



Special Education Program Handbook

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” *Mark 12:30-31*

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1. Special Education Program – Purpose

Each student is a unique image-reflector of God, and He expects each and everyone to use and fully develop their skills and strengths to the best of their ability. Each student is an important member of our school community and plays a vital role in the development of our community. We recognize that some students require a specialized environment in which to learn.

Whenever possible, we will make a concerted effort to meet the needs of students with special needs. The purpose of the Special Education Program is to provide an educational environment and an appropriate program for students who have significant physical, academic, social and/or emotional disabilities.

2. Special Education Program – Admissions

2.1. Admission

Admission to the Special Education Program at Maple Ridge Christian School is subject to all of the policies and procedures that apply to other admissions and to the additional policies and procedures described within. These policies and procedures require a firm commitment to Christian education and to Maple Ridge Christian School.

2.2. Registration Procedure

Registration opens on February 1. Steps 1 – 3 of the Registration Procedure must be complete by March 31. Steps 4 – 5 must be complete by May 31.

Registration follows these steps:

1. Submit to the Registrar all assessment reports including those by a certified registered psychologist and all specialists. Reports will be reviewed by the Special Education Coordinator. The Registrar will communicate if registration may be possible.
2. Payment of \$200.00 special education registration fee
3. Parents meet with Special Education Coordinator
4. Give Special Education Coordinator consent for school visit and to meet with the child's case management team
5. MRCS School team evaluates program and child's needs for admissions recommendation
6. Complete the registration package and follow the admission procedure

2.3. Registration Fee

The registration fee for each student with special needs is \$200.00. This fee covers the additional administrative and assessment costs required to process the application. The administration services may include meetings with specialists, observing the child in his/her current setting, filing for funding, reviewing psycho-educational reports, hiring of Education Assistants, etc.

2.4. Disclosure

It is required that parents disclose accurate information about their child's special needs and provide all psycho-educational reports and/or reports from specialists. Failure to do so will jeopardize a student's continued enrollment at Maple Ridge Christian School.

2.5. Notification

Parents will be notified of a decision about admissions into the Special Education Program as soon as possible. The last date for notification is May 31.

2.6. *Limited Enrollment*

Enrollment in the Special Education Program is limited. Preference will be given to students who are already enrolled in the program and whose siblings are currently enrolled at Maple Ridge Christian School. Admissions will also be dependent on class size, the amount of students with special needs currently enrolled in the class, the dynamics of the class, finances, resources available in the school, and availability of specialists and support personnel. Access to specialists (speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, etc.) is limited. The school will endeavor to hire these specialists on a contractual basis when needed.

2.7. *Number of Students with Designations per Grade*

Maple Ridge Christian School will evaluate the existing dynamics per class before accepting new students with special needs. We will consider the number of students with designations such as special needs, English language learners, learning assistance requirements and behavioral issues.

2.8. *Yearly Reevaluation*

Continued enrollment for students with special needs will be reevaluated on a yearly basis. Parents will be informed of any preliminary decisions regarding a change in enrollment by March 31.

Prior to entering high school, a thorough investigation will take place to evaluate Maple Ridge Christian School's ability to modify or adapt programs for a special needs student.

3. Special Education Program – Plan

3.1. Inclusion

Our Special Education Program at MRCS is designed as an inclusive program. We understand that “inclusion” refers to the goal of creating a supportive school environment that meets the needs of all its members.

An inclusive school integrates students with special needs within their peer-group classrooms to the greatest extent possible. Decisions on levels of integration are based on the educational goals and needs of the student.

3.2. Team Approach

A team made up of a combination of the following serves each student with special needs:

- The student’s parents
- The Special Education Coordinator/Learning Assistance Teacher
- The classroom teacher
- The Education Assistants
- Specialists (speech therapist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, etc.)
- The Principal

3.3. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Each student with special needs will have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with specific goals generated by the school-based team. The IEP will be created by the beginning of October or as needed. There will be a minimum of 1 IEP meetings during the school year. The IEP serves as a working document that can be modified to meet the changing needs of the student.

3.4. Adapted Program vs. Modified Program

Students with special needs may require adaptations to their program. These adaptations may include adjusting the workload, having a scribe or reader, or using appropriate technology to access the same information or content covered in class. Students with adapted programs cover the same content area as their classmates and will be graded similarly.

Students on modified programs, however, are provided with materials that are suited to their individual developmental needs according to their IEP. This modified program allows students to build skills at their own level of development rather than cover the same content or materials as their peers. Students placed on a modified program throughout their high school years will receive a High School Completion Certificate rather than a standard Dogwood Diploma.

3.5. *The Special Education Coordinator's Role*

- Serve as resource person for teachers and Education Assistants
- Assist in the development of curriculum for students with special needs (create the IEP in consultation with the school-based team)
- Assist in creating or providing modified/adapted programs for students with special needs
- Coordinate the school-based team
- Supervise the Education Assistants and coordinate the support services
- May teach students with special needs
- Assess, evaluate and report (in consultation with the school-based team)
- Administer specialized testing or make recommendations for parents to contract these services through a registered educational psychologist.
- Contact outside teams or organizations for support as needed
- Apply for special education grants and contract for services in cooperation with the administration
- Attend professional development workshops on a regular basis
- Participate in admission meetings for students with special needs
- Visit the current educational setting of the applying student
- Determine staffing needs and participate in interviewing Education Assistants in conjunction with the administration
- Develop three report cards that include an evaluative summary of each student's progress

3.6. *The Teacher's Role*

- Work in conjunction with the Special Education Coordinator and Education Assistant
- Plan for instruction which allows for diversity in each student's abilities and learning styles
- Develop and create appropriate parts of the modified or adapted curriculum plans (IEP) with the Special Education Coordinator
- Direct the Education Assistant as needed
- Develop three report cards with an evaluative summary of the student with special need's performance in class. (May be different from the regular report card format)

3.7. *The Principal's Role*

- Promote and facilitate the goals and strategies that allow for an inclusive education in the school
- Conduct admission meetings
- Provide opportunities for professional development for support staff and teachers
- Oversee grant application procedures

3.8. *The Parent's Role*

- Attend IEP sessions
- Supply all relevant psycho educational reports and documents to the Special Education Coordinator and administrator
- Maintain regular communication with the school
- Support the staff in their attempts to achieve the goals stated in the IEP
- Inform the school of all factors surrounding the special needs of their child

3.9. *Education Assistant Job Description and Responsibilities*

The Special Education Coordinator and the classroom teacher supervise the Education Assistant in order to implement the goals set out in the student's IEP.

- Provide instruction as directed by the classroom or Special Education Coordinator
- Implement programs designed for students with special needs
- Support inclusion activities
- Assist in preparing and presenting learning experiences designed in the in IEP
- Observe and document each student's daily progress
- Maintain student's files and records
- Set up the therapeutic equipment for students
- Operate equipment such as hearing aids, Braillewriter, audio-visual equipment, classroom computers, assistive technology devices, etc.
- Maintain regular communication with the classroom teachers
- Communicate with parents as directed by Special Education Coordinator

4. Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics for Education Assistants

4.1. Introduction

As disciples of our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, the staff at Maple Ridge Christian School strives to uphold discipleship characteristics. God tells us to reflect goodness, compassion and understanding. We live out this faith in the workplace by being:

- Image-reflectors – demonstrate our response to Christ’s call to be ambassadors for Him
- Community-servers – build shalom and heal brokenness as both communal and global citizens
- God-worshippers – involved in meaningful worship experiences with a grateful heart
- Justice-promoters – act as agents of change by identifying and responding to injustices
- Temple-keepers – care for our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, mindful that all aspects are interrelated
- Beauty-creators – praise God by creating beautiful things
- Creation-caretakers – respond to God’s call to be responsible stewards of all of creation
- Order-discoverers – find harmony and order in God’s creation
- Idolatry-discerners – identify and understand the idols of our time
- Truth-seekers – seek and proclaim truth in all areas of life

Accordingly, staff should act with a foundation of love and be guided in the workplace by the principle of one body, many parts (1 Corinthians 12-13). When issues arise, they should be dealt with promptly and honestly. Grievances must first be brought to the person involved (Matthew 18:15-20). If an issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the Special Education Coordinator should be brought in. If the matter is still not resolved, the Principal should become involved. All stages of conflict resolution should be handled bearing in mind the biblical through-lines.

4.2. Education Assistant Relationships

As Image-reflectors we are ambassadors for Christ and bear that out in our relationships with students, teachers, staff and parents. We will be understanding and encouraging as we support student development in an authentic, respectful and loving community. We will be constructive and mindful in our actions and communications as we work within our community to educate and equip students to engage in God’s world.

4.3. Confidentiality

Maple Ridge Christian School ensures that the personally identifiable data for each student remain confidential. Prior to the implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP), we require each individual responsible for implementing an IEP to:

- Fully understand the scope of their responsibility
- Sign the Education Assistant Confidentiality Agreement

5. Hiring of Education Assistants and Specialists

The Special Education Coordinator and the administrator will interview and make recommendations to the Board for the hiring of Education Assistants. Specialists will be hired on a contractual basis. Speech therapists, occupational therapists, counselors, physiotherapists, behavior therapists, psychologists, etc. may provide services and recommendations for the student with special needs. Whenever possible, specialists with a Christian worldview will be given preference in hiring.