

PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Lighting the Way - Rejoicing in Our Journey

The purpose of this parent guide is to:

- provide general information about special education programs and services
- provide specific information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)
- set out the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional" and deciding the pupil's placement
- set out procedures for appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC
- provide general information about the Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- provide general information about the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Additional information can be obtained from:

- Your school principal, or
- The Superintendent responsible for Special Education
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board Website:
www.st-clair.net
- Ministry of Education Website:
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html
- SNOW (Special Needs Opportunity Windows) Website:
<http://snow.utoronto.ca>

Notes:

- If you wish to receive this Parent Guide in Braille, large print, or an audio-cassette format, please contact the school principal
- The word "parent" in this guide includes guardian



OVERALL BOARD PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



What is a special education program?

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

- includes accommodations and/or modifications of the regular classroom program based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation of the abilities and needs of the student
- includes an Individual Education Plan containing specific objectives and an outline of special 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 to meet the student's needs.

What special education programs and services are provided by the board?

Most students who receive special education programs and services attend their home school and follow a program that has been modified and/or accommodated by the classroom teacher with support from the program resource team in collaboration with the parents. The program and services may require that part of the student's day be spent in a smaller resource setting or that resource support be an integrated part of in-class activity. In all cases, inclusion in the regular classroom is the primary goal.

Detailed information on the programs and services provided can be found in the Special Education Plan on the board's website at www.st-clair.net.

The programs and services provided by the board are designed to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and regulations made under the act and any other relevant legislation.

IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

Summary of the IPRC Process

The following outlines the process which begins with the recognition by the classroom teacher that a student is having difficulties and ends with the formal identification of a student as exceptional.

TEACHER REFERRAL TO SCHOOL RESOURCE TEAM

The in-school team reviews the student's progress and develops an action plan.

SCHOOL BASED RESOURCE TEAM

The parent and school resource team meet to address the needs of the student.

REFERRAL TO IPRC

The school resource team, with parental support, makes a referral for an IPRC meeting.

IPRC

The IPRC determines the appropriate category and definition of the exceptionality and the placement of the student.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

The IEP is developed and implemented in co-operation and consultation with the parent(s).

REPORTING TO PARENTS

The results of the IEP are reported to the parent(s) in conjunction with each report card and the IEP is revised, as necessary, after each reporting period.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The school resource team reviews annually the identification and placement of the student with the parent(s).



What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires that all school boards establish IPRCs. There are two types of IPRCs: school based and system level.

The school based committee is responsible for all IPRCs at the school level. The committee consists of the principal (chair), program resource teacher, classroom teacher and/or guidance counsellor and a program resource consultant.

The system level committee is responsible for all placements involving self-contained classrooms. The committee consists of the Superintendent responsible for Special Education (chair), a program resource consultant, a principal, a program resource teacher and a classroom teacher.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional
- identify the area(s) of your child's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education
- decide an appropriate placement for your child
- review the identification and placement of your child at least once in each subsequent 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... or receives a special education plan". Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education. A complete listing of these categories and definitions can be found on the back cover of this document.



What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Placement in the regular classroom is the option of first choice. 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, 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. You are welcome to visit the class before making a decision.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

Parent initiation:

You, as the parent, may make a written request to the principal for an IPRC meeting for your child. Within 15 days of receiving your request, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement indicating approximately when the IPRC will meet.

Principal initiation:

The principal 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 giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement indicating approximately when the IPRC will meet.

Parental attendance at an IPRC meeting

You are encouraged to be present at and participate in all discussions about your child and to be present when the identification and placement decisions are made by the IPRC.

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

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- inform the school principal that you will not be attending. As soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services



Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

Either you, as the parent, or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. The parent and principal should be informed if others will be attending. Others who may potentially be invited to attend an IPRC are:

- 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/advocate is welcome - that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required



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. This letter will notify you of the date, time and place of the meeting and will request confirmation of your intention to attend. Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will have received a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

The chair will introduce everyone and explain the purpose of the meeting.

The IPRC will review all available information about your child.

The IPRC will consider the following information:

- an educational assessment of your child
- 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
- an interview of your child, with your consent, if your child is less than 16 years of age, and if the committee feels it would be useful to do so
- any documentation 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 your 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 will be encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.

After all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decisions.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

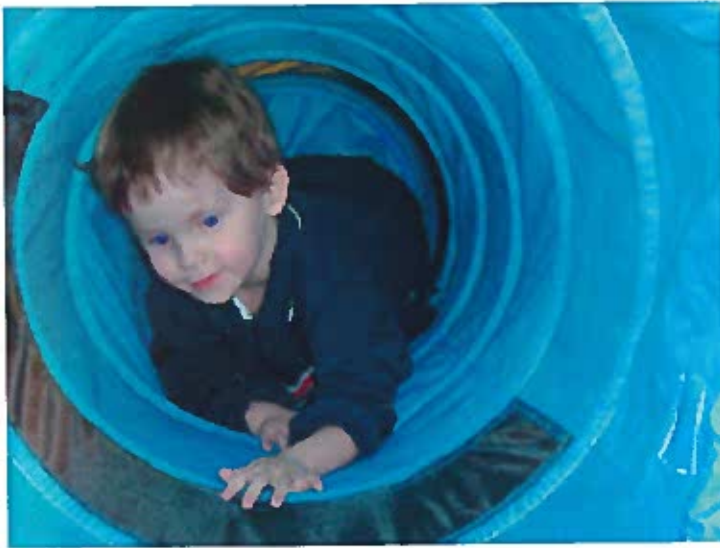
- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional
- the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified as they are defined by the Ministry of Education and Training
- the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs
- the IPRC's placement decision
- the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services
- the reasons for recommending that your child be placed in a special education class, if that is the decision made by the IPRC



What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

If you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC, you will be asked to indicate your agreement by signing the statement of decision document. 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 if you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, an IEP will be completed within 30 days of the date of the IPRC meeting.



Can the placement be reviewed once a child has been placed in a special education program?

An IPRC meeting will be held annually to review the identification and placement of your child unless you, the parent, provide written notice that you wish to dispense with the annual review.

You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been receiving special education services for 3 months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.

The IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.

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.



How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's 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:

The Director and Secretary of the
St. Clair Catholic District School Board
420 Creek St.
Wallaceburg, ON
N8A 4C4.

The notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which you disagree and include a statement that gives your reasons.



INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is a written summary of the student's strengths, interests, achievement levels and needs, as well as the expectations for the student's learning during the school year that differs from the expectations defined in the appropriate grade level of the Ontario curriculum. The IEP must be completed within 30 days of the date of the initial IPRC, or after a change in placement, including the beginning of a new grade. The principal must ensure you receive a copy.

The IEP is a plan developed in collaboration with parents and implemented and monitored by school staff. The IEP process is continuous and involves ongoing review, evaluation, and adjustments.

The IEP must include:

- 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
- A transition plan must be developed for *all students who have an IEP*, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. The transition plan is developed as part of the IEP.

Detailed information about the IEP may be found on the Ministry of Education web site at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

How do I, as a parent, collaborate in the development of my child's IEP?

You collaborate in the development of your child's IEP by advocating for your child's best interest through:

- providing important information about your child's likes, dislikes, learning styles, interests, reactions to situations, and about the God given talents and skills your child demonstrates at home and in the community
- reinforcing and extending the educational efforts of the teacher by providing opportunities for your child to practise and maintain skills in the home
- providing feedback on the transfer of skills among school, home and the community

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

What is SEAC?

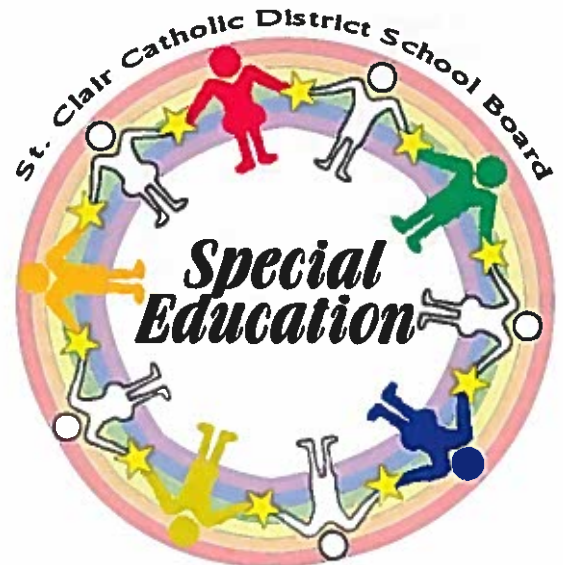
SEAC is a standing committee of the school board. It is responsible to advise the board on all matters related to the provision of special education programs and services. Membership on SEAC is comprised of two board trustees and up to twelve parent representatives. Representatives come from local associations of provincial organizations which operate to further the interests and well-being of all children with special needs. Representatives are nominated by their organizations and appointed by the board to serve on the committee.

For additional details about SEAC refer to the board's website at www.st-clair.net.



**ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey



CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

The Ministry of Education Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities are listed below. Only these Ministry defined categories of exceptionality will be used in the IPRC process. For more detailed descriptions of the exceptionalities, please refer to the board website.

Revised 2015

CATEGORY	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
Behaviour	Behaviour	A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems as to adversely affect educational performance.
Communication	Autism	A severe learning disorder that is characterized by: a) disturbances in rate of educational development, ability to relate to the environment, mobility, perception, speech and language b) 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 diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.
	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.
	Speech Impairment	A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical or sensory factors.
	Learning Disability	One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills that: a) affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are <i>at least</i> in the average range.
Intellectual	Giftedness	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences.
	Mild Intellectual Disability	A learning disorder characterized by: a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support
	Developmental Disability	A severe learning disorder characterized by: a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support
Physical	Physical Disabilities	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations.
	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 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.



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Lighting the Way — Inspiring Our Journey

420 Creek Street,
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 4C4
Telephone: (519) 627-6762 or (866) 336-6139
Facsimile: (519) 627-8230
www.st-clair.net