



St. Clair Catholic
District School Board

PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION



A Guide to Special Education For Parents, Guardians and Students

Purpose:

This guide has been prepared for parents and students to explain the process used by St. Clair Catholic District School Board (SCCDSB) to meet the special education needs of students.

This guide will provide information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process. It sets out the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as “exceptional” and deciding the student’s placement.

Philosophy:

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to fostering caring, inclusive and safe spaces. The Board priorities and values are demonstrated by the manner in which exceptional students and students with special needs are welcomed and assisted in our school communities.

Inclusion means that students with special needs fully participate in the life of the school community. Our goal is to educate students in the regular classroom program, wherever possible. Learners have the right to access the necessary special educational programs and services to support their learning.

The education of each student is a shared responsibility between the classroom teacher, the program resource team and the child’s parents/guardians. Through a collaborative partnership, the classroom teacher will be supported in accommodating, modifying, and personalizing the curriculum for learners who are exceptional.

Every **STUDENT** *can learn,*
just not on the same day,
or in the same *way.*

Notes:

If you wish to receive this Parent Guide in Braille, large print, or an audiocassette format, please contact the school principal.

*The word “parent” in this guide includes guardian.



IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires that all school boards set up an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the Board. In the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, the committee includes a principal, a program resource teacher, classroom teacher and/or guidance counsellor and a Program Resource Consultant.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC must:

- invite you, the parents (and the student, if the student is 16 years of age or older) to attend the IPRC meeting;
- describe the student's strengths and needs;
- decide whether your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the area(s) of your child's exceptionality or exceptionalities according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide on an appropriate placement for your child (regular class with indirect support, regular class with resource assistance, regular class with withdrawal assistance, special education class with partial integration, or full-time special education class);
- review the identification and placement of your child at least once each school year

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 an Individual Education Plan (IEP) containing special objectives and an outline of educational 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 is an IEP?

The IEP is a plan developed in collaboration with parents and implemented and monitored by school staff.

The IEP must include:

- the student's strengths and needs;
- specific accommodations and/or educational expectations;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be provided;
- a transition plan

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.

An IEP based on formal assessments can be prepared for students who are not formally identified as exceptional. The IEP is a working document that can be adjusted at any time.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

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.

The principal may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when school team believes 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.

May parents attend the IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and students 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at, and participate in, all Committee discussions about the student
- to be present when the Committee's decision is made

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- the principal of the school;
- other resource personnel 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;
- an interpreter, if one is required;
- other individuals whose presence is requested by either the parents or the principal of the student's school

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 if parents are unable to attend the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, the principal will try to reschedule. If the meeting cannot be rescheduled, the principal will forward the IPRC's written Statement of Decision to you, for consideration and signature, as soon as possible after the meeting has taken place.

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 and will consider:

- the results of an educational assessment of your child;
- the results of any other assessments, such as health and/or psychological assessments, if it is believed that such information is required to make an accurate identification or placement decision;
- the results of an interview with the student, 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; and
- any other information that may be relevant to the IPRC decision.

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;
- 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; and
- the reason for recommending that your child be placed in a special education class, if that is the decision made

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 Individual Education Plan (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?

A review IPRC meeting will be held each year unless you, the parent, provide written notice that you wish to dispense with the annual review.

You may request a review IPRC meeting at 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 committee 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.

What can parents do if they disagree with the 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 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 original decision, you can file a notice of appeal with the Board's secretary. *The Director and Secretary of SCCDSB, St. Clair Catholic District School Board, 420 Creek Street, Wallaceburg, ON N8A 4C4*

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

What organizations are available to assist parents/ guardians?

Each board has a mandated Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), comprised of nominated parent volunteers from local organizations and community members who have an interest in special education, board personnel and trustees. The role of SEAC is to consider and make recommendations to the Board concerning any matter related to the provision of special education programs and services. For additional details about SEAC, refer to the board's website at www.st-clair.net.

The following groups may be represented on the SCCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee:

Community Living Wallaceburg (519) 627-0777
Community Living Chatham-Kent (519) 352-1174
Community Living Sarnia-Lambton (519) 332-0560
Down syndrome Association of Ontario (416) 966-0990
Autism Ontario – Chatham-Kent Chapter 1-800-472-7789
Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent (519) 354-0520
Pathways Health Centre for Children (519) 542-3471
Brain Injury Association Sarnia (519) 337-5657 / Chatham (519) 351-0297
Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (519) 929-4311
VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children (416) 487-7719
Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario (519) 433-4073

What are the Ministry'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:

Amethyst School
1090 Highbury Avenue
London, Ontario N5Y 4V9
Tel: 519-453-4400

Sagonaska School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2830

Trillium School
347 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 3X9
Tel: 905-878-8428

French-language school for the deaf and demonstration school for French-speaking students with severe learning disabilities, including learning disabilities associated with ADHD:

Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 6R8
Tel: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302 and
613-761-9304

School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind:

W. Ross Macdonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3T 3J9
Tel: 519-759-0730

School for the Deaf:

Robarts School for the Deaf
1515 Cheapside Street
London, Ontario N5V 3N9
Tel: 519-453-4400

Where can I find more information?

More information is available from:

- your school principal
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board website: www.st-clair.net
- The St. Clair Catholic District School Board Special Education Department 1-866-336-6139 ext. 10227
- Ministry of Education Website: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html

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.

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CATEGORY	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
Behaviour	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: a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; b) excessive fears or anxieties; c) a tendency to compulsive reaction; d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.
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, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may: a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and b) 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.
	Learning Disability	One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly have an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and 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; b) results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range), and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support; c) results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;

		<p>d) may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual-motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);</p> <p>e) may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;</p> <p>f) is <i>not</i> the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.</p>
Intellectual	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.
	Mild Intellectual Disability	<p>A learning disorder characterized by:</p> <p>a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;</p> <p>b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;</p> <p>c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.</p>
	Developmental Disability	<p>A severe learning disorder characterized by:</p> <p>a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;</p> <p>b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;</p> <p>c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.</p>
Physical	Physical Disabilities	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 students 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 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.