



## Pacific Montessori Society Inclusive Education Policy

Selkirk Montessori School believes that all students, regardless of their physical, academic, social and emotional needs, have an essential role to play in the school community. An inclusive model of education has been set up, whereby all students are educated with their same-aged peers in regular classrooms as much as possible. The Learning Assistance, Special Education and Enrichment Programs have been established to assist teachers in providing appropriate inclusive education for students with differing needs.

The Special Education Program services those students eligible for a special needs grant under the provincial independent schools program. These students have specific needs such as hearing loss, developmental delay, serious illnesses, cerebral palsy, behavioural needs, medically diagnosed social and emotional needs, etc.

The Learning Assistance program provides support for students with learning needs who do not qualify for special educational funding.

The Enrichment Program addresses the learning needs of students who have the potential to excel in various areas such as academics, music, physical education, etc.

### **ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMS**

Admission for special students to Selkirk Montessori School is subject to all established policies and procedures. In addition, the following procedures will be applied to students requiring special education, learning assistance, or enrichment.

1. When an application for admission to the school that indicates a need for any of the above programs is received, it is passed to the Learning Assistance teacher, who will do an initial screening and forward the information on to the Academic Head.
2. During the intake process the following will be discussed by the parents and the Academic Head:
  - The services needed
  - When these services will be in place
  - Who will be responsible for implementing the required services
2. Parents will be made aware as early as possible in the intake process if the school is unable to supply the required services.
4. The Academic Head or Administrator will direct the admission process and be the main contact with the parents.

## **REFERRAL OF ENROLLED STUDENTS FOR FUNDING FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

During the school year, classroom teachers who notice specific learning needs in students, will discuss this with the parents/guardians, Learning Assistance Teacher and Academic Head. If testing seems to be required, this will be organized by the Academic Head. If an application for special education funding is indicated, the Academic Head will make out the application. Staff members will collaborate on establishing and monitoring the initial Independent Education Plan (IEP), and putting support in place.

### **INSTRUCTION**

As with all Montessori students, the special needs students and students receiving Learning Assistance are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Where appropriate, they will receive one-on-one instruction in the Learning Assistance room or in or near the classroom. The L.A teacher will help the student to be successful in completing classroom assignments, as well as giving instruction in skills as needed.

### **I. SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

#### **Introduction**

Selkirk Montessori School Special Education Program is designed as an inclusive program, which integrates students with special needs into their age-peer classes whenever possible, but not exclusively. Decisions on the amount of integration are based on the needs of the child.

#### **Students**

The Special Education Program provides for the needs of students who qualify for funding under the Ministry of Education Independent Schools Branch Program.

#### **Classroom Teachers**

Classroom teachers are responsible for the students' educational program. They communicate regularly with assistants/aides and the Learning Assistance teacher to determine schedules and content of lessons. Classroom teachers and the Learning Assistance teacher report the student's progress to parents.

#### **Teacher Assistants or Aides**

Teacher assistants or aides provide the personal care and education for Special Education students, to promote their inclusion with peers. They work under the supervision of the classroom teacher and the special education teacher.

#### **Learning Assistance Teacher**

The Learning Assistance teacher is responsible for designing and guiding the implementation of the program, and supporting the classroom program. The learning assistance teacher, classroom teachers, assistants and aides, parents and other professionals work together as a team.

#### **Academic Head and Administrator**

The Academic Head and the Administrator are responsible for supporting the program according to the IEP, and maintaining the vision for inclusion in the school. They process new admissions, sign contracts with outside services and provide the same services as for all students (e.g. budgeting, staffing, staff supervision, facilities, safety, dealing with major concerns, appropriate curriculum, etc)

## **Counsellor**

A school counsellor is available to consult on the socio-emotional needs of students with the teachers, assistants and parents.

## **II. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs)**

Each student receiving a special needs grant from the Ministry of Education must have an IEP on file. This IEP outlines the educational plan for the student to enable him/her to function in a regular class. It outlines the program modifications and/or adaptations for the student and the services that are to be provided. It is formed and implemented by a team, which may consist of any of the following people:

1. Classroom teachers
2. The student's parents/guardians
3. Learning assistance teacher
4. Counsellor
5. Teacher's assistant
6. The student
7. Peers
8. Academic Head
9. Administrator
10. Support services
11. Specialist teachers (e.g. music, PE, French, etc)

The Independent Education Program is planned by the Learning Assistance Teacher and/or Academic Head in conjunction with the team and generally occurs as follows:

### **Fall**

1. Meet with new assistants and teachers to discuss each Special Needs child.
2. Coordinate the involvement of therapists and consultants
3. Provide support for classroom teachers as the students with Special Needs settle into their new class.
4. Observe students with Special Needs in class
5. Hold IEP meetings to establish or update IEPs
6. Administer relevant tests
7. Begin direct instruction for students
8. Establish a list of substitute assistants

### **Winter**

1. Assess and evaluate each students' program
2. Problem solve with school based team as needed
3. Receive and process new applications
4. Continue direct instruction
5. Evaluate program

### **Spring**

1. Hold team meetings for year-end reporting
2. Work on IEPs for following year
3. Apply for Special Education grants for the following school year.
4. Participate in determining the student's placement and assistant placement for the coming year.

### **III. LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

#### **Introduction**

The Learning Assistance Program at Selkirk Montessori School is designed as an inclusive program. Students with special learning needs are included in the regular classroom. Decisions or levels of integration are based on the real needs of the children.

This is a flexible program that sometimes is used to give under-performing students a boost in their skills, or to help them catch up when falling behind. It is also useful in guiding students who need assistance in developing their organization skills, and sometimes it provides enrichment activities for gifted students. The Learning Assistance program supports the students in a variety of ways to help them to reach their full potential.

#### **Classroom Teachers**

Classroom Teachers are responsible for the students' programs. They meet regularly with the Learning assistance teacher and teaching assistants to determine schedules and delivery of service. They communicate frequently, and they report to parents/guardians.

#### **Counsellor**

A counsellor is available for consultation with Learning Assistance staff, parents and administration as well as with the student.

#### **Learning Assistance Teacher**

The Learning Assistance Teacher is responsible for implementing the program. The Learning Assistance Teacher, Classroom Teachers, and assistants work together as a team.

#### **Academic Head and Administrator**

The Academic Head and Administrator are responsible for supporting the program and maintaining the vision for inclusion in the school. They process new admissions, sign contracts with outside services, and provide the same services as for all new students (e.g. budgeting, staffing, staff supervision, facilities, safety, parent concerns appropriate curriculum).

#### **Student Plans**

Where useful, a student plan is written for each child in the Learning Assistance Program. It is usually brief, including a list of standardized tests administered, the kind of program suggested, a recommended schedule, goals, and methods. This is formulated in consultation with the Classroom Teacher.

## **Reporting**

Classroom Teachers write the reports to parents. The Learning Assistance Teacher also writes a report for children she has seen regularly.

Program implementation generally occurs during the school year as follows:

### **Start-up**

- Orient new assistants and new teachers
- Write student plans for children new to the program
- Identify students needing Learning Assistance, using advice from teachers and/or testing
- Prepare LA schedules

### **Ongoing**

- Help to identify learning difficulties
- Develop strategies to meet the needs of individual students
- Provide direct instruction for students
- Meet regularly with classroom teachers and teacher assistants to discuss students' progress
- Maintain a collaborative relationship with classroom teachers, teachers of special subjects, administrators and parents.
- Order and maintain learning assistance resources.
- Act as a resource for staff members.
- Administer informal and formal assessments
- Keep adequate records of children's progress.
- Compile information in preparation for grant applications.

### **Year End**

- Evaluate the program
- Participate in planning for returning students placement and programs for the upcoming year.
- Organize student files ready for next year.

## **IV. ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

Gifted students who need challenges outside the classroom curriculum are accommodated on an individual basis, according to their needs. They may receive an opportunity, with the learning assistance teacher, to expand their study of a particular unit. In addition, where needed, there will be an Independent Education Plan formulated using the same guidelines and procedures as those for students in the Learning Assistance program.

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