams the following requirements must be met:

- The student must be regularly monitored and evaluated
- Teachers must be able to provide observations and work samples
- The student must have an IEP, 504, health plan, or other special education plan
- The teacher must communicate with learning support team that oversees the student's progress (504 coordinator, EC case manager, MTSS intervention team)
- Accommodations must be based on student's precise requirements
- Teachers must be able to prove a history of need and evidence of need for access

To complete the application process, the following documentation must be submitted by the IB Diploma Program Coordinator to IBO:

- Classification of the student's need
- Assessment need
- Psychological evaluation (or documentation from medical professional that directly addresses assessment need)
- Additional piece of evidence (IEP, work sample, teacher statement)
- Parental permission to share information with IBO

Program, School, and District Responsibilities

- Create local policies and practices in accordance with federal and state policies that ensure that all children have access to learning.
- Ensure that teachers are effectively trained in strategies for differentiation in addition to policies and practices for meeting the needs of diverse learners.
- Communicate policies and practices with all stakeholders.
- Apply for inclusive testing arrangements on behalf of the student
- Protect the confidentiality of all students.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Design and communicate learning expectations to students and assessments will be based on these learning expectations.
- Monitor students' use of classroom and assessment accommodations to prove a history of need.
- Identify students who are struggling and refer them to the appropriate intervention team.
- Protect the confidentiality of all students.

Student Responsibilities

- Communicate learning needs to teachers and advocate for accommodations when needed.
- Communicate to IB DP Coordinator, guidance counselor, or other team members if you are struggling or if your needs are not being met.

- Take responsibility for and manage their own learning while engaging with course material more deeply and demonstrating a clear focus on learning and collaboration.

Parents Responsibilities

- Make sure the school is aware of any special learning needs your child may have.
- Provide documentation when necessary to help students qualify for special services and accommodations.
- State clear expectations for their child in regards to learning and assessment.
- Keep the school informed of any changes in the student's life that might affect his/her progress in school.
- Attend parent meetings or access online materials to stay informed about assessment practices and policies.

**This policy was most recently revised in 2025 by reviewing policies released by IBO, NC, and Union County Public Schools with the input of the IB staff, IB DP coordinator, school administration, and EC staff. It is revised regularly to reflect changes in policy and practice. The policy is shared with families upon entry in the program and is available to the community on the MRHS IB website.*