

Special Needs Policy for the IB DP at AYA

Background & Introduction

The American Youth Academy (AYA) is an independent, private school which serves students from PreK-2 to Grade 12 from a diverse socio-economic background. As such, the school relies on tuition income, donations and sponsorships to cover its operational expenses, programs and projects. With 50% of its students qualifying for Free/Reduced Price Breakfast & Lunch, the school cannot charge the same tuitions as other private/prep schools and has to carefully determine which programs to develop and support within the school.

In order to fully meet the needs of special needs students, a system must be in place which includes:

- Periodic and systematic assessment of the students' abilities and needs, by AYA's Special Needs staff and by outside professionals: Licensed psychologists and/or therapists; pediatricians; etc.
- Periodic and systematic team meetings with everyone involved in providing an education or accommodations for these students. This team may include, but may not necessarily be limited to: ESE Specialist; Guidance Counselor; Academic Head (Principal); Discipline Head (Vice Principal); Speech Therapist; Occupational Therapist; Homeroom Teacher; Subject Teachers; and at least one of the parents.
- Accurate and timely documentation and paperwork must be kept and shared as needed among all members of the team.

Philosophy

AYA's stakeholders believe that:

- A student's education does not revolve only around academics. Instead, it revolves around the academic, physical, social and moral development of the student, with equal weight placed on each of these components.
- Every student at AYA has the right to receive the best possible education and to have his/her needs met to the fullest and most positive extent.
- AYA will not accept any student into its programs, if the administrators do not feel that his/her needs will be met to the fullest and most positive extent.
- Consistent, timely and open communication must exist between and among all members of the Special Needs team to ensure optimal academic and social results for each special needs student.

Goals

- To offer each student at AYA the best education possible
- To meet the academic, physical, social and moral needs of each student at AYA
- To provide the accommodations needed for Special Needs students at AYA to ensure their success in all areas both in the classroom, during assessments and throughout the campus.

General Accommodations Offered to/for Special Needs Students at AYA

- Seating in the classroom
- Extended time in completing class assignments and homework
- Use of laptops in class to complete written assignments
- Special computer software to assist in filling gaps in particular skills
- Assistance in carrying books and moving from one class to another (student buddy system)
- Use of elevator to get from ground floor classes to classes, labs and libraries on higher floors
- Extra assistance during and after school, either from regular teacher or from ESE Assistant
- Therapist sessions during the school day as required: Speech, Occupational, Behavioral, etc.

Assessment Accommodations Offered to/for Special Needs Students at AYA

- Extended time for testing
- Testing Separately
- Oral Testing
- Modified Question Types
- Use of Computer or iPad to Type Responses

Reflection & Revision of AYA's Special Needs Policy

As with any policy, AYA's Special Needs Policy must be reviewed and analyzed on an annual basis by a committee of teachers and administrators to determine if any changes are needed. This analysis will be based on implementation of current policy, assessment of student and teacher success, demographics of the school, and other variables which may influence the policy's success.

If changes are found to be warranted/needed, they will be made and implemented and again reviewed after a one-year cycle.