



Westminster High School School Special Services



Westminster High School serves a broad student population with a variety of abilities and needs. WHS provides equal access to the curriculum and academic rigor for all students, regardless of individual abilities and needs. This is primarily achieved through an inclusion model in which classroom support is provided by special education personnel to enable students to access the same content as their non-identified peers. All classroom and examination accommodations will be compliant with IB structures and policies.

Identifying Students

IEP Students

Special education services are made available to a student based on his or her individual needs. A team, comprised of educational professionals and parents, collaborates to determine a student's unique needs to develop an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). An IEP is a written document for each child with a disability which describes the student's educational program, and includes necessary accommodations so that every student has access to education.

If a student enters the program with an IEP, all teachers will be fully informed about a candidate's needs and will provide his/her with all supports necessary for his/her success.

Students who do not enter the IB program with an existing IEP can still qualify for special needs services. The IB coordinator seeks input from the student's teachers first in order to determine the extent of the problem. The IB Coordinator meets with the student. Based on the initial findings, the student may be referred to tutoring or academic support if the problem appears to be in only one class. If the problem is more extensive, she might call a meeting of the student's teachers, the students, and the student's parents. The outcome might be tutoring, study skills help, personal counseling, and/or pursuit of an IEP through an educational team.

504 Students

A student who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more life activities, but does not qualify for an IEP, may be classified as a student with educational needs for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This is a regular education initiative and is not technically a part of special education. Students who qualify are put on a 504 plan, which are reviewed annually with a team usually comprised of an administrator, counselor, parent/guardian, teachers, appropriate district personnel (if necessary) and the student. The 504 plan is designed to provide appropriate accommodations and modifications to provide a learning environment that offers the same level of access to the curriculum as their peers.

Support services for IB students at Westminster High School (WHS) parallels those already offered to all students at the high school. We recognize that there is a range of special needs IB students may need. Support services may be broken down into the following categories:

- Academic assistance: tutoring, studying, time management; counseling and planning for high school courses, credit, GPA, etc
- Focus for gifted and talented students
- College and career planning
- Personal counseling
- Special needs (IEPs, Speech Therapy, Learning Disabilities, etc) and language support for English language learners

WHS has an open admissions policy for all students wanting to attempt the IB Diploma Program. All eleventh and twelfth grade students have the option to either enter the full Diploma Program or to take up to three IB Diploma classes regardless of previous academic performances. Teachers, counselors and coordinators meet with each student and their family to discuss how best to support a student's successful graduation from high school and post high school success.

Academic Assistance

It is Westminster High School's belief that it is particularly important to support IB students in their academic pursuits during the crucial first year. Junior students beginning the diploma programme are faced with the challenges of a strenuous pre-university programme. Students in both years of the diploma program are grouped together in an "Academic Enrichment" course with their cohort, like a homeroom, where their A/E teacher meets with them one on one and in whole groups. Additionally, the IB staff meets monthly for a student focus meeting, discussing the emotional, social, mental, and academic progress of all diploma students.

The IB coordinator offers support to students in the following areas:

- Early identification of students with problems
- Formal tutoring services
- Personal guidance and support
- Regular communication and follow up with all IB teachers
- Participation in 504 Plan and IEP meetings, where applicable

By applying the staffing-team model to serious academic problems and to any serious concern about the student, the school draws on the expertise of its staff, the knowledge of the parents, and the concern of the student to solve the problem.

Tutoring Services

Each teacher is required to offer tutoring after school on two afternoons a week. This time is spent providing students extra help and tutoring when needed. Peer tutoring has been offered in the past but is not currently a service available at WHS. Due to the personal successes and enjoyment of former IB students, many want to come back and help current IB students by providing tutoring. A hope for the new coordinator is to establish such a tutoring service. This

will not only benefit our current students academically, but will also be beneficial in that they can see and hear firsthand how IB prepared our former students for university.

Academic Guidance

The IB coordinator will, as appropriate, offer personal counseling to students with academic problems. The coordinator's hope is to develop small-group sessions focused on study skills, time management, stress management, test anxiety, and other specific areas of need. Additionally, our twice weekly academic enrichment class is used for guidance, as well as building culture of self and culture of school, future planning, and team building; this time can also be used for academic monitoring.

Gifted and Talented

WHS has a gifted and talented program with two coordinators/teacher trainers. Students identified as GT meet with these teachers at least twice a year to set goals and ensure their needs are being met, including academic challenge and interest. Additionally, WHS has a system for identifying students as GT, if they are not already identified.

College and Career Planning

College guidance is a centerpiece of the support program provided by the IB coordinator and school for IB students. Students participate in an ICAP Program (***) that begins in ninth grade and continues through the twelfth grade. This program includes college and career planning and readiness, as well as the building of personal and social skills. The IB coordinator and IB staff are key in implementing the ICAP program.

Personal Counseling

The coordinator can work to connect each IB student with his or her school counselor. There are also school social workers and a school psychologist available to all students. If a student's needs are greater than what can be offered through school personnel, the student can be referred to a variety of local community resources and support to receive the needed assistance.

Parental Support

WHS believes it is important to have a support system for IB parents. Communication between the school and parents is a necessity for student success. The IB coordinator conducts monthly parent meetings to communicate pertinent information, answer questions and concerns that arise, and provide ideas for ways in which parents can support their students. A monthly newsletter is also sent home to parents so they are always up-to-date with pertinent information and upcoming events. The IB coordinator is always available to help answer any questions and/or to serve as a liaison to the classroom.

Special Needs and Language Support

WHS has a number of support services available to students with special needs or who require additional language support. There are two social workers and two psychologists on staff to support students in any way necessary. Any students in special education also have the added support of special education teachers and a case worker. If a student is in need of modifications but does not qualify for special education services, he or she can be placed on a 504 plan, which any counselor or social worker can assist in.

Many students at WHS are English Language Learners (ELL) whose first language is other than English. There are three ELL teachers and two ELL paraprofessionals to help support ELL students both inside and outside of the classroom. Special ELL summer school programs are also available to student in need of additional language support. In addition, all staff are required to go through an ELL training in order to learn strategies to help support ELL students in the classroom. Teachers are able to participate in weekly WAC (Wednesday Afternoon Club) activities geared toward supporting teachers in increasing interaction, comprehension, and thinking skills of our students.

Inclusive Assessment Arrangements

At the discretion of the DP Coordinator, and with input and recommendations from the IEP or 504 team, the following arrangements will be provided by the school:

- Separate room if it is in the best interest of a candidate(s)
- Preferential seating
- An assistant or a nurse (non-relative) if necessary for the welfare/safety of a candidate
- An aid, e.g. hearing aid, braille etc., normally used by a candidate
- Instructions (related to directions only, not content) given by a communicator (non-relative) for a candidate with hearing difficulties
- Designated reader (non-relative) to clarify directions (not content of questions)
- Magnifying devices for candidates with vision difficulties
- Coordinator/invigilator clarifies colors in an examination for a color-blind candidate
- Supervised rest breaks for medical, physical and psychological conditions (up to 10 minutes per hour)
- Prompter (non-relative) for candidates with attention issues, psychological or neurological conditions
- Additional time to complete assignments during the two-year programme, e.g. Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge essay. Any extensions to a submission deadline will be requested from IB Answers by the DP Coordinator.

All other accommodations will be requested by the DP Coordinator via the “Requests for Inclusive Assessment Arrangements” process to ensure that all candidates can demonstrate their level of ability and knowledge. Written consent will be received from the candidate and his/her

parent/guardian before any requests or paperwork are submitted to IBO. The school will make all arrangements to accommodate inclusive assessment arrangements for a candidate.

Candidates who require inclusive assessment arrangements may have learning support requirements due to one or more of the following:

- Autism spectrum/Asperger's syndrome
- Learning disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Mental health issues
- Multiple disabilities
- Physical and/or sensory challenges
- Social, emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Speech and/or communication difficulties

Policy Distribution & Review

All WHS IB policies will be reviewed annually during the first IB staff meetings of the year, revised, and posted to the WHS IB website.