

Morikami Park Elementary School
International Baccalaureate
Special Needs Policy

Our motto at Morikami Park Elementary School (MPES) is, "Educating today's children for tomorrow's world." Administrators, faculty, parents, and students work together to develop students who are responsible, respectful, and caring citizens who are lifelong learners dedicated to success within a global society. The purpose of this paper is to describe how we provide seamless instruction to individual students with special needs by providing a continuum of support services within the least restrictive environment.

DETERMINING THE LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Students who attend Morikami Park Elementary School (MPES) come to us from an assortment of cultures, backgrounds, interests, and abilities. Prior to receiving special education services, students needs are assessed through data collection in the Multi-Tiered Support System Process. A variety of formal and informal assessments create a picture of the whole child. Progress is made with intensive interventions provided by specialized staff. Other areas include behavior, speech-language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, hearing and visual services, and health-related. These services are determined through specific interventions and/or a documented disability through a physician, which results in a negative academic impact. School District of Palm Beach County staff evaluates other specific needs when suspected.

Special Education is considered when:

- 1) The student has one or more significant academic skill deficit(s) as compared to age or grade- level benchmarks/standards.
- 2) The student is making insufficient progress in response to scientific, research-based intervention.
- 3) The student's learning difficulties are not PRIMARILY the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; intellectual disability; significant identifiable emotional disability; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency.

SUPPORT SERVICES IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH FIFTH GRADE

Once it has been determined that a student requires support from a special educator, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan developed by the Child Study Team (CST) that includes parents, teachers, specialized staff (ex. psychologists, speech-language pathologists, etc.), and administration. These plans reflect the individual needs and are guided by Federal Laws.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a piece of American legislation that ensures students with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs as reflected in the IEP. The goal of IDEA is to provide children with disabilities the

same opportunity for education as those students who do not have a disability. At Morikami Park Elementary, this goal is reached using a continuum of support facilitation based on individual student needs. Most students requiring special education services receive support facilitation in the general education classroom, while some students receive services in a resource room. Some students receive a combination of both. These students receive specialized instruction and accommodations for learning and assessments.

Students who are not eligible for special educational services but need additional support can receive accommodations and modifications to learning environments and tasks as well as assessment if they meet the criterion set forth by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Services are also provided to students who are performing above grade level through small group and whole class accelerated learning curriculum.

Student information is considered confidential and access to student files is limited to only those working with the student. Student progress is regularly reviewed and services are adjusted accordingly.

Classroom teachers are also supported by the special education staff to ensure that barriers to success are minimized. For example, classroom teachers and specialists work together in developing methods of differentiating content, process, and product. Professional development is regularly provided to staff to guarantee that students succeed in their general education classes.

PARENT RIGHTS:

Parents have the opportunity to be an educational partner in the educational decisions made regarding their child. The document titled "Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities" describes in depth a parent's rights that go along with programs for students with disabilities. These rights include written notification of any actions determined necessary, parental consent required for any actions, revocation of parental consent, confidentiality and access to student information, as well as mediation and state complaint procedures.

COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY

The full policy will be made available to staff and faculty and will be part of the orientation at the start of each academic year. Morikami recognizes that teachers new to the school and IB Programmes may require additional knowledge when teaching students with special needs, such as:

- Informational about factors that affect a student's learning, particularly with regard to inquiry-based learning
- How to differentiate and match teaching to students needs
- Knowledge of assistive technology
- An awareness of the support systems and personnel available at Morikami Park Elementary School.