

International Baccalaureate Diploma Special Needs Policy

Holy Heart of Mary High School

Philosophy

Holy Heart of Mary High School recognizes and endorses the International Baccalaureate's philosophy of making an IB education inclusive and accessible. Holy Heart of Mary also acknowledges the academic rigor of the program and the importance of encouraging students to pursue the full diploma. The school asserts that barriers to student participation can be minimized as teachers strive to meet the educational needs of a diverse population by utilizing a variety of teaching and learning strategies as well as accommodations for assessment.

The Newfoundland and Labrador provincial Department of Education promotes an inclusive education in all K to 12 schools in the province. This policy adheres to the principles directed within the province and provides specific accommodations for candidates as permitted by principles espoused by the International Baccalaureate Organization (see Appendix A).

IB Candidate Special Needs Accommodations

At Holy Heart of Mary High School students are immersed in an inclusive environment in which a delivery model of services focusing on reasonable, non-intrusive accommodations is provided to students who have documented exceptionalities. A collaborative planning structure is employed to make the most effective use of resources and learning opportunities. The student, parents, instructional resource teacher (formerly referred to as student support teachers), guidance counselors, school administrators, IB Coordinator, and subject teachers (hereafter referred to as the team) form a collaborative approach to deliver appropriate programming and accommodations. These accommodations are quantified via medical documentation or a comprehensive psycho-educational assessment diagnosing a specific learning disability.

Members of Holy Heart of Mary's teaching staff and all members of the team, who are directly involved with the student maintain confidentiality with regards to the student's special needs and accommodations. Special accommodations and differentiated instruction are provided within the regular classroom, as necessary, to ensure the student with special needs avails of the standards of assessment consistently applied to all IB candidates. A supervised alternate setting is provided within the school for use as needed by the student.

Delivery of Services

At the time of admission to Holy Heart of Mary, a student with special needs is assigned to an instructional resource teacher (IRT, a special education trained teacher) who becomes the student's case manager; educational and relevant information is provided directly from the feeder school special services team; the student's cumulative and confidential records are reviewed; discussions are held between the IRT, student, parent and guidance counselor to review the individual case and implications regarding academic, social, and post-secondary planning; and individual meetings are conducted with the student, parent and school team. Early in the school year, the IRT informs subject teachers of instructional and assessment accommodations required for the student; has frequent contact with the student; monitors supports in class instruction and assessment, as required; and ensures any additional required supports outside of regular classroom are provided, e.g., student tutoring, direct instruction, credit recovery, social skill development, speech language services, sign language interpreters, outside agency support, parental contact, access to assistive technology, etc. Subject teachers provide the student with accommodations i.e., extended time on tests and assignments and any modifications to materials and instructional practices. The subject teacher conveys any concerns to the student, parents, IRT and/or guidance counselor. The student's case manager (IRT) conducts an annual review, or more frequently as based on the student's individual needs, and evaluation of student supports and progress with relevant team members.

Accommodations for Assessment

Team members complete a formal IBO request for special accommodations arrangements for a candidate. This request (Form D1) is then submitted, by the IB Diploma Coordinator, to the IBO at least 12 months prior to the student writing the IB final exam(s). Supporting documentation, such as a medical certificate or a psycho-educational report, must accompany this request. When the IB Diploma Coordinator is informed of IBO's decision she conveys this information to team members.

Diploma Programme Candidates with Special Assessment Needs (2007) document outlines the characteristics of students who may require special assessment arrangements due to one or more of the following:

- Specific learning issues, language and communication disorders
 - Significant issues in reading, writing, spelling or manipulating numbers associated with issues in processing symbolic language (for example, problems interpreting music notation, dyslexia, dyscalculia).
 - Speech and language issues characterized by communication problems (for example, aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems).
- Social, emotional and behavioural issues
 - Includes: attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); autistic spectrum disorders; withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessive preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance abuse; disruptive antisocial and uncooperative behaviour; and anger, frustration and violence.
- Physical and sensory conditions
 - Physical disabilities include a wide range of conditions that are not always immediately obvious, but affect mobility.
 - Sensory issues: hearing – embraces an extensive range of hearing loss from mild to profound and can present communication difficulties; visual – includes difficulties with either the structure or function of the eye, affecting vision.
- Medical conditions
 - The most common being: congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, renal failure, eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia and other cancers.
- Mental health issues
 - A wide range of conditions that can affect a person's state of mind, ranging from psychotic conditions, such as schizophrenia and manic depression, to eating disorders, anxieties and emotional distress caused by circumstances in a candidate's life.

The following is a list of accommodation arrangements that maybe granted once IB0 has reviewed the required documentation:

- Additional time – usually 25% more time is allowed for the candidate, which gives them 15 extra minutes for every hour of exam time.
- Rest periods – supervised rest time maybe allowed, during which time the candidate is not allowed to work on their exam.
- Information and communication technology – a computer could be used to type the answers to the exam instead of hand writing the answers. The student cannot use any software that would the candidate an unfair advantage during the exam. Voice-activated technology or augmentative speech equipment can be requested when this has been the candidate’s normal way of working in the school.
- Scribes – a person who writes down dictated answers from the candidate.
- Readers – a person who reads allowed the questions to the candidate and can also read back answers the candidate has provided. The reader cannot explain a question or give advice on how to answer the question.
- Communicators – a person who is able to convey information to a candidate with a hearing impairment, through the use of lip-speaking, finger-spelling or sign language.
- Prompters – a person who ensures that a candidate is paying attention to the examination. This would normally be authorized for candidates diagnosed as having a neurological or cognitive disability resulting from a severe attention problem.
- Modifications to examination papers – normally made for candidates with hearing or visual issues, such as providing an exam in Braille, enlarged print, printing on colored paper, modifications to the visual complexity of the exam or modifications to the language of the exam paper.
- Audio recordings on examination papers – the IB may provide an exam paper on a CD. This is a limited service and is not available for exams with illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketch maps.
- Audio recordings of responses to examination papers – The candidate dictates answers into an appropriate recording technology. This is used when a scribe is not available and cannot be used for examinations in Groups 1 and 2 or with examinations that require the candidate to produce visual material such as an illustration, table, diagram or sketch map.
- Transcriptions – A candidate’s response to an assessment component is submitted in a form other than the candidate’s own handwriting. Transcription is justified when a candidate with a specific learning issue, or a physical disability, has very poor handwriting skills and cannot use a computer. Transcription is not available to candidates with poor handwriting for whom some form of special need cannot be diagnosed.
- Alternative venues for examinations – if a candidate is too ill to attend school, but on medical advice is able to take the examinations at home or in hospital, authorization may be given for the examination to be taken at an alternative venue. In principle, the examination should be taken at the same time as other candidates in the group. A qualified invigilator must be present.
- Extensions to deadlines – this arrangement applies to cases of illness or accident when a candidate is genuinely prevented from completing work in time for the coordinator to submit the work to the examiner.

- Assistance with practical work – if a candidate has a physical disability, assistance with practical work can be requested. This arrangement is normally confined to the requirements of internal assessment (for example, practical work in experimental science or geography fieldwork). It is particularly suited to situations where there is a concern for a candidate’s health or safety.
- Exemptions from assessments – exemptions are not normally granted for any assessment component of the Diploma Program. However, if an assessment component or part demands a physiological function that a candidate is not able to perform, an exemption may be authorized.

Resources

Department of Education Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2011), *Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities*

International Baccalaureate Organization (March 2007), *Candidates with Special Assessment Needs*, Cardiff: IBO.

International Baccalaureate Organization (August 2010), *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes*, Cardiff: IBO.

Note:

Acknowledged as a working document, Holy Heart of Mary’s IB Diploma Program Special Needs Policy is reviewed annually by members of the faculty, IB coordinator, administration, and guidance department. Within this context, avenues are explored for professional development that provide a heightened teacher understanding of processes that address students’ differentiated learning and instructional needs. A recent example of professional development that promoted this awareness was a full day in-service for all teaching staff entitled, “Helping Struggling Students Succeed”.

The special needs policies for various schools available online were viewed and it was concluded that in many cases we concurred with their phrasing of some policy components.

Holy Heart of Mary’s IB Diploma Program Special Needs Policy is available on the school’s website.

Appendix A

All special arrangements that may be authorized by the IB are based on the following principles as found in *Candidates with Special Needs*, pages 4-5.

1.1 The IB must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates, regardless of whether or not they have special needs.

1.2 Special arrangements are intended to reduce the adverse effects of a candidate's special needs when demonstrating his or her level of attainment. The special arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component.

1.3 The special arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the intellectual capacity to meet all assessment requirements leading to the award of the diploma or certificates.

1.4 The school, not the IB, is responsible for establishing whether the Diploma Programme can be taught and assessed. Advice may be sought from IB Cardiff (sen@ibo.org) before a school accepts a student with special needs; however, this advice is restricted to the implications for internal and external assessment and does not extend to teaching methods and resources.

1.5 If it can be demonstrated that a candidate's lack of proficiency in his or her response language(s) (English, French or Spanish) arises from a diagnosed need, special arrangements may be authorized. (For subjects in groups 3 to 6, all candidates are allowed to use a translating dictionary in the written examinations.)

1.6 The IB aims to authorize special arrangements that are compatible with those normally available to the candidate concerned. However, authorization will only be given for arrangements that are consistent with the policy and practice of the IB. It should not be assumed that the IB will necessarily agree to the arrangements requested by a school. Coordinators are required to provide information on both the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom and under assessment conditions.

1.7 The IB is committed to an educational philosophy based on international mindedness. Therefore, the special assessment needs policy of the IB may not reflect the standard practice of any one country. To achieve equity among candidates with special assessment needs, the policy represents the result of a consideration of accepted practice in different countries.

1.8 The IB will ensure that, wherever possible, arrangements for candidates with a similar type of need are the same. Given that cultural differences occur in the recognition of learning issues and the accommodations allowed, some compromise may be necessary to help ensure comparability between candidates in different countries.

1.9 If special assessment arrangements are necessary for a candidate, consultation with the IB is mandatory. Similarly, if a [Middle Years Program] or Diploma Programme candidate has difficulties meeting the requirements for creativity, action, service (CAS), the appropriate IB regional office must be consulted. Any exceptions are stated in this document. However, a school may provide any kind of special arrangement for a candidate during his or her study of the Middle Years Program assessments or Diploma Programme or trial (practice) examinations.

1.10 A school must not inform an examiner of a candidate's condition or adverse circumstance. Similarly, in the case of internally assessed work, teachers must not make any adjustments when marking a candidate's work. If appropriate, the IB will ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered.

1.11 The IB treats all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB personnel and members of the final award committee, who will be instructed to treat such information as confidential.

1.12 If special arrangements are authorized for internal assessment, the IB may require the candidate's work to be submitted to IB Cardiff for scrutiny.