

Hartsfield Magnet School for International Studies

Diverse Learner Policy

Established November 2022

School Vision

Members of the Hartsfield School community are committed to becoming self-directed, life-long learners in a nurturing environment, which fosters connections, relationships, safety, high expectations, responsibility and respect for others.

School Mission

Hartsfield is a diverse School Family that embraces change.

We are committed to providing a rigorous and equitable educational experience. It is our responsibility to produce students who are agents for their learning and are safe to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

To this end, we seek to facilitate an inquiry-based instructional delivery model that encourages collaboration and problem-solving. We promote international mindedness by developing the ability to connect with others in the interest of acting with compassion and serving the global community.

Introduction & Purpose

The purpose of this document is to communicate to all stakeholders in our learning community - administrators, teachers, students, and parents - the programme expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive environment for all learners as required by International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). This document also provides clear guidelines and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Philosophy

At HMSIS, we believe schools are made up of a diverse group of learners that add to the quality of both academic and social development. Our approach to education is designed to remove or reduce barriers so that every student can participate in and benefit from the IB Primary Years Programme instructional model.

Inclusion Models at Hartsfield

Pre-K ESE classrooms serve three-, four-, and five-year-olds. These classrooms are focused on learning through play, exploration, inquiry, art, and routines. Students with special needs receive individualized attention, differentiating for each student's abilities and needs. The program prepares learners academically, socially, emotionally, and physically for a life-long path of learning and contribution.

Inclusion in General Classes - From K to fifth grade, most students with special needs are supported in the classroom by a certified teacher and provided additional support by a certified special education teacher. The support is determined by what is documented in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 Plan by the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) team. Support is offered through both a push-in (a para-professional or resource teacher provides support inside the student's classroom) and/or pull-out model (the student receives support in a resource classroom for a specified amount of time per week for individual support).

Self-Contained Classes – Our campus has two self-contained classes designed specifically for students with significant developmental disabilities which can be cognitive, physical or a combination of both. Thus, inhibits them from being in a traditional classroom full time.

One model serves students with varying social delays and includes community-based instruction. This instructional model promotes the teaching and use of academic and functional skills in the student's natural environment. The setting, as well as the tasks performed in these settings, are relevant to the student, facilitate independence and are age appropriate. Instruction, materials, and activities mirror age-appropriate activities used by non-disabled same age peers and are developmentally appropriate for the needs of the student.

The other model serves students that have significant learning disabilities and need one to one support for academics.

Both models incorporate the learner profile attributes, approaches to learning, and transdisciplinary themes into the instructional model. Learners in these classes have opportunities to interact with learners outside of their classroom and participate in schoolwide initiatives.

Gifted and Talented - The purpose of the Gifted and Talented (G/T) program is to implement, maintain, and support a variety of instructional strategies that address the four core academic areas: reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students in the G/T program demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication. At HMSIS, students are nominated, screened, and selected by the classroom teacher, counselor, and administrative team.

G/T students in grades K-5 are served with a “pull out” program that meets the needs of students who demonstrate complex thinking skills and need for an additional academic challenge. G/T students are provided weekly instruction, focused on critical thinking, problem-solving, creative thinking, researching, and developing innovative products. Our G/T teacher also provides push in support to the general classroom where instruction is elevated to learning engagements encouraging higher order thinking. We currently share our G/T teacher with another school.

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

ESOL eligible students are identified based on language indicators on the school registration form. They are then screened using the WIDA screener. If deemed eligible, these learners are served in the general class by an ESOL certified teacher. Teachers develop ESOL lessons in tandem with Units of Inquiry. There is a focus on building background knowledge, teaching key

vocabulary, academic language development, and representation of the learner's mother tongue whenever possible.

Social, Emotional, and Physical Well Being Inclusion is led by the classroom teacher using support from the school's behavior management model, Conscious Discipline (CD). These supports include professional development on best practices, classroom resources for de-escalation techniques, strategies, and classroom structures that teachers can use to turn everyday situations into learning opportunities. CD encompasses seven skills of discipline, which are designed to encourage independent problem-solving with social emotional learning. All teachers incorporate a Brain Smart Start as a part of the morning routine to support learner emotional and mental wellbeing. The Brain Smart Start includes making connections, establishing a commitment, and a self-regulation activity. In addition, safe spaces are designated in each classroom to foster agency for self-regulation and resolving student conflict. The school has also established a Family Resource Center (FRC) that provides information to help support the wellness of the entire family. The FRC is used to host workshops for families that help promote the emotional, physical and academic growth of the entire learning community.

Academic Cadres

In an effort to provide all learners with an increased selection of academic and extra-curricular offerings HMSIS established the academic cadre program in 2021. These cadres provide students with a choice of a variety of "clubs" to participate in. The cadres are attended on campus, once a month, during school hours. This provides every child an opportunity to participate. Students have choice in which cadre they select and each cadre is teacher led. Some academic cadre offerings include reader's theatre, ecosystems, chess, performance, graphic design and math club.

Ongoing Review of Inclusion Policy

The Inclusion Policy is a working document, which requires ongoing review and revision based on the needs of the student population at Hartsfield Magnet School for International Studies. The pedagogical leadership team, composed of administrators, the IB coordinator, the ESE team, and teachers will review the Inclusion Policy annually. Feedback from all invested parties will be taken into consideration and subsequent revisions will be completed each year by the end of September. The updated policy will be shared with all staff during an IB Professional Learning Community and with the PTO and SAC during a given meeting. The final document will be posted on the school's website.