

# St Anthony Academy

## Special Needs Policy

### The purpose of this document is to:

- Communicate to all stakeholders; administrators, teachers, students, and parents – the programmatic expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all learners
- Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practices
- Establish clear responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Outline the various accommodations and support opportunities that are available to students and teachers.

**All students at St. Anthony are considered IB Learners including those with special needs. The following Learner attributes apply to all...**

### IB learners strive to be:

**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.

## **Identification**

The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) requires that all public schools provide school-age students with an education in the least restrictive environment, as aligned with International Baccalaureate philosophy. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed for each student who is found to be eligible under both the federal and state eligibility/disability standards, which specifies the services to be provided and how often; the student's present levels of performance and how the student's disabilities affect academic performance, and specifies accommodations as well as modifications to be provided for the student

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 St Anthony Academy (SAA), the Student Support Team (SST) is an informal collaborative process that is designed to help promote students' success in the regular education classroom. Intervention strategies such as small group, one on one, accommodations, scientific based instruction, grouping, and possible referral for evaluation.

These strategies are used to:

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

## **Response to Intervention Learning Support**

All students begin their educational experience in the traditional classroom setting. If a student is not responding sufficiently to classroom instructional strategies, support procedures shall be implemented as follows:

- A child shall be identified by the teacher, parent, or concerned staff member.
- Student information shall then be submitted to the Student Support Team (SST) and to the Special Education Coordinator
- The SST, in conjunction with the Special Education Coordinator, shall provide recommended interventions for the classroom teacher to implement over a period of a few weeks.
- The classroom teacher shall then reconvene with the SST to report on the student's progress.
- Additional targeted interventions shall then be implemented for the student, as deemed appropriate.
- The classroom teacher shall then again reconvene with the SST to report on student progress.
- If necessary, further psycho-educational testing shall be sought for the student.
- If necessary, an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 plan, or student support contract, shall then be designed and implemented for the student.

**Professional Development for Instructional Staff**

SAA firmly believes that inspiring and informed teaching is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. To that end, SAA is committed to financially supporting ongoing professional development for all instructional staff. Teachers are actively encouraged to attend a wide range of workshops to promote and support diverse learning.

**Resources for Parents, Students and Instructional Staff**

The SAA Special Education Department has 2 full-time Special Education teachers and a/504 coordinator as well as trained teacher assistants who can provide support to staff and parents.

**Special Needs Policy Review**

This policy is evaluated every year by the IB Coordinator and the Special Education Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the Principal/IB Coordinator to ensure the success of review of the Special Needs Policy.