

# *Special Education*

**PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**



**PARENT GUIDE**



Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

## MESSAGE TO PARENTS

*“I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”  
(Psalms 32:8)*

*“The Mission of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the Family and Church, is to provide, in a responsible manner, a Catholic Education which develops spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, social, and physical capabilities of each individual to live fully today and to meet the challenges of the future, thus enriching the community.”*

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The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board believes in the individual worth of all its students as Children of God and Citizens in a democratic society. As responsible members of our Christian community, we are committed to providing programs for individual children which will enable them to achieve their potential. Some students require extra assistance in order for them to meet their potential, which can be provided through program modification, resource and/or withdrawal help or a special education class. The Board provides a spectrum of programs and services to meet the needs of exceptional students. This guide outlines the rights and duties of the Board and parents in the identification and placement of exceptional students in accordance with the Education Act. Parents are encouraged to be involved in all phases of this process.

### **WHAT IS AN EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT?**

The term exceptional is used to describe a student who has exceptional needs and requires special programming. A student may be considered exceptional according to the Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education. These categories and definitions are contained in the Board's Special Education Handbook. A copy for you to refer to is located at your child's school or can be found on the Ministry website.

### **WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?**

A special education program, according to the Education Act, is 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 expectations, needs, program adaptations (in the form of accommodations and/or modifications and/or alternative program) and teaching strategies.

Such programming might be provided within a regular class, with indirect, resource and/or withdrawal assistance, or in a special education class.

Board level programs include classes for the Gifted and PDD/Autism. At the family of schools level, programs may include a variety of academic support programs which are designed to respond to the learning profile of exceptional learners.

### **WHAT SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO THE SCHOOL?**

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.

Special Services provided through the Board include Psychology, Social Work, and Speech and Language.

At the school level, Special Services may include Special Education Resource Teachers, Academic Resource Teachers, Educational Resource Workers and Child and Youth Workers.

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**NOTE: WHEN USING THIS GUIDE, THE WORD "PARENT" INCLUDES GUARDIAN.**

The aforementioned personnel can be called upon, using an interdisciplinary team approach, to assist in the design and implementation of appropriate special education programs and services. Where required, services are available from Itinerant Special Education Resource Teachers for students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, PDD/Autism, behaviour and physical/medical needs.

### **WHO DECIDES THAT A STUDENT IS EXCEPTIONAL?**

The Board's official decision that a student is exceptional is made by a Board appointed Identification, Placement and Review Committee. This Committee is more commonly known as an IPRC.

### **WHAT IS AN 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. Other members may include a consulting psychologist, a consulting psychiatrist, a vice-principal or teacher.

The IPRC will: Identify, Place, and Review

- I** • decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
  - identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.
- P** • decide an appropriate placement for your child
- R** • review the identification and placement at least once in each school year

### **WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE A STUDENT IS REFERRED TO AN IPRC?**

The school will have identified the student's special needs and will have provided support to the teacher in efforts to adapt the regular classroom program to meet the student's individual needs. If, with these adaptations, the student is not achieving according to his/her ability and grade placement, more significant accommodations and/or modifications may be required with support from consultative staff. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be developed as part of this process.

### **WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?**

An Individual Education Plan is a written plan of action. It is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil and the special education program and services established to meet the pupil's needs. An Individual Education Plan is developed for students who may require curriculum adaptations for their specific learning needs. It creates opportunities for parents, teachers, and others involved with the student to collaboratively identify individual learning needs and to develop specific teaching and learning strategies and/or curriculum adaptations which will address these needs.

The IEP includes:

- specific educational expectations
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be provided
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed
- for learners 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate post secondary activities, such as work, further education, and/or community living.

Regulation 181/98 requires that an IEP be developed for all exceptional students in Dufferin-Peel within 30 school days after the student has been identified and placed in a program. The Principal will ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

### **HOW IS AN IPRC MEETING REQUESTED?**

When the principal and the school team believe that a student may benefit from a special education program or when a parent makes a formal written request for an IPRC meeting, the principal of your child's school will formally request such a meeting.

Within 15 days of receiving a parental request, or giving notice of an IPRC, the principal will provide the parent with a copy of this guide, including a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

### **WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A PARENT IN THE IPRC?**

You are invited to attend the IPRC to participate in the discussion and contribute information. Students 16 years of age or older may also participate in the IPRC. A friend, relative, or representation of your choice may also attend the meeting to support you or to speak on behalf of you or your child.

### **WHO ELSE MAY ATTEND THE IPRC?**

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

### **WHAT INFORMATION WILL PARENTS RECEIVE ABOUT THE IPRC MEETING?**

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, you will be provided with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's identification and/or 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.

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 or a summary of information.

### **WHAT PROCEDURES DOES THE IPRC FOLLOW?**

The decisions of the IPRC are made:

- after considering an educational assessment of the student;
- after considering a health assessment by a duly qualified medical practitioner where required, with written parent consent;
- after considering a psychological assessment where required with written parental consent;
- after interviewing the student where practicable and with parent consent if the student is less than 16 years of age;
- after interviewing the parent except where the parent waives the right;
- after considering any information that the parent may submit about the student or that the student submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.

After making a decision, the IPRC sends to the parent and to the school principal a written statement of the determination of the committee, its recommendations, and the date it will notify the Director of Education.

### **WHAT WILL THE IPRC CONSIDER IN MAKING ITS PLACEMENT DECISION?**

Before the IPRC can consider placing a student in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will meet the student's needs and be consistent with parental preferences.

If, after considering all the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet the student's needs and that such a decision is consistent with parental preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. This will include the development of an IEP within the regular class.

If the committee decides that the student should be placed in a special education class, an IEP would be developed to support the student in the program.

### **WHAT WILL THE IPRC'S WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DECISION INCLUDE?**

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee's written statement of decision includes:

- whether the IPRC has identified the student as exceptional;
- where the IPRC has identified the student as exceptional,
  - the Categories and Definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;
  - a description of the student's strengths and needs;
  - the placement decision;
  - recommendations regarding special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that the student should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

### **IS TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED?**

Where the student is deemed exceptional and placed outside of the home school, or is physically disabled, the Board will provide transportation.

### **WHAT ARE IPRC REVIEWS?**

According to the legislation:

- A review IPRC meeting will be held each school year.
- A parent may dispense with the annual review by providing the principal with written notice of the request (an IPRC Waiver).
- A parent may request a review IPRC meeting at any time after the student has been in a special education program for three months.
- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered, as well as the student's current level of functioning in the placement. It will also consider any new information that is made available.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

### **WHAT CAN I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION OF THE IPRC?**

Parents are always encouraged to discuss concerns with the school principal. Parents have the right to request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss their concerns. You must apply in writing to the school principal within 15 days of the IPRC.

### **CAN I APPEAL A DECISION OF THE IPRC?**

Yes. You may appeal the IPRC decision on the grounds that you disagree:

- with the identification of your child as an exceptional student; or
- with the decision of the IPRC that your child is not an exceptional student; or
- with the special education placement of your child as an exceptional student.

### **HOW DO I MAKE AN APPEAL?**

Every attempt will be made to resolve your concerns at the second meeting of the Committee, which is empowered to change the original identification and/or placement. If, however, you still remain dissatisfied, your notice of appeal must be forwarded, in writing, to the Director of Education within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting. Your notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which you disagree and also 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 (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- 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 both 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 the student, if she or he is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in, all decisions.

### **WHAT DECISIONS DOES AN APPEAL BOARD MAKE?**

The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting 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, 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 ORGANIZATIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST PARENTS?**

Many organizations provide assistance to parents of exceptional students. Local organizations have representation on the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). This information can be obtained on the Board SEAC website or through the Superintendent of Special Education and Support Services.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Boards are required to have a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Membership on the Dufferin-Peel SEAC has included and/or continues to include representation from elected Board trustees and representatives from the following Local Associations:

Association for Bright Children (ABC)  
Autism Society of Ontario (Peel Chapter)  
Community Living Mississauga Easter Seals/March of Dimes Society  
Epilepsy Ontario  
Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario  
Peel Parents of Hearing Impaired Children

## **WHAT ARE THE MINISTRY'S PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS?**

There are a number of provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario. These schools include residential placement for exceptional students with severe disabilities such as deaf, blind, deaf-blind, severe learning disabilities as well as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

## **DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS WITH SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITIES, SOME OF WHOM MAY HAVE ADHD:**

**Sagonaska School**  
305 Dundas Street West,  
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2  
Telephone: (613) 967-2830

**Trillium School**  
347 Ontario Street South  
Milton, Ontario L9T 3X9  
Telephone: (905) 878-8428

**Amethyst School**  
1090 Highbury Avenue,  
London, Ontario N5Y 4V9  
Telephone: (519) 453-4408

## **SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF:**

**Ernest C. Drury School**  
255 Ontario Street South,  
Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5  
Telephone: (905) 878-2851  
TTY: (905) 878-7195  
Fax: 905-878-7400

**Sir James Whitney School**  
350 Dundas Street West,  
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2  
Telephone: (613) 967-2823  
TTY: (613) 967-2823

## **SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND DEAF-BLIND:**

**W. Ross Macdonald School**  
350 Brant Avenue,  
Brantford, Ontario N3T 3J9  
Telephone: (519) 759-0730

# CONTACTS

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPAL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

PSYCHOLOGY STAFF MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL WORKER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

APPROXIMATE DATE WHEN IPRC WILL MEET \_\_\_\_\_

**BOARD OFFICE:**  
Catholic Education Centre  
40 Matheson Blvd West  
Mississauga, Ontario L5R 1C5

Superintendent of Schools:  
(905) 890-1221

Superintendent of Special Education and Support Services:  
(905) 890-1221

Dufferin-Peel CDSB Special Education Website:  
<http://w3.dpcdsb.org/CEC/Programs/>

**COMMUNITY:**  
Associations with representation on the Special Education Advisory Committee may be found on the Dufferin-Peel CDSB website. Look for SEAC Information within the Special Education link.

This guide reflects Ontario Regulation 181/98. It is available in large print, Braille and audio-cassette format on request.

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