



### **Philosophy of Inclusion:**

In our mission to prepare students to become lifelong learners in an increasingly intercultural world, we have developed the Morse Middle School Middle Years Programme around principles and practices that value the diversity of our student body and take into account the individual learning differences of all of our students: All MMSGT students are IB students and participate in the IB MYP.

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, while students with higher than average aptitudes are offered meaningful adaptations and extensions of the curriculum (a free and appropriate public education, as per Section 504). Morse Middle School also adheres to the Milwaukee School District's policies for all Special Education procedures, such as those concerning special education referrals, evaluations, testing, and student file cumulative records.

At MMSGT, the MYP is an all-inclusive programme that caters to all students, and provides tailored educational experiences offered not only by specialist educators, but by all teachers. As such, the MMSGT MYP Inclusion Policy echoes the principles of the International Baccalaureate MYP: "The central place of approaches to learning (ATL) helps teachers and students respond in a flexible way to individual learning needs..." (MYP: From Principles into Practice 27).

### **Aims/Objectives of Morse Middle School:**

- to create a school in which all students feel happy, secure, and valued
- to ensure that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- to ensure that all students participate in all school activities to the greatest extent possible
- to encourage all students to reach their full potential intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically
- to provide a caring environment in which our students become independent thinkers and problem solvers
- to provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the student's needs and abilities
- to provide effective, differentiated instruction and accommodations that ensure the academic participation of all students, regardless of ability

#### References:

Programme standards and practices (2014), MYP: From Principles into Practice, 2008 p. 100-101, Developing Policies, Procedures and Practices to Meet Student Learning Diversity, IBO, John Glenn Middle School Special Educational Needs Policy, Mariner Middle School Inclusion Policy



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- to provide a full continuum of special services to ensure that each student with an exceptionality is included in the academic and social environment
- to provide appropriate support and resources
- to ensure that our students are involved, when practical, in decisions affecting their future
- to ensure that parents of our students are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are encouraged to play a vital role in supporting their children's education
- to provide a collaborative environment for parents, teachers, and administration to cooperatively identify appropriate services to foster students' academic and social growth

### **Supports and Partnerships**

#### **Academic Supports**

It is our expectation at Morse Middle School that all of our MYP students, including students with exceptionalities, are full participants in all our school has to offer. To that purpose, MMSGT ensures that necessary supports and a full array of services are provided for students with exceptionalities such as specific learning disability, language and communication disorder, emotional and behavior difficulty, physical difficulty affecting mobility, sensory impairment, medical condition, mental health condition, and/or cognitive disability.

The continuum of special education services offered at Morse Middle School includes the following:

- various related services such as speech-language, counselling, physical therapy, assistive technology services, school health services, interpretation services, school nurse services, audiology and vision services
- consultant ESE teacher and resource services that are designed to assist teachers to help students be successful in general education classes
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) provides specialized behavioral and academic interventions and supports to students with an identifiable need.
- two self-contained Life Skills classrooms with a student-teacher ratio of 12:1+1

These service delivery models allow teachers to work with a lower student-teacher ratio and to accommodate students who require more individualized attention. Additionally, these service delivery models enhance the teaching and learning experience for all by eliminating

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the divide between students with learning exceptionalities and their grade-level counterparts and by encouraging a school-wide collegial culture.

In addition, at Morse Middle School, 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, as outlined by their IEP or 504 Plan.

Morse Middle School also uses the Multi-tier System of Support (MTSS) model to identify and support students who are in need of additional academic and social interventions. These supports are student specific and based on data disaggregated and discussed among a problem-solving team typically consisting of a general education teacher, intervention support specialist, administrator, school psychologist, school counselor and school nurse. Interventions include but are not limited to peer mentoring, check in/check out with a faculty member, targeted reading fluency and/or comprehension practice, and number sense training. Students receiving MTSS services are reevaluated cyclically, approximately every 8-12 weeks to reflect on the efficacy of the services provided. MTSS works hand in hand with PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) to serve all learners.

As a result of these supports and services, our MYP students engage in collaborative and cooperative learning, pursue creative means of research, and make meaning of the world together. In so doing, they set and meet challenging educational goals, and continually redefine what an inclusive education looks like, and what it can achieve for all of the stakeholders involved.

### **Social Supports**

To complement academic supports across the IB MYP, Morse Middle School also ensures that social and emotional supports are available. MMSGT has in place a mentoring program for students in need of additional support, where students are encouraged to reflect on and embrace their shared humanity, and to communicate their needs and wants in a way that honors both themselves and others. Our mentors are drawn from the local community to not involve outside stakeholders in our processes but to encourage students to make connections outside their classrooms and campus.

Our teachers also address the social and emotional well-being of our students through programs such as are prepared to navigate the full diversity of our student body; they have awareness and respect for individuality, whether related to ethnicity, culture, sex, or exceptionality, and they instill the same values in their mentees.

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At MMSGT, we share the ultimate IB goal of creating a better world, and actively promote the IB Learner Profile traits throughout all our daily endeavors, be they academic, athletic, social, or personal. Helping all members of our school community be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective is our “mission in action”.

### **Parents/Guardians as Partners**

At Morse Middle School, we feel it is essential that we partner with parents and guardians to guarantee that all of our students become self-assured life-long learners. We understand that parents and guardians are the primary influence in the lives of our students, and that they are a unique and valuable resource when it comes to supporting them.

Parents are invited to take part in all facets of Morse Middle life. Parents participate in the School Advisory Committee, help chaperone school trips, assist in classrooms, and help to develop programs and events on and off campus. Because communication between parents and guardians and the school is vital to fostering the sense of community Morse strives for, we make sure that parents are able to follow their children’s progress, grades, and attendance through the Infinite Campus portal, and to access lesson material through teachers’ GoogleClassrooms.

### **Students as Partners**

At Morse Middle School we value the individuality of all our students, and we champion them as they each embark on their own journeys towards their specific academic, technical, artistic, athletic, and social goals. In this endeavor, we encourage self-advocacy, a tool essential for all students, but especially important for students with exceptionalities. Because students have insight and awareness about what they need to be successful learners, we invite them to participate in their Individual Education Plan meetings and to assist in the crafting of their goals and individual processes.

**Created December, 2021**

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Review of the Inclusion Policy:

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Morse Middle School for the Gifted and Talented School community.

Written, December 2020 by Morse Middle School Leadership Team.

Reviewed and Updated, June 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024