

Parent's Guide to
SPECIAL EDUCATION

MESSAGE TO PARENTS

“Each one called by name”
(Isaiah 43:1)

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.

The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board believes in the dignity of all its pupils 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 as learners.

Keeping the pupil at the centre, Special Education and Support Services practice is rooted in the home school community. This practice promotes inclusivity, facilitates accessibility and honours diversity.

Dufferin-Peel Catholic schools provide a spectrum of programs and services to meet the needs of all pupils including those identified as exceptional where ‘each one is called by name’ (Isaiah 43:1). The home school can provide general information and pupil specific information regarding programs and services available within Dufferin-Peel.

This guide outlines the rights and responsibilities of pupils, and/or parents/guardians and/or the Board in the identification and placement of exceptional pupils in accordance with the Ontario Education Act. Parents are encouraged to be involved in all phases of this process.

For additional information regarding programs and services in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, please refer to the Special Education Report on the Board’s website at www.dpcdsb.org.

NOTE: WHEN USING THIS GUIDE, THE WORD “PARENT” INCLUDES GUARDIAN.

WHAT IS AN EXCEPTIONAL PUPIL?

An “exceptional” pupil is a pupil who has exceptional needs and requires special programming. There are various Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education which are posted on the Board’s Special Education and Support Services website at www.dpccsb.org. A copy can be obtained from the school.

WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?

A special education program, according to the Education Act, is an educational program that is based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan) which contains an outline of educational services and specific objectives to meet the needs of the exceptional pupil. Such programming might be provided within a regular class, with indirect, resource and/or withdrawal assistance, or in a special education class.

At the Board and/or Family of Schools level, exceptional learners have a variety of programs and services available.

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 a special education program.

Support Services provided through the Board include Psychology, Social Work, and Speech-Language Pathology staff .

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

All of the above special education and support service personnel can work together to assist in developing the appropriate special education programs and services. Where required, services are available from Itinerant Special Education Resource Teachers for pupils with hearing impairments, visual impairments, autism, behaviour, physical/medical needs and/or for students in transition.

WHO DECIDES THAT A STUDENT IS EXCEPTIONAL?

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

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?

An IEP is a written plan which describes the strengths and needs of a pupil and the special education programs and services established to meet the pupil's needs. An IEP creates opportunities for parents, teachers and others involved with the pupil to work together to identify individual learning needs and to develop specific strategies and/or 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 the child's progress will be reviewed
- for pupils 14 years and older (except those identified on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate post secondary activities, such as work, further education, and/or community living

The Principal will consult with parents and the pupil (if he/she is 16 years of age or older) and take any recommendations of the IPRC or Special Education Tribunal into consideration in developing the IEP.

Regulation 181/98 requires that an IEP be developed for all exceptional pupils in school boards within 30 school days after a pupil has been 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/or, if 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 pupil may benefit from a special education program or when a parent makes a written request for an IPRC meeting, the Principal will refer the pupil to the IPRC to decide whether the pupil should be identified as an exceptional pupil and, if so, determine the appropriate placement for the pupil.

Within 15 days of receiving a request from a parent, or giving notice of an IPRC, the Principal will provide the parent with a copy of this "**Parents' Guide to Special Education**", including a written statement of approximately when the Principal expects the IPRC will meet and an acknowledgement of the parent's written request (if one was submitted).

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. Pupils 16 years of age or older may also participate in the IPRC. A friend, relative, or person of your choice may also attend the meeting to support you or your child to speak on behalf of you or your child and be present when a decision is made.

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 invited to attend. This letter will notify you of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and it will ask you to indicate whether you, the parent, and if the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil, will attend.

You and/or the pupil, if the pupil is 16 years of age or older, will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received. This does not apply to oral information submitted at the meeting.

WHAT PROCEDURES DOES THE IPRC FOLLOW?

The decisions of the IPRC are made after considering the following:

- an educational assessment of the pupil;
- a health assessment by a qualified medical practitioner if required, with written parental consent;
- a psychological assessment where required with written parental consent;
- an interview with the pupil where practicable and with parent consent if the pupil is less than 16 years of age;
- an interview with the parent except where the parent waives the right;
- any information that the parent may submit about the pupil or the pupil submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older;
- any information submitted to the IPRC that it considers relevant.

WHAT WILL THE IPRC CONSIDER IN MAKING ITS PLACEMENT DECISION?

The IPRC must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will meet the pupil's needs and also be consistent with parental preferences. If after this consideration the committee feels it is appropriate, the committee will decide to place the pupil 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 the pupil should be placed in a special education class, an IEP would be developed to support the pupil 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 pupil as exceptional;
- where the IPRC has identified the pupil as exceptional,
 - a) the Categories and Definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education;
 - b) a description of the pupil's strengths and needs;
 - c) the placement decision;
 - d) recommendations regarding special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that the pupil should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.
- The Chair of the IPRC will send a written statement of decision to:
 - a) a parent of the pupil;
 - b) the pupil, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older;
 - c) the Principal (if he/she made the referral);
 - d) the Director of Education of the Board.

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

A parent who receives a decision may request a meeting with the IPRC and must do so in writing to the Principal, within 15 days of receipt of the written decision.

Please note: Once a pupil has left a demonstration school and the pupil is referred to the IPRC for a decision regarding the placement of the pupil, a parent who receives a decision and wishes to meet with the IPRC may make a request in writing, through the Principal, to the Director of Education, within 15 days of receipt of the decision.

As soon as possible following a meeting with the IPRC, the Chair of the Committee will send a written notice to each of the persons described above, stating whether any changes in its decisions were made. If changes are made, the Chair will send a revised statement of decision, together with written reasons.

If you are still dissatisfied from your second meeting with the IPRC, there are appeal procedures which are described further in this Guide.

IS TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED?

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

WHAT ARE IPRC REVIEWS?

- A review IPRC meeting will be held each school year.
- The Principal of the school at which a pupil's special education program is being provided may refer the pupil to the IPRC for review of the IEP or placement on written notice to the parent, written request of the parent or written request of the Director of Education of the Board.
- The Director of Education will not make this request if:
 - a) The IPRC meeting has already been held during the school year; or,
 - b) If a parent provides the Principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided with written notice, waiving the annual review.
- A parent may request a review IPRC meeting at any time after the pupil has been in a special education program for three months.
 - a) A parent may not make a request more than once in every three month period.
 - b) Within 15 days of the Principal giving notice or receiving a request, the Principal will provide a written statement of the approximate time when the review meeting will take place.
- The review IPRC considers the same information originally considered and any new information that is made available.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identify decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should be made.
- The IPRC will provide their written decision to:
 - a) a parent of the pupil;
 - b) the pupil, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older;
 - c) the Principal who made the referral, where the referral was made by a Principal;
 - d) the Director of Education of the Board.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH A DECISION OF THE REVIEW 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. A parent may request a meeting with the IPRC in writing, delivered within 15 days of receiving the IPRC's decision, to the Principal of the school at which the pupil's special education program is being provided.

As soon as possible following a meeting with the review IPRC, the Chair of the Committee will send a written notice to each of the persons described above, stating whether any changes were made as a result of the meeting. If changes are made, the Chair will also send a revised decision with written reasons.

The Board will make a change in placement as a result of a decision made by the IPRC when:

- a) A parent of the pupil consents in writing to the placement; or,
- b) A notice of appeal is not filed within the required timeline (as described below).

CAN I APPEAL A DECISION OF THE IPRC?

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

- a) with the identification of your child as an exceptional pupil; or
- b) with the decision of the IPRC that your child is not an exceptional pupil; or
- c) with the special education placement of your child as an exceptional pupil.

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 identification and/or placement.

If, however, you are still dissatisfied from your meeting with the Committee you must file a notice of appeal. The 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 or within 30 days of receipt of the written decision.

If you are dissatisfied with the review IPRC's decision, 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 or within 30 days of receipt of the written decision.

Your notice of appeal must indicate the decision you disagree with and also 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 invite any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal to attend.
- You, the parent, and the pupil, if she or he is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in the appeal process.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE APPEAL BOARD?

The appeal board must make a recommendation within 3 days of the meeting ending. It may:

- agree with the IPRC's and recommend that the decision be implemented
- 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, the pupil if he or she is 16 years of age or older, to the Chair of the Committee, Director of Education, and the Principal of the school in which the pupil was placed, 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's recommendations.)

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 pupils. This information can be obtained on the Board Special Education and Support Services website at: www.dpcdsb.org or through the Superintendent of Special Education and Support Services/designate.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Boards are required to have a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). A list of all the local associations of the Board can be found on the Board SEAC website found at: www.dpcdsb.org.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Additional information regarding special education programs and services that the Board provides can be found in the Board Special Education Report at: www.dpcdsb.org

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 pupils with severe disabilities such as deaf, blind, deaf-blind, severe learning disabilities as well as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

A list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario can be found on the Board Special Education and Support Services website at: www.dpcdsb.org or on the Ministry of Education website at <http://tinyurl.com/EDU-Prov-Dem-Schools>.

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

DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE
Catholic Education Centre
40 Matheson Blvd. West
Mississauga, Ontario, L5R 1C5

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

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Special Education Website
<http://www.dpcdsb.org/CEC/Programs/Special+Education/>

Associations with representations on the Special Education Advisory Committee [SEAC]
<http://www.dpcdsb.org/CEC/Programs/Special+Education/SpecialEducationDP/SEAC/Membership.htm>

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

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