



Joel C. Harris Middle School

Special Education Needs Policy

Philosophy

Joel C. Harris Middle School and the IB MYP recognize that students come from a variety of cultures and backgrounds and have a wide range of academic, emotional, physical, and other needs. Examples of these special needs include the following:

- specific learning and intellectual disabilities
- language and communication disorders, including autism spectrum disorders
- emotional and behavioral difficulties
- physical difficulties affecting mobility
- sensory impairments
- medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy, and diabetes)
- other health impairments (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and anxiety)
- gifted and talented

Although the MYP can be rigorous and challenging for many students, this does not preclude the admittance of students with special needs in accordance with federal law. We acknowledge that students acquire knowledge and skills through different means and at different rates. We believe that all students are capable of learning. The Harris staff is committed to working with children who have disabilities or other needs and use the following two strategies to facilitate student success:

Inclusion – Joel C. Harris Middle School provides specialized, comprehensive services for eligible students in the areas of special education instruction and related services. Instructional support is provided in the least restrictive setting for students eligible for services, with the continuum of instructional settings ranging from a general education classroom setting to the specialized one. Harris espouses the inclusive model of support that allows most students to remain in the general education classroom setting, with varying levels of special education support and services. To ensure all students have equal access to the curriculum and are successful, teachers recognize the need to be purposeful when planning instruction for students with special needs.

Differentiation - All teachers design learning experiences using modified MYP objectives/assessment criteria that allow students, including those who have special-educational needs, to meet the rigorous standards of the IB MYP. Teachers provide all students with opportunities to achieve these goals through carefully constructed differentiated teaching strategies and activities as well as modified MYP objectives and assessment criteria. Differentiated instruction is the practice of modifying and adapting teaching practices, content, student activities, and assessments to meet the learning

needs of individual students. When differentiating instruction, teachers consider the following four areas:

- **Content** - Multiple options for taking in information
- **Process** - Multiple options for making sense of the ideas
- **Product** - Multiple options for expressing what they know
- **Environment** - Multiple arrangements and settings to foster engagement and relevance

Response to Intervention

Harris teachers have been trained in and adhere to the Response to Intervention (RtI) process that provides intervention and educational support to all students at increasing levels of intensity based on their individual needs. The goal is to prevent problems and intervene early so that all students can be successful. Improvement for delivery of services to students with disabilities is an ongoing process.

Section 504

Any student who is not eligible for special education services may otherwise be eligible for certain accommodations and/or modifications under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Requests for Section 504 accommodations or modifications should be made to a counselor. Parental consent is not required to provide needed modifications or accommodations in this program.

ARD (Admission, Review, Dismissal and IEP (Individual Education Plan))

Special Education teachers will send an Electronic Records Folder (ERF) of student's IEPs, Accommodation and Modifications, and/or a BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan) as needed to all teachers and administrative staff members that work with students. This will be done at the beginning of the school year and after every annual ARD.

All teachers and/or administrative staff members will be required to read the IEPs of all their special education students will be responsible for implementation of accommodations/modifications and BIP as needed.

Eligibility Categories

AI: Auditory Impaired

AU: Autism

DB: Deaf-Blindness

ED: Emotionally Disturbed

ID: Intellectual Disability

LD: Specific Learning Disability

MD: Multiple Disabilities

OHI: Other Health Impaired

OI: Orthopedically Impaired

SI: Speech Impaired

TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury

VI: Visually Impaired

Documentation of Services

Harris documents compliance with local, state, and federal special education guidelines and policies on a continual basis. An assistant administrator and special-education chairperson oversee the implementation of the school's special education program. All information regarding student performance and progress are contained in the students' personal cumulative folder. Access to these confidential folders are on a strictly "need to know" basis. The students' parents attend annual meetings with teachers and other personnel to ensure educational plans meets the specific needs of each learner.

School and District Support Staff and Related Services Personnel Providing Special Education Services at Harris

- Special-Education chairperson
- Inclusion teachers and paraprofessionals
- Gifted-and-talented trained teachers (30 hours initially with 6-hour annual updates)
- Counselor
- Speech therapist
- Occupational and physical therapists
- Orientation and Mobility
- Music Therapy
- Adaptive P.E
- Transportation
- Music Therapy

Commonly used Acronyms:

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder

ADHD: Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity

ACE: Alternate Curriculum Environment (Previously Lifestrides and TLC)

APE: Adaptive Physical Education

ARD: Admission, Review, and Dismissal

AT: Assistive/Adaptive Technology

BIP: Behavior Intervention Program

CBI: Community-Based Instruction

CP: Cerebral Palsy

CPI: Crisis Prevention Intervention

DPH: Due Process Hearing

ESL: English as a Second Language

ERF: Electronics Records Folder

ESY: Extended School Year

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education

HLS: Home Language Survey

IA: Instructional Assistant

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP: Individualized Education Program

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

LEP: Limited English Proficient

LPAC: Language Proficiency Assessment Committee

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment

MHA: Mental Health Authority

ODD: Oppositional Defiant Disorder

RDSPD: Regional Day School Program for the Deaf

SBOE: State Board of Education

STAAR: State assessments of Texas of Academic Readiness

STAAR ALT 2: State assessments of Texas of Academic Readiness Alternate

TDHS: Texas Department of Human Services

TDMHMR: Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

TEA: Texas Education Agency

TWC: Texas Workforce Commission

TYC: Texas Youth Commission

VAC: Vocational Adjustment Coordinator

504: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 discrimination on the basis of disability (not an educational program).