



Archbishop MacDonald High School

Inclusive Education Policy

Updated December 2023

Purpose:

1. Identifies the legal requirements for inclusion and outlines the structures and processes to access support.
2. Articulates the rights and responsibilities of the school community.

Rationale

The Inclusive Education Policy is intended to:

- Provide a faith-based education to all students in our school that is designed to increase access and engagement in learning by removing barriers.
- Address fairness and equal access by considering human rights, diversity, equity, and quality.
- Use a balanced approach to assessment (formative, summative) to provide equitable educational opportunities in learning and teaching.
- Create and implement individualized program plans (IPPs) or accommodations for any student who requires support.
- Implement a whole-school approach to create welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that support diversity where required due to issues and challenges for students such as:
 - Language, ability, emotional and mental wellness, economic deprivation, gender and sexual identity, ethnicity, medical issues, impairments and/or other long-term challenges
- Educating staff on mental health issues and reducing barriers.
- Inform teachers of best practices in working with students who require specialized supports.

School Philosophy

We recognize that students come from a variety of backgrounds, and that each student has different learning strengths, challenges, styles, and levels of life experiences. It is the responsibility of each staff member to remove barriers that impede students' learning. Multiple teaching strategies are executed to differentiate instruction and assessment to make learning accessible to all. Our staff is committed to refining their understanding and implementation of inclusive strategies to support all learners. The implementation of these strategies is seen in every classroom through various tools, strategies, and accommodations.

Differentiation and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

In a universally designed learning environment, teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to understand content, express their knowledge and engage in learning. The 'multiple means' approach allows all students to engage in a variety of activities to capture their agency, learning needs, learning styles and personal preferences.

- multiple Means of Representation (present information and content in different ways).
- multiple Means of Action and Expression (differentiate the ways that students can express what they know).
- multiple Means of Engagement (stimulate interest and motivation for learning).

UDL makes use of educational technologies to focus on learning rather than on content, and works in a flexible and fluid manner to eliminate the barriers to learning.

Flexible and responsive supports include:

- universal supports – incorporated into the environment for all learners, such as flexible learning resources and technologies, differentiated instruction and positive behavior supports.
- targeted strategies or interventions – for learners who need more specialized learning opportunities or access to more specialized expertise.
- specialized/Individualized supports – that directly relate to individual learning needs such as the use of sign language interpreters, alternative and augmentative communication systems (ACC), or mental health support.

Requirements for Inclusive Education

Edmonton Catholic Schools: Administrative Procedure 213

As a faith community, the Division welcomes all students. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of and belonging for all children and students. Educational practices that are flexible and responsive to the strengths and needs of individual students can create inclusive learning experiences that ensure all students are successful. For our students, flexible learning environments include instruction and support in a grade level classroom with same-aged peers; individualized instruction in smaller group settings; a specialized classroom or setting; one-on-one instruction; a program of choice; or a combination of these learning environments. Parents and – where appropriate – students, are to have meaningful participation in the education decisions regarding placement and program.

Alberta Education: Inclusive Education

Alberta's education system is built on a values-based approach to accepting responsibility for all children and students. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of, and belonging for, all children and students.

To support children and students in attaining the goals as stated in the Ministerial Order on Student Learning, school authorities must ensure that all children and students (Kindergarten to Grade 12), regardless of race, religious belief, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, or any other factor(s), have access to meaningful and relevant learning experiences that include appropriate instructional supports.

International Baccalaureate: Learning diversity and inclusion in IB Programmes

Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community. Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusive access arrangements provided for a student must be:

- individualized, evaluated, and monitored.
- applied throughout the course of study.
- reflect the optimal support that the student requires.
- based on current, not past, requirements
- drawn from teacher observations in the classroom.
- considered in line with the eligibility criteria for inclusive access arrangements in this policy.
- strictly based on individual requirements (and not provided as a standard to all students with learning support requirements in the school/classroom).

Rights and Responsibilities for Inclusive Education

School Rights and Responsibilities

- Ensure programming meets the needs of all students.
- Provide opportunities for differentiated instruction and assessments.
- Be flexible and compassionate in working with students to provide opportunities for success.
- Encourage collaboration of all members of the school community to meet the needs of students.
- Collect information and identify the strengths and needs of diverse students, determine supports and specialized services needed and consult parents/guardians on educational programming.
- Coordinate, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) with teachers, students and parents.
- Ensure IPPs are supported with required documentation including specialized assessment data, identified specialized supports and services, current levels of performance, strengths and areas of need, goals and evaluation procedures, progress reporting, required classroom accommodations, relevant medical information, transition plans & year end summaries. All IPPs must be signed by parents/guardians to indicate informed consent.
- Parents/guardians have the right to appeal educational decisions regarding their child.

Student Services Team Rights and Responsibilities

Includes: Learning Coach, Graduation Coach, School Counsellor, Counselling Therapist, Mental Health Therapist (partnered with Alberta Health Services), Truth and Reconciliation Coordinator, Family School Liaison Worker, Educational Assistants

Learning Coach

A learning coach is a teacher who is committed to ensuring success for every student. School-based learning coaches are provided training to better understand the diverse learning needs of students.

They identify, model, and share varied instructional strategies, resources, and tools with teachers. This role focuses on the success of all students by supporting teachers and students in creating and sustaining inclusive educational environments. The learning coach works very closely with teachers, educational assistants, parents, and administrators to support the success of all students.

Graduation Coach

The Graduation Coach is to ensure the successful transition of all students from high school into post-secondary education or workplace environments. The High School Graduation Coach provides additional support and works with students to ensure academic and social success as well as to ensure all students can complete high school with a Diploma or Certificate of Achievement.

School Counsellor

The School Counsellor supports students with social/emotional, academic, and post-secondary-vocational needs. Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Assessments (KBit/WFAS)
- Applications to post-secondary
- Crisis intervention (Suicide Risk assessments, coordinating Risk Team)
- Coordinating the Student Services Team (referrals, wrap around supports)
- Communicating with staff and parents when appropriate to support struggling students, with academic and/or mental health concerns
- Providing professional development to the staff about current mental health issues

Counselling Therapist

Counselling Therapists in Edmonton Catholic Schools are Certified Canadian Counsellors. Counselling Therapists evaluate and address the mental health needs of students including assessing students for suicide risk and developing safety plans. Counselling Therapists use their theoretical knowledge and understanding to intervene for student success by providing counselling therapy in individual and group settings and supporting student participation in their educational programming. Counselling Therapists assist school staff, parents and families through consultation and collaboration by liaising closely with the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) and parents/guardians. In addition, Counselling therapists develop and deliver information sessions for groups of students, staff, and parents on various mental health topics.

Mental Health Therapist

The Mental Health Therapist is affiliated with Alberta Health Services. The MHT provides mental health assessments, mental health therapy – short or long term, 1 hour weekly or bi-weekly sessions with 4-5 students daily, consultation with teachers/admin/staff/parents to provide general and specific mental health guidance, pre-referral conversations with staff to assess suitability of referral, review referrals and assess needs which can include referrals to outside services, such as psychiatry, community services, or in-patient treatment.

The Mental Health Therapist will liaise with FSLW/counsellors/teachers and other involved parties. In times of crisis, the MHT will provide suicide assessment and act as Intervention Lead: which looks at risk assessment and safety planning – including communication with parents, CFS, family doctor, etc. and all documentation of all services provided in student's online medical record through AHS.

Family School Liaison Worker (FSLW)

Family School Liaison Social Workers assists students and their families, by offering a range of services that support the academic, behavioral, social and emotional growth of students and families. Some of these services include non-therapeutic counselling, connecting with community resources, providing crisis intervention and prevention, liaising between schools and families to facilitate increased positive contact through communication and understanding of individual student needs and circumstances.

Truth and Reconciliation Coordinator

The Truth and Reconciliation Coordinator plays a significant role in moving reconciliation forward. In keeping with the goals of supporting culture and learning, the TRC works with the Division Indigenous Curriculum Consultants to support teachers to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to infuse Indigenous perspectives into all curriculums.

Educational Assistant (EA)

Under the direction of a teacher, support staff may work directly with students individually or in small groups to deliver activities that reinforce and advance the educational program. They also provide teachers with advice and suggestions. For example, they may assess how well students are functioning, observe and document behaviors as students participate in learning activities and, where appropriate, help plan the educational program. Together with teachers, educational assistants enrich the educational program by helping students gain the knowledge and skills they need to function in the classroom, the school, and larger community.

Additional Services Available to our School/Students through ECSD

- Inclusive Education Consultant
- Managers of Indigenous Services
- Our Lady of Grace Program for Pregnant and Parenting Teens
- Crisis Intervention Team

Students Rights and Responsibilities

- Access support and programming that is flexible and responsive in meeting their needs.
- Accurately represent their situations when accessing support.
- Communicate their needs with parents/guardians.
- Right to appeal, withdraw or deny services and/or educational programming.
- Receive supports and accommodations outlined in their IPP throughout the school year.

- Coordinate, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) with teachers, students and parents.

Parents and Legal Guardians Responsibilities:

- Provide consent for referrals and access to supports for their child.
- Meet with the school and sign documentation regarding supports and/or educational programming for their child.
- All IPPs must be signed by parents/guardians to indicate informed consent.
- Parents/guardians have the right to appeal, deny or withdraw services and/or educational programming decisions regarding their child.
- Coordinate, develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) with teachers, students, and parents.

Procedures for Requesting Inclusive Access, Accommodations or Supports

Long Term/Chronic Diagnosis requiring supports and/or accommodations:

Access to supports and services:

- by referral from a teacher or another member of the school learning services team
- student and/or parent request
- IPP must be put in place to document the educational plan.
- Specialized assessment data and relevant medical information must be included to access supports and services for funding.
- Supports are implemented for both coursework and exams, including Diploma Exams and all Division Common Assessments.
- IB students on a current IPP can request access to accommodations for their IB courses and exams. The IB coordinator will work with the Learning Coach to ensure required documentation is available to determine requests for inclusive access. All requests must be approved by IB and are subject to review. Parent/guardian consent is required.

Temporary/Short Term Diagnosis and Concerns requiring supports and/or accommodations:

Students dealing with changing needs such as medical or mental health concerns are provided with responsive and flexible approaches to accommodate their needs. Access to services in these cases:

- By referral or request based on needs
- The Learning Services Team works collaboratively with the school, students and parents to provide support based on need (academic and/or mental health) to set up educational programming.
- IB students whose needs change throughout the school year can request special approval for accommodations or deferral of IB exams. Approval of any changes to exam conditions must be approved by IB and is submitted by the IB Coordinator.

Policy Review Process

A committee comprised of IB Coordinator, Learning Services Educational Support Team and school administrators are responsible for updating the current policy annually and reporting back

to the IB faculty and school community. Additionally, the committee is responsible for providing professional development to the school community on the implementation of good practices that foster a culture of inclusion.

This policy was reviewed, amended and updated on the 10th of December 2023, by Jennifer Vandendooren and Kary LaPlante.

References

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