



LONDON DISTRICT
Catholic School
BOARD

Parent Guide to Special Education

Revised May 2017

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, Special Education programs and services for their exceptional pupils.

The purpose of the parent guide is to provide information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set out the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as “exceptional”, deciding the pupil’s placement, or appealing such decisions.

It is understood that a parent can, at anytime, contact the principal if they wish to access special services for their child.

Throughout this document, ‘parent’ will refer to one or both parents or guardians.

Information is also available on the board website: ldcsb.ca.

Philosophy of Special Education

The provision of appropriate learning environments and experiences for exceptional students and for students who have special needs is based on the following beliefs held by the London District Catholic School Board.

We believe that...

- All students educated in our schools have an opportunity to learn to live and to contribute as responsible Catholics in any society
- Students have a right to participate fully in opportunities for learning and growth appropriate to their needs and gifts
- Students that have exceptional needs are more LIKE other students than they are different
- It is our responsibility as Catholic educators and parents to provide for all students the opportunity to share the school experience which their brothers, sisters and friends enjoy
- An attitude of welcome acceptance, and indeed, celebration of individual differences and unique gifts is to be encouraged and supported among pupils, parents and staff of this Catholic school board

The commitment of the Board to these beliefs is expressed by the manner in which students with special education needs are welcomed and provided for in our school communities. The Board, therefore, delegates to the Director, in consultation with the Special Education Advisory Committee, responsibility for developing regulations and procedures to promote:

- Effective and ongoing communication among parents/guardians and school/system staff basic to a relationship of trust and mutual respect
- Shared responsibility among teachers, parents, students, school and system staff to enhance the participation of students with special education needs in the life of the school
- Recognition that the Ontario Curriculum is designed for all students; and that programs must reflect the abilities, needs, interests and learning styles of students of all gender, racial, linguistic and ethno cultural groups

- The co-ordination and utilization of system resources, human and material, in all sectors of the system to provide practical support for school and system staff in their efforts to meet the unique needs and gifts of all students
- Full access to community resources for students, staff and parents
- The development of partnerships within our communities to enrich the educational experience of all students
- A continuum of services and programs that reflect our belief in the provision of appropriate learning environments and experiences
- The concept that regular classroom settings with age appropriate peers is the optimum learning environment for students to experience community. Together, all students learn communication skills, socialization, independence and the value of self and others as contributing members of society.

What is an Identification, Placement Review Committee (IPRC)?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up IPRCs. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board. The Student Program Support Teacher and the classroom teacher are often members of this Committee.

What is the role of the IPRC?

A Special Education Identification, Placement and Review Committee will:

- Decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional
- Identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, including the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education
- Decide an appropriate placement for your child
- Review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Who is identified as an Exceptional Pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as a 'pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a Special Education Program."

Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (www.edu.gov.on.ca).

Behaviour

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- An inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- Excessive fears or anxieties;
- A tendency to compulsive reaction;
- An inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

Communication

Learning Disability: A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

- Is not primarily the result of Impairment of vision; Impairment of hearing; Physical disability; Developmental disability; Primary emotional disturbance; Cultural difference;
- Results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of:
- Receptive language (listening, reading); Language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating); Expressive language (talking, spelling, writing); Mathematical computations
- May be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as a perceptual handicap; brain injury; Minimal brain dysfunction; Dyslexia or Developmental aphasia.

Language Impairment: A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- Involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication
- Include one or more of: Language delay; Dysfluency; Voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

Speech Impairment: A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm and stress.

Autism: A severe learning disorder that is characterized by disturbances in rate of educational development; ability to relate to the environment; mobility; perception, speech, and language; or lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing: An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

Intellectual

Mild Intellectual Disability: A learning disorder characterized by: an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service; an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; A potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Developmental Disability: A severe learning disorder characterized by: An inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Giftedness: An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

Physical

Physical Disability: A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.

Blind and Low Vision: A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

Multiple

Multiple Exceptionalities: A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

What is a Special Education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- Is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- Includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What are Special Education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

What is an Individual Education Plan?

The IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- Specific education expectations
- An outline of the Special Education program and services that will be received
- A statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed
- A plan for transition to support the physical, emotional, and learning needs of your child upon entry to school; between grades; from one program area or subject to another; when moving from school to school or from an outside agency/facility to a school; from elementary to secondary school; and from secondary to the next appropriate pathway.

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- Must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request
- May, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a Special Education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

May parents attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older;

- To be present at and participate in all Committee discussions about your child;
- To be present when the Committee's identification and placement decision is made.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- the Principal of your child's school
- the student
- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, Board support staff, or the representative of an Agency, who may provide further information or clarification
- your representative (a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child)
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You can request the services of an interpreter through the Principal of your child's school.)

Who may request that others attend?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at an IPRC meeting.

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the Chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the Chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments and a summary of information.

What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- Contact the School Principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- Let the School Principal know you will not be attending, as soon as possible after the meeting, the Principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRCs' written statement noting decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding Special Education Programs and Services.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

The Chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.

The IPRC will review all available information about your child. They will:

- consider an educational assessment of your child
- consider (subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996) a Health or Psychological Assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if the committee feels that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision
- interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age if they feel it would be useful to do so
- consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.

The Committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a Special Education program or Special Education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older.

You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion. After all the information has been presented and considered, the Committee will make its decision.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will:

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

What will the IPRC written Statement of Decision include?

The IPRC's written Statement of Decision will state:

- Whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional
- Where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional,
 - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education
 - the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs
 - the IPRC's placement decision, and
 - the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and the Special Education services.
- Where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a Special Education class, and the reasons for that decision.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The Statement of Decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.

If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you have agreed with the decision, the Board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the Special Education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

Once a child has been placed in a Special Education program, can the placement be reviewed?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school at which the Special Education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent, waiving the annual review.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a Special Education program for 3 months.

What does a review consider and decide?

- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP. It will consider the same type of information that was originally considered by the IPRC, as well as any new information.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should be made.

What do parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

If you do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:

- Within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
- Within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a Notice of Appeal with the Secretary of the Board.

If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a Notice of Appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, the Board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to:

London District Catholic School Board
5200 Wellington Road South
London ON N6E 3X8

The Notice of Appeal must :

- Indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- Include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal, one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board provide written consent to a later date).
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting's ending. It may: – agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or – disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification or placement or both.
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation).
- You may accept the decision of the school board or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

What Special Education programs and services does the Board provide?

Programs and services within the Board are School-Based; System-Based and Community-Based:

- School-Based resources consist of the classroom and school teams, which may include the Principal/Vice-Principal, classroom teacher, Student Program Support Teacher, Early Childhood Educator, and Educational Assistant.
- System-Based resources consist of Administration, Consultants, System Teachers, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, Positive Behaviour Support Assistants, Psycho-Educational Consultants, Social Workers, Speech/Language Pathologists and other system-support staff.
- Community-Based resources consist of the Ministry of Education, other related Ministries, community agencies, treatment facilities, SEAC member associations and other resources within the community. The LDCSB has established partnership agreements that benefit all students.

What is SEAC?

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) consists of representatives of up to 12 community associations and 3 trustees, all appointed by the Board.

SEAC members are available as a resource for parents of students with exceptional needs, as well as for schools, educators, and the community. Many SEAC members are themselves parents of students with special needs.

SEAC is responsible to the Board for examining, reviewing and making recommendations regarding the provision of Special Education programs and services.

Some areas of focus are philosophy and goals, policies and procedures, organizational structure, program delivery methods, services and facilities, funding, and the review of the Special Education Plan.

What organizations/supports are available to assist parents?

Many parent associations and organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children. Some examples are listed below:

Association for Bright Children of Ontario*
Autism Ontario - London Chapter*
Canadian Hearing Society
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
Children's Aid Society (CAS)
Community Living London
Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI)
Council for Exceptional Children, Chapter 81*
Easter Seals Ontario
Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario*
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario Network
First Nations Representative (Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Munsee-Delaware Nation)
Learning Disabilities Association—London Region*
London Down Syndrome Association*
Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders*
Oxford Elgin Child and Youth Centre (OECYC)
Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH)
Parent Mentor Service (through TVCC)
South West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
Vanier Children's Services
VIEWS for the Visually Impaired
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children

*Currently has a representative on SEAC.

Ministry of Education and Training's Provincial and Demonstration Schools

The ministry operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with severe learning disabilities, including learning disabilities associated with ADHD:

Sagonaska School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville ON K8P 1B2
613-967-2830

Trillium School
347 Ontario Street S.
Milton ON L9T 3X9
905-878-8428

Amethyst School
1090 Highbury Avenue
London ON N5Y 4V9
519-453-4408

Schools for the Deaf:
Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton ON L9T 2M5
905-878-2851 | TTY: 905-878-7195

Robarts School
1090 Highbury Avenue
PO Box 7360, Station E
London ON N5Y 4V9
Phone and TTY: 519-453-4400

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville ON K8P 1B2
Phone and TTY: 613-967-2823

School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind:
W. Ross Macdonald School
Brantford ON N3T 3J9
519-759-0730

Francophone School for the Deaf and Demonstration School for French-speaking students with severe learning disabilities, including learning disabilities associated with ADHD:

Centre Jules-Leger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa ON K1Z 6R8
613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302 and 613-761-9304

Additional information can be obtained from:

The school principal

Catholic Education Centre
Learning Services
5200 Wellington Road South
London ON N6E 3X8
519-663-2088 | ldcsb.ca

Ministry of Education and Training
www.edu.gov.on.ca

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