**MVHS IB Special Education Needs Policy**

**MVHS Mission Statement**

The mission of Murrieta Valley High School is to inspire and empower all students to grow academically, emotionally, and socially in order to become productive citizens who serve others and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

**Statement of Philosophy**

The IB programs at MVHS are open access to all students. There are no assessment pre-requisites to enter either the MYP or the DP. Some of the courses do require that students meet the pre-requisite of completion of the prior course. This is consistent with IB expectations for both the DP and MYP, as stated in the *Programme Standards and Practices* (2014).

**Definitions**

An **Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)** is a plan or program developed to provide supports to allow students with a disability identified under the law access to all curriculum provided on campus.

A **504 Plan** is a plan developed to provide supports to a child who has a disability identified under the law to receive appropriate accommodations and modifications that will allow them access to all curriculum provided on campus.

The **Americans with Disabilities Act** is a federal law that requires specific supports and structures to be in place to ensure physical access to buildings and fields on campus.

At MVHS, we have extensive expertise available to support the philosophy that all students can and should access the IB programs. Our IB Coordinator holds a special education credential and taught nine years of special education direct instruction at the secondary level. Our head of school/principal holds a special education credential and taught special education out of state. One of our assistant principals was a special education teacher for six years, teaching direct instruction classes at the secondary level. He also has seven years of experience as the Murrieta Valley Unified School District’s Coordinator of special education. He has great expertise in Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), which are implemented on our high school campus to include all students in all aspects of the high school experience. The Dean of Students on our campus holds a special education credential, Masters in Special Education, and taught direct instruction at the secondary level. We currently have a full time School Psychologist, a full time Speech/Language Pathologist, one Behavioral Program instructor, two high school age severely handicapped teachers, two adult age severely handicapped teacher, seven specialized academic instruction teachers, one adaptive PE teacher available one period per day, and a variety of special education aides. The following special education itinerants service students on our campus: visually impaired, orientation and mobility, deaf and hard of hearing, assistive technology, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and a full time Registered Nurse. We also have a mental health therapist and staff three days a week to assist with positive behavioral supports, interventions and mental health services. At this time, we do not feel that any additional expertise is required. However, training of staff on the IB’s philosophy and guidelines for implementing accommodations/modifications for assessments will be needed.

With a highly qualified staff, we have access to numerous testing and screening tools depending on the need and perceived disability of the student. These can include: intelligence tests, achievement tests, language development tests, processing tests, assistive technology, sensory input, etc. Each staff member is qualified to administer the set of tests within their area of expertise. The multidisciplinary team, which will include any member who was a part of the assessment process is responsible for notifying parents, students and teachers of testing results at an officially documented meeting. The inclusive supports for IB DP or MYP will be discussed at the annual meetings for the students and incorporated into either their IEP or 504 plan. The case carrier/counselor is responsible for communicating the needs of the students to the teachers using tools such as the “IEP at a Glance”, for coordination and monitoring of the program. It is their responsibility to inform the IB coordinator if special arrangements are necessary for official IB assessments. Our entire staff, including special education teachers, were all in attendance for the MYP in-school workshop and are participating in the MYP unit planning process. All confidential information is held by the case carriers or counselors in the cumulative files. All staff members involved in the instruction of the student are allowed access to these files. These files are passed on to the next school in the district or by request out of district. Transition meetings are held when students move from elementary to middle school and again from middle school to high school.

MVHS has a history of providing all students with special needs the supports and services to access all areas of the high school experience, ranging from academic courses to social activities. Our school implements Section 504, IDEA, and ADA federal and state requirements for meeting the needs of all students. All teaching staff have been educated in inclusion strategies as part of the California Credential program requirements. The case carriers and counselors are in constant communication with the general education teachers who have students with special needs in their classes. Staff are invited to yearly meetings on individual students. If attendance is not possible at these meetings, then information on the updated IEPs and/or 504’s are provided to the teachers to implement the proper accommodations and modifications in the classroom. The case carriers and counselors are responsible for that communication and updating of the student’s progress in the yearly meetings. MVHS is well known for the high regard and inclusion of special needs’ students with varying disabilities within the daily school culture and classroom. For example, general education students are teaching assistants within the severely handicapped classrooms and help provide a social connection for this population of students that would otherwise not exist. Special needs’ students are incorporated into athletic activities as support personnel or a participating team member and are equally engaged in activities. Students with special needs are involved in all levels of academic classes on our campus with implementation of accommodations/modifications as needed per the student’s IEP/504 plan. Our counselors are trained in the student study team procedures as the first level of intervention for students. This begins the entry procedure for any potentially unidentified student with special needs, otherwise known as Child Find. Once PBIS and parent/teacher meetings have been explored, if the basic accommodations are not successful, then the team will examine the need for special education assessment or a 504 plan to be implemented. All federal guidelines are then followed for the identification, implementation and exit process.

Being a fairly new IB Program, students with special needs have only accessed a few of our IB Diploma courses, such as Art and Psychology. However, as we grow, it is our goal to increase our inclusion of special needs students into all IB courses in both the MYP and DP. Part of doing that is dispelling the stigma that most staff and community members have about IB being an elite program. Another is through our training of our teachers regarding the Inclusion guidelines for assessment. Our goal of making MYP for all students is our first step in making this change in mindset. Our DP is already an open access program. Approximately ten percent of our student body is an identified special needs student, which is commensurate with the national average.

**Specific Assessment Inclusion Guidelines**

MVHS will follow the specific guidelines as outlined in the variety of published IB documents and specifically outlined in the *Candidates with assessment requirements*. Each accommodation will be examined individually by the IEP or 504 team and documented as such. All special education teachers and 504 counselors will be provided with the IB guidelines for assessment to make informed decisions at their meetings. Once decisions are made, they are to inform the IB Coordinator of any arrangements needed for the student. The IB Coordinator is then responsible for completing the official D1 forms for a student requiring accommodations in the formal assessments in the IB DP. Accommodations and modifications will be implemented at the school level for the IB MYP, since at this time the school is not participating in the official e-assessment process. If that changes in the future, then the proper procedure to communicating with IB MYP office will be followed.

**Connections to other policies**

All special needs students will be held to the same standards for the assessment policy, and the academic honesty policy, and the language policy, which are all found on our school website and Haiku page. All students will be supported in making choices that promote academic honesty.

**Review Process**

There will be a yearly review of the policy to include any revisions/updates from IBO to address omissions or additions as experience dictates. The initial team will be involved in the annual review and taken to the leadership team for approval.

**Members creating this policy and Communication**

IB DP Coordinator/MYP Coordinator, the Assistant Principal, and the special education department were involved in the creation of this policy. This policy was then presented to the leadership team for approval and feedback. This document was then shared with the whole staff and made available to staff and community through Haiku and school website.