

Ascot High School Inclusive Policy for Special Needs students



ASCOT HIGH SCHOOL

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN SCHOOL INCLUSION POLICY

Overview

As an educational institution, Ascot High School aims to create an atmosphere where children with special needs feel included. Educational research done on school inclusion of special needs children has suggested that these students benefit tremendously from this educational approach. The literature suggests that they benefit significantly in their academic development as well as their social development. It is on this premise that this policy has been drafted to outline protocols that will guide us in our quest to create an inclusive educational environment for our special needs students.

The policy will outline key areas such as: key infrastructure and facilities/resources, curriculum management for special needs children, staff competency and social/emotional supportive systems for children with special needs.

Brief History on Disability Policy

In Jamaica, the National Disability Policy was enacted in 1999 which provides guidelines for cooperation between government and the society in addressing equal opportunities for people with disability. Education being a primary tool for upward mobility, this policy aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities had the opportunity of benefiting from the education system.

Classification of disabilities

Special Needs/ Disabilities include the following:

- Physical and mental disability
- Mental retardation
- Learning impairment, including deafness, speech or Language disturbance
- Visual impairment (Blindness)
- Emotional disturbance (Orthopaedic impairment)
- Autism
- Brain injury
- ADD
- ADHD

Ascot High school presently has students with physical disabilities, autism, adhd, and some with learning impairment.

SECTION 1

INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The readiness (implementation of infrastructures and facilities) of Ascot High School for the inclusion of learners with disabilities is paramount for creating an atmosphere where students with specific challenges will benefit from the education process. Are the infrastructures retrofitted for students with various disabilities so as to facilitate an inclusive environment? A question that must be answered when the aim is to ensure that all students feel included in the school environment. Disability Act 2014 explicitly states that the school environment must be retrofitted to meet the needs of special needs children.

Physical Characteristics

a) Facilities and infrastructures

Facilities and infrastructures play an important role in serving special needs students in inclusive schools such as Ascot High school where students are sent yearly and no accessibility for special needs students provided. Facilities and infrastructures provided by the school should be aligned to the needs of the students. For example students with visual impairment may need guide blocks and specific signs to indicate rooms and other facilities; students with hearing impairment need some visual signs, students with physical disabilities need ramps and spacious rooms in order to make them move freely. Students with attention deficit disorder will need less distraction and students with autism will need well organized classrooms.

According to Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey (2005), several things to consider in relation to facilities and infrastructures in inclusive school are:

1. Ramps where there are steps.
2. Width and positioning of door and doorways, opening and closing speed.
3. Arrangement of furniture
4. Classroom clutter such as games, bags, rugs, toys, sporting equipment.
5. Table, bench and shelf height
6. Lighting
7. Unobscured lines of vision
8. Distraction Access to sinks and other specialized classroom equipment
9. Access to drinking water (Pipes, Coolers etc)

10. Access to other areas of the school such as other building, sporting fields, playground
11. The visibility of hazards

Please identify specific areas on the school grounds where some of the facilities and infrastructures can be placed.

b) Classroom physical setting

Seating arrangement may affect students' learning and behavior (Miller, 2002). There are various ways in organizing students seating such as traditional seating, homogeneous cluster, heterogeneous cluster, circular, semi circular, split half, and individual learning space.

Specific immediate physical amendments to address needs

- A ramp will be placed at the front of the school's entrance for wheelchair accessibility
- A total of 58 ramps will be installed for offices, labs and classrooms.
- A total of eight bathroom ramps will be installed
- Ramps will be placed at areas for easy access to sanitation stations.
- Effective lighting for all classrooms
- Teachers will arrange seating in order to fully include students with disabilities

SECTION 2

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Curriculum design forms the core of the teaching and learning process in any educational institution. A curriculum designed effectively seeks to address all the learning needs of the students within the institution. Ascot High School understands the importance of a well designed curriculum , one that is tailored to meet the needs of students with special needs. Considering the needs of students with specific challenges, whether learning or physical, will allow Ascot High to effectively design a curriculum that engenders inclusiveness while catering to individual needs.

Inclusive approach in curriculum design and delivery

- The school will gather data on the amount of students registered that have a special need.
- The data gathered will allow for the effective categorizing of the varied special needs whether learning, behavioural or physical.
- Curriculum will be tailored to meet the needs of students who are identified as having learning challenges. While still being a part of a traditional school setting , individualized education programmes (IEP) will be implemented to meet the needs of these learners. The approach to delivering the curriculum core subjects will be different from how they are delivered to other students.
- To further ensure inclusion of special needs students as it relates to the curriculum, students that may have a challenge but do not have a learning disability will be exposed to the same curriculum as the regular student population. They will still be exposed to the same assessments even though the mode of assessments may be different from other students.

How to Modify for Special Education

Teachers are often asked to modify instruction before, during and after a lesson to accommodate special needs students. Students will benefit from the following teaching practices:

- Pre-teach difficult vocabulary and concepts
- Teach the mental activities involved in listening — mental note-taking, questioning, reviewing
- Provide study guides/worksheets
- Provide visuals via the board or overhead
- Use flash cards to teach concepts

- Have the student close his/her eyes and try to visualize the information
- Have the student take notes and use colored markers to highlight them
- Teach the use of acronyms to help visualize lists (Roy G. Biv for the colors of the spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet)
- Give explanations in small, distinct and clear steps
- Provide written as well as oral directions
- Have the student repeat directions
- Shorten the listening time required
- Be concise and clear with verbal information: "Rihanna, please sit." instead of "Rihanna, would you please sit down in your chair."

Below, is a list of ideas to pull from when modifying a child's assessment or homework,

1) **Reduce workload**

- Keep activities short and give fewer of them. Additionally, list fewer problems on each page.
- Give the student a choice of how many problems/questions he/she chooses to do. This will allow for intrinsic motivation as the child sees it as having a choice in the assignment.
- Select specific problems and eliminate all the extra ones. This will allow for less distractions.

2) **Modify the content**

- Provide an alternate assessment.
- Plan lessons which coincides with the learner's interests.
- Allow for students to complete tasks at a lower level within the content area

3) **Provide support**

- Have an adult read assignment to the learner.
- Allow for extra time to complete assessments.
- Allow for brainstorming activities before assigning homework.

Learning to modify the curriculum to meet special needs students at Ascot High will be an ongoing process. The modifications may have to be altered as the years go on to fit our students' needs. Reassessment will need to continuously be done as students will be growing and making progress. We will also work with the special needs staff to get their input, feedback and suggestions as we continue to plan for the best way forward for these students.

Classroom setting and its importance to curriculum delivery to special needs students.

Classrooms must be designed in ways that allow for special needs students to benefit effectively from the curriculum. Seating arrangements must be considered as well as other aesthetics of the classroom. Children with specific needs must be seated in a manner where they can be fully engaged in the teaching and learning process.

Resources and personnel must be allowed for those students in the classroom who might need special assistance, for example students who are visually Impaired. Specific strategies must be utilized to deal with children who are considered as autistic or having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

SECTION 3

STAFF COMPETENCY AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I. Staff Competency

The staff plays a very important role in supporting students with special needs in mainstream schooling. The role of teachers at any institution is to provide knowledge to their students. Majoko (2019) explained that studies previously done revealed that most teachers were not prepared or trained to utilize different teaching strategies for inclusive learning. Ascot High School would need to provide training for the teachers who will directly be involved with the special needs students. Engaging in social- emotional learning is one thing that can be included in the training for teachers and other staff members. This will ensure that the teachers are properly equipped with various teaching strategies that will benefit all students.

II. Social/ Emotional Support

A support system is a network of people that provide practical and emotional support to an individual. Providing a social and emotional supportive environment helps to create a healthy inclusive school. It has been proven that when students have a social and emotional support system, they tend to thrive academically. The students would benefit from positive relationships with peers, teachers, parents and even community members. These relationships should be filled with encouraging words, helpful hands, a listening ear and open communication.

Ways to provide support can include:

- Parental workshops can be held to help them learn how they can provide that extra support for their child.
- A club for peer leaders could also be effective in providing social support for the students who are having trouble making friends. Helping them to create a support circle at school can increase their confidence.
- Having a support group meeting for parents and family members of a special needs child can also be helpful for the parent. This could be a method of having the parent vent on issues they may be having at home with the child.
- Include parents and communities in the school's social/emotional learning initiative and activities.

CONCLUSION

As educators, our core duty is to ensure that every child receives the best education in an environment that is conducive to their growth and development. Ascot High school's resolve is to create a space that is aptly equipped to cater to the needs of all students within its walls. The school will therefore work assiduously to ensure that the aforementioned come to fruition. This will be done through the continued training and development of our staff, infrastructure development and the garnering of the requisite resources vital to meeting the needs of all students.

References

The book titled Introduction to Disability studies prepared by: Mavis M. Ferguson (Forensic Social Worker September 2014 that mentioned the Jamaican story (Brief History of Disability Movements also Stigmatization, invisible disability. Marginalization

Policy on Education in Jamaica 2000 National Policy says persons with disabilities as the ability to fit into the educational system depends on the nature of the disability, socio-economic background and family support system. (75% had primary level and 10% secondary education

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