

Sussman Middle School

Inclusion Policy

2025-2026

Downey Unified District Mission & Vision:

At Downey Unified, all students graduate with a 21st Century education that ensures they are college and career ready, globally competitive and citizens of strong character.

In alignment with our district mission and vision, we value inclusion and cultivating belonging for all. Our board goal #6 focuses on implementing and assessing all components of our equity plan to ensure our district continues to build on and enhance our practices in acknowledging and addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will use progress monitoring benchmarks to support our effort to create accountable and transparent systems that improve organizational practices and ensure all students are college and career-ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character.

Downey Unified School District is committed to developing all students to be self-motivated learners and productive, responsible, and compassionate members of an ever-changing global society. Our highly qualified staff foster meaningful relationships with students, parents, and the community while providing a relevant and rigorous curriculum in facilities that advance teaching and learning.

At Downey Unified, all students graduate with a 21st Century education that ensures they are college and career ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character.

Sussman Middle School Vision:

At Sussman Middle School, 21st-century learners thrive as they prepare for their high school journey to become college and career ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character.

Sussman Middle School Mission Statement:

At Sussman Middle School, we provide a safe, engaging, and rigorous learning experience that empowers all students to reach their full potential. We develop learners of strong character who demonstrate integrity, resilience, and compassion. Through a curriculum that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, we nurture future leaders who contribute meaningfully as responsible and reflective citizens in our local community and the wider global context.

"Sussman Middle School is a Candidate School* for the Middle Years Programme. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a

common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Sussman Middle School believes is important for our students.”

Philosophy of Inclusion

At Sussman Middle School, we believe every child deserves a world-class education. Guided by the inclusive philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP), we are committed to ensuring that all students receive the resources, guidance, accommodation, and differentiated instruction needed to become college, career, and life ready. Our inclusive approach celebrates diversity and supports the unique needs of all learners.

Recognizing Diverse Learners

We understand that students may have recognized or unrecognized special educational needs. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties
- Giftedness
- Language and Communication Disorders
- Medical Conditions
- Mental Health Conditions
- Physical Disabilities
- Sensory Impairments
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)

Commitment to Inclusive Education

Sussman Middle School implements the MYP using evidence-based instructional practices and interventions. Our highly qualified teachers deliver rigorous and globally centered instruction that supports the development of all students, whether through traditional classroom settings or alternative formats. We also provide tutoring opportunities open to all students, further supporting equitable access to academic success.

Local, State, and National Guidelines

Our inclusion practices align with all applicable local, district, state, and national regulations, including:

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004)

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990)

Continuum of Services

Students with exceptional needs receive support through a continuum of services tailored to their individual requirements:

Special Education Services

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) access specialized instruction, accommodations, and services designed to meet their needs. Each student has a case manager who collaborates with teachers and families to ensure success.

504 Plan Services

Students with 504 Plans receive accommodations addressing physical, emotional, or health-related challenges, ensuring equitable access to the curriculum.

Multilingual Learners (ML)

Support is provided at all stages of language acquisition, including English Language Development (ELD) for students at proficiency levels 1–3, as well as differentiated instruction and scaffolding to foster language development and academic achievement.

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)

Advanced learners engage in challenging and enriched curriculum opportunities through flexible grouping, acceleration, differentiation, and access to an accelerated pathway in mathematics.

Implementation and Monitoring

We utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to meet diverse student needs:

- Tier 1: High-quality, differentiated instruction for all students.
- Tier 2: Targeted interventions for students requiring additional academic or behavioral support.
- Tier 3: Intensive, individualized interventions for students with significant needs.

Student progress is monitored regularly through common formative assessments. Progress is communicated to stakeholders through regular grade reporting on Student Connect and Parent Connect. Teaching strategies are adjusted based on data and feedback. Faculty receive ongoing professional development in inclusive practices and differentiation to ensure effective implementation.

Exemptions from MYP Requirements

While Sussman Middle School strives to include all students in the MYP, exemptions may apply when district, state, or national mandates conflict with MYP requirements. Examples include:

- Placement in a remedial course based on reading and math test scores.
- Enrollment in credit recovery classes.
- Determinations made by an IEP or 504 team based on specific student needs.

Commitment to Collaboration

Our inclusion policy reflects the collective efforts of students, families, educators, and the community. Together, we strive to create an inclusive environment that fosters academic excellence and the development of global citizens.

Reviewed and Approved by the Sussman Middle School MYP Inclusion Policy Committee

Date of Review: August 2025, January 2025