



SUFFIELD
ACADEMY

THE ACADEMIC
SUPPORT PROGRAM



ABOUT ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Academic Support program at Suffield Academy is designed to teach and support compensatory study strategies to students who have been identified as having atypical learning styles.

Students are scheduled for academic support two to four times per week in group settings of approximately five to eight students. Student participation is voluntary as only through the diligence and commitment on the part of the student will the staff's recommendations work. Our program does not involve content or specific curriculum tutoring. The Academic Support Program utilizes assignments from a student's coursework to develop appropriate compensatory strategies. Additionally, the students in our program generally have educational testing in the above average and average range, and need help with executive functioning skills, attention strategies, or auditory processing.

Students who have documented grounds for special accommodations in classroom procedures and testing—be it standardized or academic—are expected to speak to their teachers about their needs. Students are coached in self-advocacy skills to facilitate this communication. Suffield Academy does not charge an additional fee for academic support services. Like all programs at the school, Academic Support is covered by tuition.

Student progress is measured in four key areas:

- Awareness, acceptance, and understanding of one's individual learning differences, challenges, and strengths
- Motivation for and commitment to making a change
- Evidence of a growing mastery of compensatory strategies and self-advocacy skills
- Application of strategies in academic program and elsewhere

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are students placed in Academic Support?

Students are placed in Academic Support through a variety of means. A newly admitted student with a history of support services or educational testing speaking to the need for this support will automatically be assigned. The individual schedule will be determined once classes are in session. Students may also be placed in Academic Support at the discretion of the Academic Dean's office.

Is there “drop-in” help in the Academic Support office during the school day?

Yes. The Academic Support office is open during all class periods Monday through Saturday. Students already assigned to Academic Support may come during any open period on their schedule.

Is documentation of a learning disability or other significant learning difference required for students to have classroom accommodations?

Yes. Most classroom accommodations at Suffield Academy are determined from a student's psychoeducational evaluation, which must be completed within three years prior to their arrival at Suffield.

What can be used for documentation of a learning difference and the need for accommodations?

We require full and current neuropsychological or psychological and educational evaluation report that contains specific tests to support a diagnosis in a specific area. A doctor's note is not enough documentation for a learning disability or difference. For example, ADHD can be medically diagnosed; however, a medical doctor's note is not documentation of how it affects a person's ability to learn, nor does it support the need for accommodations.

What constitutes a disability or learning difference and a need for an accommodation?

According to the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) individuals with disabilities have certain protections including the right to reasonable accommodations and equal access to programs and services. To access these rights, an individual is required to furnish documentation that the disability substantially limits a major life activity, such as learning, when compared to most people.

Does the Academic Support office evaluate students for or diagnose students with learning disabilities or differences?

No. The office can provide a list of qualified evaluators in the area, or will try to assist with finding a qualified evaluator near the student's home.

What academic accommodations are available for Suffield Academy students who qualify?

Dependent on testing, students may qualify for some or all of the following accommodations:

- Extended time for quizzes, tests, and exams (typically 50%)
- Use of a computer for written expression
- Use of a calculator
- Use of audio books/digital text and/or text-to-speech software
- Copies of class notes, power points, etc.
- Language waiver (after careful consideration and consultation with the Academic Dean and College Counseling)

What if my child's evaluation lists other accommodations?

Evaluations will sometimes list several other accommodations, modifications, and recommendations for students that are not compatible with Suffield Academy's educational program.

How many times a week may a student attend Academic Support?

Each student's program for Academic Support is determined individually. Attendance typically ranges from two to four times a week. Additionally, the program is very fluid, so an individual's schedule may change throughout the year based on specific needs at a given time.

When are the sessions scheduled?

Sessions are scheduled during a student's free block. Once these are scheduled, a consistent commitment is expected from the student. However, typically students do not receive any punitive consequences for not attending Academic Support as scheduled. It is hoped that the students will be willing participants in their Academic Support program.

How is information about a student's learning difference and need for accommodations communicated with faculty and staff working with the student?

A chart listing all students with accommodations is distributed to all Suffield Academy teachers within the first few weeks of school. The Academic Support staff updates this chart regularly. Our students' psychoeducational evaluations are kept on file in the Academic Office and Academic Support Office. Faculty, advisors, coaches, and staff who need or want more information may request additional student information in the Academic Support office. No copies or print outs of evaluations are disseminated.

Who is responsible for providing the accommodations?

Accommodations are provided by the classroom teacher; however, it is important for a student to communicate with his or her teachers regarding the best way to use an accommodation such as a computer or copies of notes. When necessary, the Academic Support center will assist teachers with the provisions of accommodations.

Does Suffield Academy provide assistive technology for students? The Academic Support office owns a subscription to audio versions of many of the works read in the Suffield Academy English Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and families are encourage to explore audio versions of other texts as well. There are also assistive technologies like Google Read and Write, Grammarly (text-to-speech) and the Livescribe Pen, which students are encouraged to explore.

Will the Academic Support office assist families in understanding the process of applying for accommodations on college entrance standardized tests? Yes. An informational brochure is sent to all Suffield students at the end of the sophomore year that details the process of applying for accommodations for the College Board and ACT. This is a complex process that requires steps for families to complete, and steps Suffield Academy must complete.

Does the Academic Support office hold yearly “team meetings” with teachers to review a student’s progress or discuss evaluation results? No. However, when necessary, the Academic Deans or Academic Support staff may schedule a meeting with a student’s teachers to discuss specific diagnostic information or accommodations.

Questions? Please contact
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