



*Florence High School: An International Baccalaureate World School*

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY**

### **Introduction and Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to communicate to all stakeholders at Florence High School (students, parents or guardians, teachers, and administrators) the expectations for creating and maintaining an educational environment that is inclusive for all learners as required by the IBO. This document was created by the IB Diploma Coordinator with the guidance and expertise of the Special Education Department Chairperson and is supported by the FHS teaching staff and administration.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to prepare our students to flourish in an ever changing global society by grounding them in our traditions while integrating technology into learning experiences that promote readiness for college, careers, and a successful life.

### **Florence High School's IB Diploma Program Philosophy:**

Florence High School serves the citizens of Florence, Arizona and the surrounding communities. FHS teachers educate our student population by providing a range of programs to meet students' individual needs. Our school's mission statement applies to all students at Florence High School. Inherent in this mission statement is to provide support so that all students become lifelong learners and become successful productive members of the local and global community.

Florence High School supports the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate Organization that, "all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible."

### **Identification/Special Education Process:**

At Florence High School students with a suspected disability due to academic and/or behavior struggles go through an identification process through the school's Student Study Team (SST). The process begins with a referral to the team by a teacher, student, or parent/guardian. The team works together to brainstorm interventions try in the classroom to improve academics and/or behavior. After interventions have been implemented the team reconvenes to determine if adequate progress has been made. If progress has been made then the student stops the SST process or is referred for a 504 plan. If progress has not been made then the student goes through a Multidisciplinary Team (MET) at FHS to determine if special education testing is necessary.

The MET team will meet to discuss possible evaluations. The minimum members of the team consist of School Psychologist, Student, Parents/Guardians, General Education Teacher, Special Education Teacher, LEA (local education agency) Representative, and Individual to Interpret Results. The MET team will determine if a disability exists or if the student may need to be referred for a 504 plan. If a student qualifies for special education then an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) will be written within 30 days to include what accommodations, modifications, and services will be provided. The IEP will be reviewed at least once annually and the MET team will meet at least once every 3 years.

### **Special Arrangements for IB Diploma Program Students:**

Any student that has either an IEP or a 504 plan is automatically eligible to apply for special arrangements with the IBO to assist the candidate during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations. In November of each year, after the IB exam registration period has ended the IB Coordinator requests a list of all students with special needs either through an IEP or a 504 Plan from the Florence High School Special Education Department Chairperson and the 504 Coordinator. The IB Coordinator compares the list of students with special needs against the list of students registered for IB exams. Students with special needs who need accommodation and are enrolled in an IB course are then organized into a file so the IB Coordinator can file the appropriate forms with the IBO. The IB Coordinator receives the decision of the IB, the student, parents/guardians, and teachers and organizes files and meetings as necessary to ensure all members understand the appropriate accommodations used in class and on assessments. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Extended time
- Scribe
- Type Assignments instead of hand write
- Readers
- Access to Computer
- Record a lesson, instead of taking notes
- Have another student share class notes with him
- Be given an outline of a lesson
- Use visual presentations of verbal material, such as word webs and visual organizers

- Be given a written list of instructions
- Work or take a test in a different setting, such as a quiet room with few distractions
- Sit where he learns best (for example, near the teacher)
- Use special lighting or acoustics
- Take a test in small group setting
- Use sensory tools such as an exercise band that can be looped around a chair's legs (so fidgety kids can kick it and quietly get their energy out)

Florence High School encourages all students to advocate for their needs. Teachers are required to implement accommodations as necessary that are written into a student's IEP or 504 Plan. The IB Coordinator will file the necessary forms with the IBO for students with special needs.

### **Professional Development for IB Diploma Program Instructional Staff:**

Florence High School believes that inspired and informed teaching is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. As a result, Florence High School is committed to financially supporting ongoing professional development for all instructional staff. Teachers are actively encouraged to attend a wide range of workshops involving strategies for instructing students with special needs.

### **Resources for Parents, Students and Instructional Staff:**

The Florence High School Special Education Department has a full time Special Education Department Chairperson who works closely with the Special Education Director in the Florence Unified School District. The Special Education Department offers several professional development opportunities for general and special education staff throughout each school year. Florence High School has four full time special education teachers and four full time paraprofessionals. The special education staff works with students in the special education and general education setting. The special education staff is always available to help general education teachers and staff understand students with special needs IEP and accommodations. The counseling department consists of two full time counselors who also support students in the high school experience. The counselors are also a resource to help understand the needs of students with special needs.

### **Special Education Needs Policy Review**

The IB Diploma Program Coordinator collaborated with the Special Education Chairperson to create this policy during the 2015-2016 school year. The members of the IB Diploma Program Team approved the policy and fully support it. Starting with the 2016-2017 school year, this policy will be evaluated every year by the IB Diploma Coordinator, Director of Counseling, Special Education Chairperson, and FHS Administrator. It is the responsibility of the IB Diploma Coordinator to ensure the success of the special education needs policy review.