



**Louise R Johnson Middle School**  
**Special Education Needs Policy**  
**Inclusion Policy for ESE Students**



### **Exceptional Student Education (ESE)**

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) understands that students come from a variety of backgrounds and have a range of academic, physical and other needs. Among our students there are those that have a recognized, diagnosed special educational need (SEN) and other students that may have special needs that have not yet been diagnosed. Examples of these special needs include:

- Specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia and dyscalculia)
- Language and communication disorders (such as aphasia, dysphasia and articulation deficits)
- Emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Physical disabilities affecting mobility
- Sensory impairments (such as visual or hearing difficulties)
- Medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy and diabetes)
- Mental health conditions (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders and anxiety)
- Gifted and talented students

### **Philosophy**

Louise R. Johnson Middle School operates under the guiding principle of inclusion. Our admission policy does not exclude students with disabilities from applying and participating in our program. Careful consideration is given to each student that applies to our program, which includes a thorough review of Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans. A student with needs beyond our level of Exceptional Student Education services is referred to his/her districted program to ensure that all students will have their needs met.

Our teachers design learning experiences that allow our students, including those who have special educational needs, to meet the objectives in each subject group. Through the process of differentiated instruction, our teachers provide our students with opportunities to reach these goals. Differentiated instruction aims to maximize students' potential, and allows them to demonstrate their learning in different ways. Our school mission to inspire students to achieve academic excellence, embrace global diversity, and become lifelong learners is in line with the ideals inherent in differentiated instruction.

## **Support for Students and Staff**

Training is provided as needed throughout the course of the school year for all staff members. All members of the teaching staff are provided with accommodation information for any qualified and placed students with disabilities. Consultation services for staff are provided throughout the school year by our Varying Exceptionalities Resource to ensure that students receive appropriate accommodations.

Teachers and therapists provide appropriate accommodations and services as designated in Individualized Education Plans and 504 Plans to ensure that all students enrolled at Louise R. Johnson Middle School have access to the educational opportunities provided in the IB Middle Years Program.

## **Mandates**

### IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Detailed information on this act is provided by the US Department of Education on the website <http://idea.ed.gov/>.

The purpose of this act is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education. Services for these students must be designed to meet their unique needs. To serve this purpose, all states that receive federal funding must make a free appropriate public education available to all children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 and develop an Individualized Education Plan for each child with a disability, reviewed at least annually.

### Section 504

Section 504 is part of a federal civil rights law known as the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This law specifically prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Discrimination, as defined in Section 504, is the failure to provide students with disabilities the same opportunity to benefit from education programs, services, or activities as provided to their non-disabled peers. Therefore, schools cannot exclude students with disabilities from facilities, programs, benefits, activities, or services that are provided to students without disabilities. Schools must make sure that all students receive equal access to educational opportunities. Students with disabilities receiving exceptional student education (ESE) services, as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), are protected under Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for ESE.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 defines a person with disabilities as any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,

has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. Major life activities as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 include caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. A parent, teacher, or other member of the school staff may raise a concern about a student's unique need for special help. Parents, teachers, and other staff members will meet to discuss all relevant information about the student. If the team determines that the student does have a disability, they will then identify what types of support, or accommodations, are appropriate to meet the student's needs. The accommodations will be described in a document referred to as the Section 504 accommodation plan.

The above information was provided by the Florida Department of Education. This and further information can be found on the section 504 documents found on the Florida Department of Education website [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org). The document referenced in this policy can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/504bro.pdf>.

### Response to Intervention

The term Response to Intervention (RtI) has now been combined with Positive Behavior Support (PBS) for the acronym MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports). As a general education reform, MTSS is the responsibility of everyone including administrators, teachers, and support staff. The implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support is the link between student achievement and instructional practices. There has been a significant transformation within the law in regards to the delivery of instruction. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) gave structure to the belief that early intervention is the key to all children learning.

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a 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 students can be successful. The RtI process has three tiers that build upon one another. Each tier provides more intensive levels of support:

- **Tier I includes high quality instruction.** The school provides all students with access to high quality curriculum, instruction, and behavior supports in the general education classroom.
- **Tier II includes additional targeted, supplemental instruction/interventions.** The school provides interventions to small groups of students who need more support than they are receiving through Tier I.
- **Tier III includes intensive interventions.** The school develops and implements interventions to meet the individual needs of students.

The above information was provided by the School Board of Manatee County. This and further information can be found on the School Board of Manatee County's website: <http://www.manateeschools.net/pages/SDMC>

### **Mandate Compliance**

Compliance with the above mandates is overseen by our onsite Special Programs Coordinator, Assistant Principals, and Principal. The Special Programs Coordinator serves as the Local Education Agent (LEA) for all IEP meetings and as a member of our Response to Intervention/ Multi-Tiered System of Support Team.

### **Policy Review**

The International Baccalaureate leadership team at Johnson Middle School annually reviews this SEN/inclusion policy. Any changes or modifications that are made must then be brought up for discussion and agreement with the entire faculty.