



Inclusion Policy

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I. SCHOOL VISION, MISSION, AND PHILOSOPHY

VISION AND MISSION OF THE ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL

Our vision is to be a dynamic learning community where students become life-long learners, develop self-knowledge, and are challenged to excel.

The mission of the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) is to use the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools (Appendix B) to:

- BUILD an empowered and inclusive community of students, parents, and educators
- CHALLENGE each student to take an active role as an informed citizen in a global society
- ENGAGE the whole child - intellectually, social-emotionally, and physically
- HELP all students to know themselves and to be known well by their community
- COLLABORATE with the larger community to advocate for student-centered schools.

In carrying out our mission, we are guided by the following values and principles.

ANCS is affiliated with the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), a national network of schools focused on creating schools that are intellectually challenging, personalized, and democratic. CES schools are simply united by a shared commitment to ten Common Principles (Appendix A) that guide teaching, learning, and decision-making at each school. They are:

- Learning to use one's mind well
- Less is more: depth over coverage
- Goals apply to all students
- Personalization
- Student-as-worker/Teacher-as-coach
- Demonstration of mastery
- A tone of decency and trust
- Commitment to the entire school
- Resources dedicated to teaching and learning
- Democracy and equity

At ANCS, our Guiding Principles describe how we are to behave as members of the ANCS school family. We have an individual and collective responsibility to:

- Come to school and every class prepared to learn and do our best
- Respect each other, our surroundings, and ourselves
- Take responsibility for our actions and learning
- Resolve conflicts in a peaceful, thoughtful, and meaningful way
- Celebrate our individual and collective successes.

Additionally, the learners within our school community seek to embody the attributes of the IB MYP Learner Profile.

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-Minded
- Caring
- Risk-Takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

II. PURPOSE and PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSION

PURPOSE: Our purpose is to ensure, through policies and practices, that every student gets what they need while understanding that what every student needs is different.

PHILOSOPHY of DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION at ANCS

Diversity is a representation, visible or not, of people from different backgrounds and identities. It involves bringing different ideas, perspectives, lived experiences, talents, values, and worldviews together to represent the variety of communities within the School Family. Diversity includes, but is not limited to race, culture, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, socio-economic status, ability, health status, learning style, immigration status, education, family structure, marital/partnership status, language, and physical appearance.

Equity provides fairness by ensuring access to resources and opportunities that are reflective of diverse needs, identities, and experiences. This requires collective understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities, acknowledging historical, systemic, and individual biases and privileges, and being informed by current data and best practices. ANCS commits to pursuing equity in a way that preserves dignity through differentiation, culturally responsive practices, and authentic and open communication.

Inclusion is an action and a behavior that ensures that all people feel they are safe, welcomed, and that they belong. This means putting diversity into action with skill and intentionality to ensure everyone feels valued and included, and that they have support to develop and share their authentic selves, speak their truths, and engage in their best work. It means actively seeking out voices that have been traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized while being careful not to call any one person to represent an entire group or community.

PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

It is our expectation at Atlanta Neighborhood Charter that all of our MYP students, including students with exceptionalities, are able to fully participate in all our school has to offer. To that purpose, we ensure that necessary supports for students with exceptionalities are put into place. Whenever possible we utilize co-teaching approaches and supportive instruction designed to help students be successful in general education classes.

We believe our diversity strengthens our school family and all students are entitled to equity of access to education. It is our responsibility to:

- know students well
- remove barriers to learning
- focus on strength-based perspectives
- meet students where they are with the goal of promoting a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student.

Our goal is to support students with special needs in gaining skills, as well as fostering student independence and responsibility for learning through active engagement in grade-level curriculum. A continuum of services designed to meet the needs and learning styles of individual learners is provided. Our inclusion model uses co-teaching, and/or classroom support, and resource setting as determined in the IEP.

III. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PLANS AND PROGRAMS

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), our students with learning exceptionalities are provided equal access to the curriculum in the least restrictive environment (a free and appropriate public education, as per Section 504). Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School also adheres to the Atlanta Public Schools policies for all Special Education procedures, such as those concerning special education referrals, evaluations, testing, and student file cumulative records.

The goal at Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School is to ensure access to the IB programme by identifying and removing barriers to learning. Policies that govern inclusion through federal, state and local school district legislation will be honored through extensions of IB pedagogy that promotes student exposure to individualized teaching and learning.

IEPs

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written documents prepared by the Special Education Department for a student with a qualifying disability. The IEP is developed through a collaborative process involving the school, parents, the student (where appropriate), and other relevant personnel. It refers to the adapted or modified aspects of the educational program, focusing on priority learning needs while setting specific learning goals for a student over a set timeframe all set in the least restrictive environment possible for the student to learn. Effective IEPs are individualized, child-centered, inclusive, holistic, collaborative, and accessible. When complete, the IEP plan outlines teaching strategies, resources, and supports necessary for the student to achieve those goals. When necessary the IB coordinator will collaborate with the ESS department to modify assessments for students with disabilities. Any reasonable adjustments for a particular student pertaining to his/her unique needs will be considered.

504

Students with exceptionalities who do not need specialized instruction, but are granted protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973 (ADA), receive appropriate accommodations including on assessments, as outlined by their 504 Plan.e

MTSS

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) provides specialized behavioral and academic interventions

and supports to students with an identifiable need.

POWER 30

A designated time (30 minutes) four days a week to provide additional support or enrichment for students in the area of math. A smaller population of students will receive reading and writing supportive instruction during this time, or individualized support in reaching their IEP goals. This program works in conjunction with our MTSS department.

SSR

A designated time (10 minutes) four days a week to provide time for students to work on fluency with reading. Students are provided with support in selecting appropriate reading materials.

Opportunity Gap Task Force

A designated group enacted to strategically address gaps in scores between different sub-groups of students at our school.

IV. DIFFERENTIATION

Inclusive educational practices and diversity are integral in the MYP programmes. All students enrolled in IB programs should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum.

The process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals so learning opportunities can be created that enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve appropriate personal learning goals is of the utmost importance at ANCS. We acknowledge the important link between differentiation and thoughtful and adaptive planning.

Differentiated teaching may involve using collaborative and cooperative learning, a variety of learning practices, creative approaches to teaching and learning, differing formats and modes of exploring and presenting knowledge and understanding being made available to the students. By providing students with multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement as in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), students are given equal opportunities to learn.

V. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- **School Leadership:** the Executive Director and Middle Campus Principal and Assistant Principal will ensure that policies are in alignment with our philosophy and continue to provide support through staffing and professional development for progress in efforts related to DE&I.
- **ESS Department:** the Dean of Academic Growth and ESS Department Chair will ensure that

students with IEPs are served according to their needs. Additionally, they will continue to look holistically at the student body to ensure that all students are being served well.

- DE&I Co-Directors: The Directors of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are responsible for creating, maintaining, and shaping structures that will support inclusive practices at ANCS by:
 - Making diversity, equity and inclusion a clear and concrete focus of the school's strategic plan, with goals, priorities and timelines.
 - Expand the school's diversity, equity and inclusion scope to include work across a range of differences – learning abilities, gender (including non-binary), cultural, etc. – and not just race and class.
 - Expand the school's student centered approach to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.
 - Build an inclusive school community that values diversity and seeks ways to address inequities.
- Coaches: Develop appropriate professional learning opportunities for teachers to grow their capacity as culturally responsive instructors.
- Abide by our Guiding Principles in all interactions with the school community.

Classroom Teachers

- Familiarize themselves with this Inclusion Policy
- Provide and document supports for students.
- Participate in work related to DE&I that includes, but is not limited to: Advisory leadership, summer reading, in school professional learning, committees, and other outside workshops.
- Abide by our Guiding Principles in all interactions with the school community.

Students

- Participate in reflective and growth-oriented practices to continue working toward a more inclusive school environment
- Advocate for their own needs and interests
- Participate in their education through understanding of their own strengths, areas for growth, and needs.
- Abide by our Guiding Principles in all interactions with the school community.

Parents & Community Members

- Participate in the school community and take advantage of opportunities for voices to be heard
- Familiarize themselves with this Inclusion Policy
- Support students and staff in efforts toward our strategic priorities
- Abide by our Guiding Principles in all interactions with the school community.

ANCS promotes Inclusion by following the commitments outlined below amongst students, staff, parents, and community members:

- We agree to come **PREPARED** by being present and mindful, listening actively, and taking responsibility for our device use. We agree to give ourselves and others time to think and reflect and do our part to collaborate.
- We agree to show **RESPECT** by recognizing our own and others' feelings, checking on each other intentionally, maintaining confidentiality, and honoring time.

- We agree to take **RESPONSIBILITY** by recognizing our own biases, aligning our actions with our words, assuming the best of others, and acknowledging the impact we have on one another is more important than our intent.
- We agree to **RESOLVE CONFLICT** peacefully by being open to giving and receiving feedback, even when challenging power, by expressing our needs and feelings, and going directly to the source of our conflict.
- We agree to **CELEBRATE** by honoring each other's identities and stories. We will make time for connections and for expressing appreciation. We will celebrate mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth.

VI. INCLUSION IN ADMISSIONS

ANCS is a free, public school committed to serving all students who attend our school. Admission to ANCS is based on a weighted lottery system. Families who live within the attendance zones outlined in our school charter can place their students into the lottery. The lottery is weighted based on financial need, but is blind to sex, race, and ability. All students who attend the Middle Campus at ANCS participate in the Middle Years Programme. For more information about admissions, see the Access and Admission Policy.

VII. PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF INCLUSION POLICY

This Inclusion policy was created by the MYP Steering Committee in 2019 with improvements made based on input from the full faculty and staff. This policy will be reviewed annually to make additional improvements and will also be referenced during the planning of each unit of study. Students and families will be provided with this policy at the beginning of each school year so that it can be reviewed as often as necessary to ensure that the practices outlined in this policy are observed.

Standard: Culture through policy implementation(0301)

Schools develop, implement, communicate and review effective policies that help to create a school culture in which IB philosophy can thrive.

Culture Practice 2: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential. (0301-02)

- Culture 2.1: The school implements and reviews an inclusion policy that meets IB guidelines. (0301-02-0100)
- Culture 2.2: The school identifies in its inclusion policy all of its legal requirements and outlines the school's structures and processes for compliance. (0301-02-0200)

- Culture 2.3: The school describes in its inclusion policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and clearly states the school's vision for implementing inclusive programmes. (0301-02-0300)

Reviewed and updated September 2022 by full faculty and staff.

Reviewed and updated September 2023 by IB Coordinator, Co-Director of DE&I, and parents.