

IPPs – FAQ by CMHS Parents

Q: What is an IPP?

A: An IPP is “a concise plan of action designed to address students’ special education needs, and is based on diagnostic information which provides the basis for intervention strategies.”

Q: What does IPP stand for?

A: Individual Program Plan

Q: Who receives an IPP?

If a student receives a medical, psychological, or learning diagnosis that impacts their learning and/or experience at school, *and* it is shared with the school, an IPP is initiated.

Q: Who do I ask if I have questions about my student’s IPP?

A: Your first point of contact is your student’s homeroom teacher. If they are unable to answer your question, they will refer you to the Inclusive Education Learning Leader and/or Guidance and/or Admin, as necessary. If you have questions specific to a particular class or course, you can direct it to their classroom teacher.

Q: What is included in an IPP?

A: Things that may be included on an IPP at Central Memorial High School are:

- Conditions for Success: these are supports that have been accessed or used previously, and have been demonstrated to be supportive of the student’s learning and success.
 - Note: conditions for success can be updated at any time.
- Priority Learning Cycles: these are goals set by the student (in collaboration with parents and teachers).
 - PLCs include a “current learning” (a strengths-based summary of where the student is currently at with a particular skill or area for growth), a “target” (the goal) and strategies (ways to attempt to achieve the goal).
 - PLCs are recommended when a student (and/or parent and/or teacher) identify an area for growth based on their diagnosis or diagnoses, and current learning (based on classroom assessment).
 - Students may have between 1-3 PLCs on their IPP at any given time. The number of PLCs is based on what the student, parent and teacher team determine best fit the student’s current context, capacity, and need.
 - PLCs can also be used to support a student trialling a new learning support or strategy, in order to document progress and success.
- Specialized Assessments: an overview of assessments that support diagnoses. Includes:
 - the type of assessment
 - the date of assessment
 - the assessor
 - the diagnosis or diagnoses
 - other relevant details from the assessment

- **Key Understandings:** any other relevant information that a student wishes to share with their learning team. Can include:
 - An overview of the student's understanding of their learning style(s) and needs
 - Information on current barriers or challenges
 - Medical understandings
 - A summary of medications
 - Transition summaries (school-school or grade-grade)
- **Supports and Services:** lists out any supports and services that the student may be accessing. Can include:
 - In-school supports and services (accessed by all students)
 - In-school supports and services (specialized, or accessed by referral)
 - Out-of school or community supports and services (specialized programs, psychologist, medical team, etc)

Q: What are accommodations?

A: An accommodation is a change or alteration to the regular way a student is expected to learn, complete assignments or participate in the classroom. There are three types of accommodations:

- environmental accommodations; e.g., alternative seating
- instructional accommodations; e.g., providing copies of notes
- assessment accommodations; e.g., extra time

Q: What accommodations are available for my student at CMHS?

A: To support inclusive educational policies, the CBE has moved to the Collaborative Response Model, which outlines a need for a continuum of supports for students. "The establishment of a continuum of supports is essential for all schools, to organize, articulate and tier the strategies, accommodations and interventions available to support the diverse needs of students. A comprehensive continuum of supports, developed and refined over time, helps to inform the collective question "so now what should we do?" and ensures the tiering of supports, not students" (Jigsaw Learning, 2023).

Tier One supports and strategies are universal, and delivered in the classroom for all learners. Many instructional practices and assessment accommodations that were previously targeted and delivered to specific students are now common practice and available to all. There is not a separate pedagogy for inclusion; good teaching is good teaching for all.

Tier One supports and strategies students can expect to be embedded in all classrooms and structures at Central Memorial High School are:

- welcoming, caring, safe and respectful learning environments (including trauma-informed teaching practices)
- course outlines
- a multimodal approach to instruction (ie pairing verbal with visual) whenever possible
- access to additional learning/tutorials from teachers, outside of class time

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- access to extracurriculars and clubs based on student interest
- access to course resources on an online platform (D2L)
- clear communication of assessment schedules and deadlines
- checks for understanding
- constructive feedback
- access to exemplars, examples, and non-examples
- formative and summative assessments
- celebrations of success
- access to graphic organizers
- access to lecture or lesson notes
- study guides for major assessments
- use of a calculator for assessments where computational skills are not being assessed
- extra time on assessments (double time)

Tier Two supports and strategies are more targeted and delivered to specific students, but still within the inclusive classroom environment. Tier Two supports might be identified as necessary for a student by the classroom teacher, might be asked for by the student, or might be recommended for a student by a teacher, psychologist, doctor, or other learning professional.

Examples of Tier Two supports at Central Memorial High School that a teacher may recommend for a specific student, or a student may request are:

- use of assistive technology like speech-to-text or text-to-speech
- use of earplugs, earmuffs or ambient noise during work periods and/or assessments
- increased font-size on printed materials
- use of math manipulatives during relevant learning
- use of visual timers
- supportive/strategic seating
- use of a cardboard privacy trifold
- use of fidgets and/or sensory items
- advanced notice of fire drills and lockdowns
- visual cues to support positive behaviour
- differentiated assessments to support current proficiency level on an outcome or outcomes
- One digit lock for student locker

Tier Three and Tier Four supports are accessed on a referral basis (through guidance or admin) and occur in addition to, or outside of the classroom. These supports may include things like:

- access to a regulation space
- access to a school-family liaison
- access to school-based mental health supports
- a behaviour support plan
- an attendance improvement plan

- a student safety plan
- strategist support
- change in course stream/level
- consideration of a specialized placement such as:
 - Alternative High School
 - Discovering Choices
 - CBE Learn

Q: How do I know what accommodations my student should be accessing at school?

A: Students can work with their homeroom teachers to discuss what tier 2 supports might be supportive for them based on their diagnosis, goals, and current learning. If a student is struggling to find success with tier 1 and tier 2 supports, they are encouraged to meet with their guidance counsellor to discuss further supports that might be helpful.

Q: Why can't you provide X/Y/Z to my student?

A: There are some recommended strategies, supports and accommodations that are not possible within the Central Memorial High School context. Resource allocation is always a constraint in public education, and unfortunately, this limits what is possible.

Q: Why does my student's IPP look different in high school than it did in elementary and/or junior high school?

A: As students transition from elementary and junior high to high school, their IPPs evolve to reflect their changing developmental stages, academic needs, and the distinct structures of high school education. Adolescence brings significant growth in cognitive abilities, social-emotional development, and independence. Consequently, the strategies and supports that were effective in earlier grades may no longer align with a student's current needs. High school curricula are more specialized and require students to manage multiple subjects, each with different teachers and expectations. This complexity necessitates adjustments in how supports are provided. For example, in elementary and junior high school modifications to instruction, or differentiation on assessments may have been a part of your student's IPP. However the structures in place in high school are such that differentiation is delivered via different course streams, such as the "-1", "-2" and Knowledge and Employability (K&E) path.

Q: What happens if my student's needs aren't being met at CMHS, even with the supports in place?

A: At CMHS, we are committed to supporting students through an inclusive education model that is guided by the Calgary Board of Education's (CBE) Collaborative Response framework. This model emphasizes a continuum of supports, which helps us respond to student needs with a tiered approach—starting with strategies available to all students (Tier 1), and increasing in intensity as needed (Tiers 2 and 3).

If your student is not experiencing success with the supports currently available—despite accessing the full range of what we can provide within our school context—we begin to explore other environments that may be better suited to their learning profile. While CMHS offers many supports, there are limits to what we can provide due to staffing, programming, and structural realities of a large high school setting.

In some cases, alternative educational settings within the CBE may be a more appropriate fit. Some programs are accessible through referral, while others are open to direct student and family application. Programs requiring a referral are accessed through the escalation of continuum of supports. When students are struggling, Student Learning Team meetings are held (often including the student and parents) in order to brainstorm what the needs are and what programs might be most supporting. But there are some specialized settings that do not require a referral, and we invite families to look into these on their own if they are interested. Alternative High School, Discovering Choices, and CBE Learn, all offer different learning environments, structures, and specialized supports that may align better with your student's needs.

Our goal is always to help students find the environment where they can thrive. If your student continues to struggle despite the supports provided at CMHS, we are here to work with you in exploring next steps that may include these alternative pathways.