

## **Abby Kelley Foster**

### **Special Educational Needs Policy**

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School is to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children by providing a classical liberal arts education grounded in the great works of Western Civilization and aimed at academic excellence, musical competence and character formation.*

#### **Philosophy**

##### **Vision Statement**

*Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School, in collaboration with parents; faculty and community members will provide students with an environment that emphasizes the strength and structure of a rigorous academic program.*

Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School supports the belief that all students should strive for academic excellence. We are committed to providing all students with learning strategies, academic intervention and curriculum accommodations necessary to allow for academic success and address gaps in learning. The foundation of a successful and rigorous program is a highly qualified staff working in partnership with parents to ensure student needs are met. Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School utilizes a policy of inclusion that works with students and their families to identify minor adjustments and accommodations that can be made by the teachers, students, families and support staff to allow student access to all levels of general education curriculum of the school, including the IB Diploma Programme. We strongly support a safe learning environment by valuing student diversity and learning differences.

#### **Implementation**

Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School, in accordance with IB policy, “believes that all students should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a student with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing him or her from demonstrating his or her level of skill and knowledge attainment, special arrangements may be authorized.” Such arrangements follow the principles and guidelines of the IB Diploma

Programme as set forth in the IB document entitled “Candidates with assessment access requirements” (IBO, May 2014).

Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School is committed to providing all students with the learning strategies, academic intervention and curriculum accommodations necessary to allow for academic success and address gaps in learning. Student areas of academic strengths and weaknesses are evaluated throughout the school year to identify areas of need.

Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School provides all students with a safe learning environment. All members of the school staff are required to attend trainings regarding harassment, student safety, civil rights, bullying prevention and intervention strategies, restraint training, mandated reporter requirements, student confidentiality and disciplinary procedure for students with special needs, and the laws and regulations regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA) and Section 504 Americans with Disabilities Act at the beginning of each year

In order to provide instruction that is designed to meet the varied learning needs of our students and designate more time on learning, students may be grouped for math and reading within their classrooms according to their needs. We strive to keep the expectations high for all our students and want to create an atmosphere where each student can be successful.

Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School provides comprehensive services to those students with disabilities and maintains a range of educational services that are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Any child with a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) is provided with a free and appropriate public education and held to standards established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Special education teachers are assigned to each grade level and provide students with instructional support in both the inclusion and pull out setting. All students have access to a learning center located in each building which provides student with access to teacher support during scheduled times during and after the school day.

Students, regardless of disability, are taught with students in similar proficiency levels in reading and math in appropriate instructional groups. Students with disabilities receive instruction in all subject areas in the regular education classrooms, with non-disabled peers, and with minimal separation in the least restrictive environment. In situations where fully inclusive models of special education are not appropriate, a special education teacher, or instructional assistant will be utilized to provide more direct services, maintaining sensitivity to the effects of being removed from general education classroom environment.

Presently we are providing 160 students in Grades K-12 with individualized instruction in both the inclusion and pull out setting. Abby Kelley Foster conducts on-going communication with regular education staff to ensure that the individual needs of students are met in the least restrictive environment.

Special education teacher's work with classroom teachers to incorporate accommodations and modifications as outlined in students' Individual Education Programs into the general education setting throughout the day. In this inclusion model, special education staff "push" into the classroom to provide additional resources for instruction, modifications for assessments, and other IEP driven services. There are instructional assistants available to also provide accommodations and instructional supports in general education classrooms. The regular education curriculum can be modified as needed to meet the needs of the individual special needs students according to the student's IEP.

In situations where fully inclusive models of special education are not appropriate, a student receives services in the school's learning center. Instructional services may include one-on-one instruction, consultation services, tutorials, or behavioral support in the least restrictive environment. The purpose of the pull out services is to provide the specially designed instruction in a setting outside the general education classroom. At times, students need more direct teaching/instruction using different methods than those utilized in the general education classroom, accommodating or modifying the general education curriculum is not enough for these students.

For students in need of related services, the school's speech/language pathologists, an occupational therapist, counselors, and other outside service providers are available to meet student needs.

Students identified with special education needs are encouraged to apply for IB courses and are accepted, provided they meet the course criteria. Students who received specialized instruction may enroll in an IB course with the support of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team. The Team may include the student, parents, general education teacher, special education teacher, a member of the administration, related service providers. All members of the Team are encouraged to communicate on a regular basis to support the student's ability to access the curriculum. The Team will review the student's present levels of performance and identify services and accommodations the student may need to access the IB curriculum. The IB Coordinator will attend the IEP Team meeting to coordinate services. All members of the faculty have access to the school's special education student management system in order to review student's individualized plans. The IB Coordinator and the Director of Special Educations work together to ensure all students have access to the school curriculum.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The IB Coordinator**

The IB Coordinator will coordinate assessment accommodations and modifications with the Director of Special Education to ensure all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. The IB Coordinator will apply to the IB for students' accommodations in assessment type and circumstances. The IB Coordinator will maintain discretion and confidence in providing special needs services.

### **Instructors**

The classroom teachers will comply with all federal and local laws regarding special education needs. The classroom teachers will participate in all required training when available. The classroom teacher will identify struggling learners and refer the student to the counselor or IB coordinator as needed. The classroom teacher will maintain accurate records of students' progress. The classroom teacher with the assistance of the special education department will become familiar with the special needs of the student. The classroom teacher will provide differentiated instruction as outlined by the students' IEP or 504 Plan. The teacher will maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing special education needs services.

### **Support Staff**

The high school is staffed with special education teachers as well as reading and math specialists. A learning center is located in the high school to provide students with specialized instruction in areas of need as identified on the student's IEP, as well as instruction in developing compensatory skills so that the student can access the general education curriculum independently. The learning center teacher may also provide reinstruction in the core curriculum and test taking in small groups. Instruction in life skills and self advocacy is provided in order to enhance college and career readiness, which is coordinated with the guidance department. Students with emotional and behavioral challenges receive support through our school adjustment counselors, school psychologist and contracted behaviorist.

### **Parent/Guardian**

As part of our mission statement, we believe that our role as a school is to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children. To this end, we encourage and require strong and frequent communication with parents. We see the role of the parents as not only an advocate for their child, but as a partner to obtain successful educational outcomes.

The parents are required and partnered with by the school to encourage independence and self-reliance. These skills are certainly necessary in any IB class.

Parents are relied upon to provide documentation related to their child's special needs.

### **Student**

Students will be proactive in asking for assistance from the school administrators, faculty, and staff. Students will be an active participant in classes. Students will follow all Abby Kelley Foster Charter High School and IB policies and procedures.

Special Educational Needs Policy Committee:

Kelly Davila – IB Coordinator

Jaime LaFlash – Special Education Teacher

AnnMarie Little – Director of Government Relations and Special Education

Michael Penney – Guidance

## References and Resources

Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom. IBO, 2013.

Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes. IBO, 2016.

IB Publication: Diploma Programme: From principles into practice. IBO, 2014.

IB Publication: Candidates with assessment access requirements. IBO, 2009.

Language Policy of Vanguard High School in Marion County, Florida.

Bishop Amat High School IB Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy.

Sturgis Charter Public School Inclusion Policy, 2015-2016.