



**CARROLLWOOD  
DAY SCHOOL**  
*Education with Character*

## **Carrollwood Day School Inclusion Policy**

Reviewed July 24, 2025

### **Philosophy**

***“When students are seen for who they are and considered in terms of their strengths and challenges, not their labels, teachers are better able to create learning opportunities that enable every student to develop and pursue appropriate personal goals.”***

***International Baccalaureate Organization***

At CDS, we are committed to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and equitable learning environment that reflects the International Baccalaureate (IB) philosophy of inclusion, which recognizes diversity as a strength and supports the right of every student to access high-quality education. We believe that learners can achieve success when they are provided with meaningful opportunities, personalized support, and a nurturing, respectful community.

Guided by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), our approach ensures that learning is accessible, engaging, and flexible—designed to meet the diverse needs, strengths, and interests of all students from the outset. We embrace best practices in differentiation, scaffolding, and proactive planning to remove barriers to learning and promote independence, agency, and growth for every student.

Inclusion at CDS is a shared responsibility and realized through a collaborative team approach involving educators, learning specialists, students, families, and other support professionals. Through open communication, mutual respect, ongoing reflection, and problem-solving, we work together to identify and implement effective strategies that empower all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our goal is to ensure that every student feels valued, challenged, and supported on their individual learning journey.

## General Policy

CDS is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities. In accordance with applicable laws and best practices in education, CDS does not discriminate on the basis of disability at any stage of the educational experience—including the application process, admission decisions, enrollment, or throughout a student's time at CDS.

As an independent school that does not receive federal funding, CDS is not required to implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans. However, we recognize the valuable insights these public school plans can provide. Families are encouraged to share any such documentation, including evaluations, in order to help inform how CDS can best support their child's learning needs.

CDS provides reasonable accommodations to students with formally documented disabilities, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration of the educational program or place an undue burden on the school. In alignment with the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), CDS is also committed to differentiating instruction to support diverse learners and to promote full access to the curriculum. CDS does not modify curriculum, as all students are held to the same high-quality standards.

Our team works collaboratively with families, students, and faculty to ensure each child is a good fit and has the opportunity to reach their potential in a respectful, responsive, and inclusive environment.

## Rights and Responsibilities

### Administrators

#### **Rights:**

- Maintain the integrity of the school's mission and programs.
- Determine whether requested accommodations would result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Ensure nondiscriminatory practices are upheld during admissions, enrollment, and throughout the student experience.
- Foster an inclusive school culture aligned with IDEA principles and IB

philosophy.

- Support and guide staff in making informed decisions around accommodations and differentiation.

## Learning Specialists

### Rights:

- Access relevant student documentation, including previous IEPs and 504 Plans (when shared voluntarily by families), and evaluations to inform support strategies.

### Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with families, students, teachers, and administrators to understand and address student needs.
- Recommend and help implement reasonable accommodations and instructional strategies.
- Advocate for inclusive practices within the CDS framework.

## Teachers

### Rights:

- Receive support and professional development to meet the needs of students with a variety of learner differences or disabilities.
- Work within the school's curriculum and policies without being expected to implement accommodations that impede the learning of other students or cause undue burden.

### Responsibilities:

- Differentiate instruction appropriately in accordance with IB standards and best practices.
- Implement reasonable accommodations as agreed upon through collaboration.
- Foster a respectful and inclusive classroom environment for all learners.

## Parents

### Rights:

- Be treated as valued partners in their child's education.
- Share documentation such as evaluations, previous IEPs or 504 Plans to help inform CDS of their child's learning needs.

**Responsibilities:**

- Communicate openly with the school about their child's diagnosis and educational needs.
- Collaborate with school personnel to support accommodations and differentiation strategies.
- Understand the limitations and scope of CDS's responsibilities as an independent school.

**Students****Rights:**

- Access learning opportunities in an inclusive and supportive environment.
- Receive reasonable accommodations based on formally documented needs.

**Responsibilities:**

- Participate actively in their learning process.
- Communicate their needs when appropriate and with support.
- Contribute to a respectful and inclusive school community.

**Assessment and Identification of Disability****Student Success Team Support Process for Students with Disabilities**

CDS values open communication and shared responsibility in supporting students with disabilities. Parents or guardians of current or prospective students are encouraged to inform the school of any diagnosed disabilities and to request accommodations or support that may assist their child's learning.

Student progress is consistently monitored by faculty to ensure academic and social-emotional growth. When a concern is identified—either through parent/guardian input or observations by educators—a Student Success Team is convened. This team typically includes a parent or guardian, the learning specialist, and at least one teacher familiar with the student. Administrators and counselors can also be invited to attend. Together, the team engages in a collaborative, student-centered process to determine appropriate next steps. Medical needs will be supported by Individual Health Care Plans, once cleared by the nurse.

Through this process, the team may develop a plan for instructional differentiation, intervention or, if needed, a formal CDS Accommodation Plan (AP). Some students needs may be effectively addressed through classroom-based strategies without the need for a CDS AP. The SST will work collaboratively with the student's parents/guardians and, when appropriate, the school nurse, to develop an Accommodation Plan that addresses both learning differences and medical needs

To inform decision-making, CDS may request current and comprehensive documentation from the family. This includes a full psychoeducational evaluation conducted by a licensed professional that clearly identifies a disability and outlines specific learning needs. While all professional recommendations are reviewed with care, CDS will implement those accommodations that are reasonable and feasible within the context of its educational program. This approach reflects CDS's commitment to inclusivity, student well-being, and high-quality education for all learners.

### CDS Accommodation Plans

Carrollwood Day School supports students with diagnosed disabilities through a collaborative and student-centered approach. When a formal diagnosis is provided by a qualified professional (e.g., psychologist or neuropsychologist), and the requested accommodations are deemed reasonable—meaning they do not fundamentally alter the academic program or impose undue burden—CDS may develop a **CDS Accommodation Plan (AP)**.

Supports may include, but are not limited to:

- Teacher-led differentiation and specialized instruction in and/or outside of the classroom
- Academic, social-emotional, or behavioral accommodations across settings
- Additional student check-ins and home-school communication
- Support with connecting to outside providers (e.g., tutors, therapists)
- Wraparound communication among staff, families, and support providers
- Access to resources and professional guidance for teachers

The development of a CDS AP involves the learning specialist, parent or guardian, teacher, and may include administrators, other relevant school staff, and the student. Once finalized, the plan is shared confidentially with the student's teachers and reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness.

All documentation related to the CDS AP is securely stored and maintained separately from a student's general education file. Medical documentation from a qualified healthcare provider will be required to support requests for health-related accommodations on a yearly basis. CDS requires a neuropsychological or psycho-educational evaluation every 3 years.

Follow-through on recommended accommodations is a shared responsibility between CDS staff, the student, and the parent or guardian, with consideration given to the student's age, needs, and level of independence.

### Communication of Policy

Current and prospective families should submit relevant documentation of a diagnosed disability when requesting specialized accommodations. This should include evaluations and signed releases to communicate with healthcare or service providers, if applicable. When a student is identified with possible learning needs, the Learning Specialist will connect with the family to explain this policy and discuss available systems of support. The Learning Specialist will also facilitate meetings and outline the support systems specific to each division, which may vary. This policy is available on the school website. Questions should be directed to the appropriate Learning Specialist.

### Language Support and Inclusion

As part of CDS's commitment to inclusion, language development is recognized as an essential component of student success. In alignment with the CDS Language Policy, all teachers share responsibility for supporting students whose home language is not English.

Each year, families are surveyed to identify the languages spoken at home, and support is provided to English language learners through differentiated instruction, targeted accommodations, and intentional language-rich practices across all grade levels. These supports may include additional small group instruction, differentiated learning opportunities, technology integration, and curriculum adjustments (not modifications).

When language acquisition needs intersect with other learning needs, students may be supported through a CDS Accommodation Plan, developed collaboratively with parents and relevant staff. These inclusive practices are guided by the school's Student Success Team (SST) and reviewed annually to ensure they continue to meet the evolving needs of each learner.

For further details, please refer to the **CDS Language Policy** and **Primary Years Programme Language Practices**.

### **College Board (SAT), ACT, and IB Accommodations**

To request accommodations through College Board, ACT, and IB, the student's full psycho-educational or neuropsychological testing must be current and on file with CDS. The parent or guardian maintains responsibility for taking the following steps regarding requests for standardized test accommodations, keeping in mind that the identification of a disability does not necessarily mean that extra time will be granted and is subject to individual guidelines. CDS Administration reserves the right to decline requests for application if sufficient evidence does not exist to substantiate the need. In these cases, and with the exception of IB, the parent or guardian have the right to apply directly.

#### **College Board (SAT)**

1. During the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, schedule a meeting with the SSD coordinator to input information to the College Board.
2. Upon receipt of the College Board decision, forward a copy of the letter to the SSD coordinator for CDS records.
3. If approved, when you log onto the College Board site to register for any future test, you automatically will be recognized as a student requiring an accommodation.

#### **ACT**

1. During spring of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year—at least 3 months prior to first intended ACT—print out the forms from the ACT website or see the SSD coordinator for the forms.
2. Fill out the forms, sign them, and bring them to the SSD coordinator for signature.
3. Mail the forms with registration and payment for a specific test date.
4. Follow the same procedure for each additional ACT date.

#### **IB**

1. During August of the 12th-grade year, schedule a meeting with the DP Coordinator and SSD Coordinator to review student documentation to be sent to IB for approval of inclusive access for IB Exams.

