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**Special Education Policy**  
**Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry**

**RATIONALE**

Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry (“VISII” or “the school”) believes that all students have unique educational needs and that each person can play an essential role in our school community. Our model of education is inclusive by nature, whereby each student will co-create a personalized learning program with VISII teachers, in consultation with parents as needed and desired. We believe that all students should have equitable access to learning, opportunities for achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs.

**POLICY**

**Admission**

Every effort will be made to accommodate students in our school. There may be situations in which we are not equipped, experienced, or qualified to the degree necessary to admit every student who applies.

Because we are a small school and intend to remain small as a part of our learning program design, we may not have the economy of scale required to implement staffing, equipment, or programming needed to support all students adequately. Only in such cases would we ever deny a student enrollment.

**Continued Enrollment**

While it is the goal to create a stable environment for the entirety of a child’s middle school years, the school may find that, after admission, an extended assessment offers evidence that a student is in need of additional services and that the school lacks the resources to sustain an individualized plan for that student and meet their needs. Should this be determined to be the case, the Principal will contact the family and work with the Board of the Epiphyte Educational Society (“EES” or “the Board”) and family to find an appropriate program for the student. A prorated refund will be granted to the family.

**Instruction Format**

As consistent with our school’s philosophy and approach to education for all of its students, students with special needs are encouraged to be as independent as possible. We deploy additional staff and resource specialists as needed to support students with special needs over and above the regular programming and assistance to other students.

## **Teachers' Responsibility**

Teachers are responsible for the students' educational program. They communicate regularly with one another to determine best practices for each student, including those students with special needs. Teachers are also responsible for reporting to parents regarding a student's progress.

The school does not make a distinction between a teacher and a learning assistance teacher. All teachers are expected to offer the kinds of learning assistance that each student needs.

## **Principal's Responsibility**

The Principal is responsible for supporting the program according to the Individual Education Plan (IEP), and for maintaining the vision for inclusion in the school. They process new admissions, sign contracts with outside services where appropriate, and provide the same services as for all students (e.g. budgeting, staffing, staff supervision, facilities, safety, dealing with major concerns, appropriate curriculum, etc.)

## **Individual Education Plans (IEPs)**

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a documented plan developed for a student with special needs that describes individualized goals, adaptations, modifications, the services to be provided, and includes measures for tracking achievement. An IEP must have one or more of the following:

- the goals or outcomes set for that student for that school year where they are different from the learning outcomes set out in an applicable educational program guide; or
- a list of the support services required to achieve goals established for the student; or
- a list of the adaptations to educational materials, instructional strategies or assessment methods.

Each student reported on form 1701 with special needs will have an IEP on file unless:

- the student with special needs requires little or no adaptations to materials, instruction, or assessment methods; or
- the expected learning outcomes have not been modified; or
- the student requires 25 or fewer hours of remedial instruction by someone other than the classroom teacher in a school year.

The IEP outlines the educational plan for the student to enable him/her to function in a regular class. It outlines the program modifications and/or adaptations for the student and the services that are to be provided. An IEP should also include the following:

- the present levels of educational performance of the student;
- the setting where the educational program is to be provided;
- the names of all personnel who will be providing the educational program and the support services for the student during the school year;
- the period of time and process for review of the IEP;
- evidence of evaluation or review, which could include revisions made to the plan and the tracking of achievement in relation to goals; and
- plans for the next transition point in the student's education (including transitions beyond school completion).

The IEP is formed and implemented by a team, which may consist of any of the following people:

- Teachers
- The student's parents/guardians
- Teacher's assistant
- The student
- Peers
- Principal

The Individual Education Plan is created *generally* as follows:

#### Fall

- Meet with new assistants and teachers to discuss each Special Needs child.
- Coordinate the involvement of therapists and consultants (where appropriate).
- Provide support for classroom teachers as the students with Special Needs settle into their new class.
- Observe students with Special Needs in class.
- Hold IEP meetings to establish or to update IEPs.
- Administer or arrange for the administration of relevant assessments.
- Begin direct instruction for students.

#### Winter

- Assess and evaluate each students' program.
- Problem-solve with the school-based team as needed.
- Receive and process new applications.
- Continue direct instruction.
- Evaluate program.

#### Spring

- Hold team meetings for year-end reporting.
- Work on IEP for the following year.
- Apply for Special Education grants for the following school year.
- Participate in determining the student's placement and assistant placement for the coming year.

### **Personalized Learning**

It is important to note that because the school operates through a personalized learning approach, each student has a personal inquiry plan. Adjustments are made throughout the year to optimize the learning conditions for each student in the school, and not just as part of a formal IEP review process.

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Epiphyte Educational Society

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