



NOTRE DAME



Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy Special Needs and Inclusion Policy

Overview

At Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy (NDPMA), teachers and staff are dedicated to the success of each student. We focus on the academic, social, and emotional success of each individual student.

Definition of Special Needs

We define a special needs student as any individual who shows a need for extra support in our challenging IB, AP, and college preparatory curriculum. This includes students with a professionally written diagnosis such as a chronic medical condition, learning disability, temporary illness or injury. Our school does not provide special education programs, resource rooms, Individualized Education Programs, however we provide reasonable accommodations.

Expectations of Stakeholders

While we cannot alter our challenging International Baccalaureate college preparatory program, our counselors, teachers, and administrators are expected to work with students and parents when provided with information about a diagnosed special need. Preferential seating, support before or after school from teachers or student tutors, and extra time on tests are some of the primary ways that the school provides assistance. Parents are also encouraged to contact their local school district to inquire about additional services the home district may provide.

Admission and Identification Process at NDPMA

For the Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme (Grades JK-12), students are involved in an extensive admission process during which families provide detailed medical and educational information. Entrance/placement exams are administered and past grades are reviewed. The final step is a face to face interview with an administrator or teacher. The admission team then determines if NDPMA is the best match for the prospective student. At the time of recruitment, admissions and enrollment, prospective parents and students are advised of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement. At this time, when necessary, individual meetings with families are held to go over the school's SEN policy.

If there is any concern about a current student or a diagnosis is discovered after the student is admitted; parents, teachers, or administrators may contact the counseling department to determine the issues and implement a plan of action. Teachers and parents identify students who

may be presenting new problems and counselors suggest referrals or recommend evaluations by professionals outside the school environment as necessary.

Lower Division Special Educational Needs Services

In the lower division (Grades JK-5) teachers are expected to provide the optimal learning environment for students. This includes but is not limited to working individually with students or in small groups. Accommodations, which do not compromise the integrity of the program may be used, such accommodations include seat location, use of microphone, and in rare cases extra time on tests. Although there is no SEN faculty member on site, the lower division does have a reading specialist and math specialist on site. Regular assessments in reading and math are conducted, and the results of the assessment determine if a student needs to meet with either specialist. Both specialists are responsible to work with students, parents, and teachers when issues/concerns arise. If an ongoing issue is identified the principal meets with the parents to discuss possible solutions which include, but are not limited to tutoring, learning centers, outside evaluations. Parents can request Pontiac School District Special Education Services; however most families utilize private doctors and or other organizations. If a severe deficient or disorder is diagnosed the principal, along with the core classroom teacher, reading and math specialist, meet to determine if acceptable accommodations can be made. If there are not acceptable accommodations, the principal meets with the parents to discuss alternative instructional learning institutions, which would lead to greater success for the student.

Middle Division Special Educational Needs Services

In the middle division (Grades 6-8) teachers work with students individually and are flexible in classroom accommodations. These accommodations include: seat location, flexible seating options, study hall, and extra help before/after school and at lunch. Our teachers identify the needs of students based on the subject area and assist the student to take an active and responsible role in achieving success. The counselor meets with students to devise a study plan and checks weekly grades and missing assignments. The counselor and teachers continually review organization/binder systems and periodically check locker organization.

Teacher Responsibility

Teachers monitor student grades through an *Academic Status Report* which is compiled weekly by the counseling office and notes students' academic averages below 69 percent. Teachers are expected to work with students to create a plan of action, communicate with parents, and share information with the grade level team at Academic Meetings. Social and emotional issues are also addressed at the weekly meetings and the middle school counselor intervenes as needed. Teachers continue to ensure that students are adhering to their plan, staying organized, and following the mission of Notre Dame. Our goal is to offer students support and with that, the opportunity to improve their grades and notice the rewards of their efforts.

For ongoing issues, the counselor meets with parents/students to discuss possible solutions (tutors, learning centers, medicines) and discuss family routines to help the students. If necessary, the counselor recommends outside evaluations or additional help. Parents who request Special Education services may utilize Pontiac School District Special Education Services, however most families use personal doctors and other outside agencies. A reading teacher at the lower division administers testing when necessary to evaluate current struggling middle division students.

Upper Division Special Educational Needs Services

In the upper division, (Grades 9-12), counselors meet with students requiring additional assistance in order to coordinate their needs with teachers. Teachers are expected to provide an optimal learning environment for each student. A student diagnosed with a particular need meets with his or her counselor who provides support and communicates suggestions to the student's teachers. There is no credentialed SEN resource teacher on site.

In the upper division, we have several students who utilize the counseling office for extended time and alternate site testing, overseen by our counseling secretary. We are currently in discussion with our administration to determine a more effective solution to address this need.

Freshmen are the primary focus of assistance with study skills, organization, and time management. Grade reports are generated at least once per week to monitor all student grades. All students with academic averages below 69% are required to meet with the counselor to help determine the problems and to implement possible solutions. The goal is to encourage students to take an active role in monitoring and meeting their own learning needs and abilities.

Freshman Seminar

At the time of admission, freshmen identified with low high school placement test scores, low middle school grades, or who have a history of challenges with workload are placed into a daily class called *Freshman Seminar*. In this class, the supervising teacher works with a small group of identified students. The focus is on organization, time management, and study techniques. A portion of the class time is also devoted to studying, homework, and guided review sessions.

Assessment

In alignment with the expectations of the International Baccalaureate and the College Board, NDPMA students requiring special arrangements for IB and AP examination sessions will be required to meet with their counselor, administrator or program coordinator to identify the issue and determine and establish a plan of action when required. The procedure for establishing and providing accommodations during IB and AP examination sessions will be comply with the principles established by the International Baccalaureate Organization and the College Board.*

Conclusion

Notre Dame Preparatory and Marist Academy (NDPMA) does not have an all-inclusive Special Educational Needs Policy. As a private, parochial, educational institution we are not federally or state funded for special needs services and do not have support staff for meeting a wide spectrum of needs. In partnership with teachers, counselors, students, parents and administration, we work with each student individually to ensure that his or her challenges are met. If we cannot provide adequate support, the administration meets with the families to suggest other learning institutions that would foster greater success for that student.

*Please also note the document “Special Educational Needs” in [Towards a Continuum of International Education](#) pages 28-32 and [Candidates with Assessment Access Requirements](#) published by the International Baccalaureate Organization was used as reference in creating this document.