

**Riverdale High School**

**International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme**

**Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy  
2014-2015**



## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to

1. Communicate to all stakeholders in our IB community – administrators, teachers, students, and parents – the programmatic expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all learners as required by IB.
2. Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practice in the context of the Diploma Programme at Riverdale High School.
3. Establish clear responsibilities of all stakeholders.
4. Outline the various accommodations and support opportunities that are available to students and teachers

*This document draws its authority from the IBO Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Program (2012), Programme Standards and Practices (2005), Candidates with Special Assessment Needs (2009), The Diploma Program: A Basis for Practice (2009), The Diploma Program: From Principles to Practice (2009), and the IB Online Curriculum Center online publications and resources. It was created in collaboration by teachers and administrators.*

## IB LEARNER PROFILE

**Inquirers** - They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable** - They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

**Thinkers** - They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators** - They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

**Principled** - They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

**Open-minded** - They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring** - They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**Risk-takers** - They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

**Balanced** - They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

**Reflective** - They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Riverdale seeks to serve students with a range of programs designed to meet individual needs. Our mission is to challenge all students to strive for the best, to become life-long learners, and to become successful, active members of the global community.

Riverdale High School supports the IB philosophy that *“all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible.”* To that end, Riverdale High School offers an array of accommodations for students found eligible to receive services. These individual needs may include but are not limited to specific learning disabilities, communication and speech difficulties, social, emotional and behavioral difficulties, physical challenges, medical challenges or multiple disabilities. Any faculty member can identify a student for evaluation and assessment. The identification of students who are eligible for special education is a carefully managed process, guided by state and federal regulations. Evaluations required to make this determination are completed at the expense of the school system and only with parent permission. Teachers and parents are part of the team that evaluates students in need of services. An individual education plan (IEP) is developed for each student found eligible for services. This plan is reviewed at least annually.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

All students experiencing academic and/or behavior difficulties may not have a disability or require special education to meet their individual educational needs. In many cases, modifications to the regular education program will address a student's particular needs without resorting to evaluations or special education services. At Riverdale High School, the Inclusion Committee (IC) is a formal collaborative process that is designed to help promote students' success in the regular education classroom. Intervention strategies such as alternative or modified learning instruction and behavior management techniques may be developed to:

- improve the student's academic performance
- improve the student's behavior, or
- improve and refine teaching skills so that the classroom teacher is able to teach students with diverse educational needs.

### **Inclusion Committee Purpose**

The written intervention plan developed for the student will be implemented by the classroom teacher, the parent in collaboration with teacher, the classroom teacher in collaboration with consultation by persons with a particular expertise, or consultative staff alone.

The IC carries out the following activities:

- Review problem areas
- Document difficulties
- Utilize informal methods to document
- Recommend specific in-school accommodations (differentiation)
- Recommend school based resources (i.e. Counseling, Reading Specialist, etc.)
- Monitor students' progress and effectiveness of interventions
- Develop monitoring system
- Involve parents as participants
- Provide parents with clear information and feedback
- Provide feedback to administrators regarding school resource needs
- Develop intervention plans
- Refer to student study if necessary

## **Benefits of IC**

Some of the benefits of the IC process:

- Collaborative problem-solving approach
- Promotes strength-based approach
- Reduces labeling
- Addresses a need without evaluations
- Provides academic/behavioral supports in least restrictive environment
- Provides support to teachers
- Improves and refines teaching skills to teach students with diverse needs
- Prevents over-referral to special education

## **Who Should Be Referred?**

School staff should consider an IC referral for any student who is:

- Experiencing academic and/or behavioral problems
- Risk of not being promoted
- Risk of being referred to Student Study Committee
- Absent frequently
- Planning to drop-out
- Demonstrating negative changes in behavior after illness or accident

## **Special Arrangements**

Any student that has either an IEP or a 504 plan is automatically eligible to apply for special arrangements with the IB to assist the candidate during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations. In November of each year, after the IB exam registration period has ended, the IB Coordinator requests a list of all special needs and 504 students from the Riverdale High School Special Education Department. The IB Coordinator automatically files a D1 form with the IB for any student with special needs that is enrolled in an IB course. Once the IB Coordinator learns of the decision of the IB, the student, parents, and teachers involved will be informed. Special arrangements may include:

- Additional time
- Rest periods
- Word processor
- Scribe
- Readers

- Communicators
- Prompters
- Modifications to examination papers or assignments
- Transcriptions
- Extensions to deadlines
- Assistance with practical work
- Exemption from one or more assessment components
- Other arrangement as recommend by committee recommendation and approved by IB

Riverdale High School encourages all students to come forward if they experience any adverse circumstances. The IB Coordinator will file a D2 form with the IB as necessary.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF**

Riverdale High School firmly believes that inspiring and informed teaching is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. To that end, Riverdale High School is committed to financially supporting ongoing professional development for all instructional staff. Teachers are actively encouraged to attend a wide range of workshops including Learner Profile, Special Needs, and Developing Strategies that Promote and Support Diverse Learners in the DP.

### **RESOURCES FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF**

The Riverdale High School Special Education Department faculty provide technical assistance to staff and parents. Additionally, there are three Assistant Principals with extensive classroom and administrative expertise in the area of special needs. The counseling department has counselors to help students with special needs.

#### ***\*Special Needs Policy Review***

*This policy is evaluated every year by the Pedagogical Leadership Team. It is the responsibility of the IB Coordinator to ensure the success of the Special Education Needs Policy review.*