

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



Special Education and Learning Services

Revised June 2021



You are encouraged to approach your school staff when you have concerns regarding the education of your child.

Contacts	
School:	Telephone:
Principal:	Vice Principal:
Teacher:	Resource Teacher:
Guidance Counsellor:	Student Success Teacher:
Psychology Staff:	Speech-Language Pathologist:
Social Worker:	Child and Youth Worker:
IPRC Date:	

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

Superintendent of Special Education and Learning Services
 Deborah Finegan-Downey

Mission Statement

Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body and soul to the fullness of life.

Vision Statement

Changing the world through Catholic education.

Message to Parents/Guardians

**“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”**

Jeremiah 29:11

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 students to achieve their potential as learners.

Keeping the pupil and the family at the center, the Special Education and Learning Services (SELS) department’s practice is rooted in the home school community. This practice promotes inclusivity, diversity, and facilitates accessibility for all learners.

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District schools provide a spectrum of programs and services to meet the needs of all pupils, including those identified as exceptional. The home school can provide general information and pupil specific information regarding programs and services available within Dufferin-Peel CDSB.

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 Plan](#) or the Board’s [website](#).

*In this document, *parent(s)* refers to both parent(s) and guardian(s). It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

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The Ontario Education Act

The Ontario Education Act requires that school boards provide special education programs and services for their exceptional students. The purpose of this Parent Guide is to provide you with information about the Special Education Programs and Services available to students within the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

What is an Exceptional Student?

An “exceptional” student is a pupil who has identified needs and may require specialized programming. There are various Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities as outlined by the Ministry of Education. The Categories of Exceptionality are posted on the Board’s Special Education and Learning Services [website](#). A copy can be obtained from the school. An “exceptional” student is a student who has significant, behavioural, communication, intellectual (including gifted), physical, or multiple exceptionalities such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program.

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, includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan) which contains an outline of educational services as well as specific objectives to meet the needs of the exceptional pupil. Such programming may be provided within a regular class with indirect support, resource assistance, or withdrawal assistance, or in a special education class full-time or with partial integration.

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 at 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.

At the school level, Special Education Resource Teachers, Academic Resource Department Heads and Teachers, Educational Resource Workers and Support Services Personnel (e.g., psychology staff) are part of the Special Education Team who supports students with diverse learning needs.

The special education team works 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, physical/medical needs and/or for students in transition.

Who Decides that a Student is Exceptional?

The decision to determine whether a pupil is exceptional is made by a school level or family level Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

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

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires that all school boards organize IPRCs. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a Principal or Supervisory Officer of the board. The remaining members may include Principal, Vice-Principal, or teacher.

The IPRC will: Identify, Place, and Review

Identify: Decide whether the student should be identified as exceptional and identify the area(s) of exceptionality according to the Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

Place: Decide an appropriate placement for the student. If the recommending placement is in a special education class, the IPRC must set out the reasons for this recommendation in their decision (Regulation 181/98). The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board is an inclusive board. In most cases, the recommended placement is in a regular class with indirect support, resource assistance or withdrawal assistance.

Review: Review the identification and placement at least once in each school year unless, under specific circumstances, parents agree to waive the annual review. Reviews typically take place at the school level.

What Happens Before a Student is Referred to an IPRC?

The school team will have determined the pupil's specific needs and 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 outlining some of the strengths and needs of a pupil and the special education programs and services involved 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 program adaptations to address these needs. The IEP includes:

- specific educational expectations (based on Ontario Curriculum expectations and/or Alternative curriculum 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
- a transition plan as outlined in PPM 140 (for students identified under the exceptionality of Communication: Autism) or PPM 156 for all other students

The Principal will consult with parent and the pupil (if the student 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 sent to a parent and/or the pupil (if 16 years of age or older).

What are Accommodations and Modifications?

Accommodations are teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required to enable students to learn and demonstrate learning. The provincial curriculum expectations for the grade are not altered for a student receiving accommodations.

Modifications are changes made to the age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. For students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), these changes could include expectations from a different grade level; significant changes (increase or decrease) in the number and/or complexity of the learning expectations; and measurable and observable performance tasks. At the secondary level, a credit may or may not be granted for a course, depending on the extent to which the expectations in the course have been modified.

What are Alternative Expectations?

Some students may require “alternative” expectations in order to succeed. Alternative expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario Curriculum.

Alternative Courses or Expectations, at the secondary level, are non-credit courses in which the expectations are individualized for the student and generally focus on preparing the student for employment (supported or independent) and/or community living. Examples of alternative courses include Transit Training and Community Explorations (KCC), Culinary Skills (KHI), and Money Management and Personal Banking (KBB).

How Often Can the IEP be Revised or Updated?

The IEP is a working document and is reviewed and updated at least once every school term. Parents are encouraged to collaborate with the school team in developing and revising the IEP and to discuss the student’s progress on an ongoing basis.

The school Principal has a legal obligation to see that the IEP is implemented. Any concerns about the IEP, or its implementation, should be discussed with the child’s teacher, school Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), and Principal.

How is an IPRC Meeting Requested?

An IPRC meeting can be initiated in two ways:

1. If it is believed that a child may benefit from a special education program, the Principal may, with written notice to the parent, refer the pupil to an IPRC.
2. If the parent feels the pupil would benefit from a special education program, the parent may request an IPRC in writing to the school Principal. Upon receipt of this written request, the Principal shall request an IPRC meeting. Within 15 days of the parent request, the Principal will provide a copy of this Special Education Parent Guide and a written statement as to when the IPR committee will meet.

What is the Role of the Parent/Guardian in the IPRC Process?

The parent is 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.

Who Else May Attend the IPRC?

A friend, relative, or person of the parent's choosing may attend the meeting to provide support. Upon request, other invitees may also be included at the IPR meeting.

What Information Will Parent/Guardian Receive About the IPRC Meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the parent will be provided with written notification (Invitation to IPRC) of the scheduled meeting. This invitation will include details surrounding the date, time, and place of the meeting. The parent and/or pupil (if 16 years of age or older) will be asked to respond to this invitation to indicate whether they will be attending and if a guest will accompany them.

The parent and/or the pupil, if the pupil is 16 years of age or older, will receive a written copy of the Report of IPRC, which will include recommendations made at the meeting and decisions surrounding identification and placement.

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 possible and with parent consent, if the pupil is less than 16 years of age
- an interview with the parent (where possible)
- any information that the parent may submit about the pupil or the pupil submits (if 16 years of age or older) on their own behalf
- any information submitted to the IPRC that is considered relevant

What Will the IPRC Consider in Making its Placement Decision?

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, the Report of IPRC will outline:

- 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 will be stated in the Report of IPRC.

- Through the school Principal, the Chair of the IPRC will send a written statement of decision (Report of IPRC) to:
 - a) a parent of the pupil
 - b) the pupil, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older
 - c) the Principal
 - d) the Director of Education of the Board

What is a “Placement”?

In making its placement decision, the IPRC may consider a range of options, such as:

A regular class with indirect support. The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.

A regular class with resource assistance. The student is placed in the regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.

A regular class with withdrawal assistance. The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50 percent of the school day from a qualified special education teacher.

A special education class with partial integration. The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards in O. Reg. 298, section 31, for at least 50 percent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

A special education class full time. The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student-teacher ratio conforms to the standards in O. Reg. 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

What Happens if the Parent/Guardian/Student Aged 16 or Older Disagrees with the Decision of the IPRC?

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 the parent/student aged 16 or older is still dissatisfied with the second meeting with the IPR committee, there are appeal procedures that are described further in this guide.

Is Transportation Provided?

Special Education Transportation requests are submitted to the Family of Schools Supervisory Officer and reviewed annually. Generally, students are assigned to central pick-up locations near their homes. Occasionally students are provided with door-to-door service.

A special education transportation request may be made if a student meets the following criteria:

- where the student has been identified as exceptional through the IPRC process and whose special education program or placement is outside the students' school attendance area
- attends educational programs in care and/or treatment, custody, and correctional facilities
- attends a Provincial Demonstration School
- has a medical condition requiring special transportation, which is supported by a doctor's note

What are IPRC Reviews?

Generally, school level IPRC meetings are convened annually for the review of identification and/or placement. Parents/students aged 16 or older may agree in writing to dispense with or "waive" the annual review. IPRCs are not waived for more than three consecutive years or during a transition, which involves a change of school, panel or program. A parent/student aged 16 or older may request a review of the IPRC decision three months after the placement has begun. The review cannot be requested more than once every three months.

What Happens if the Parent/Guardian/Student Aged 16 or Older Disagrees 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 where the pupil's special education program is being provided.

Upon receipt of this request, the Principal shall arrange that the IPR committee reconvenes to discuss the parental concerns involving the original decisions. As soon as possible, the Chair of the Committee, through the school Principal, will provide a written statement to the parent outlining whether changes were made to the decision of the original IPRC due to this subsequent 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 a Parent/Guardian/Student Aged 16 or Older Appeal a Decision of the IPRC?

Yes. A parent may appeal the IPRC decision if not in agreement with:

- a) The identification of the pupil as an exceptional learner; or
- b) The decision of the IPRC that the pupil is not an exceptional learner; or
- c) The special education placement of the pupil

How Does a Parent/Guardian/Student Aged 16 or Older Make an Appeal?

Every attempt will be made to resolve parental concerns at the second meeting of the Committee, which is empowered to change the identification and/or placement.

If, however, a parent is still dissatisfied from the meeting with the Committee, the parent 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. It must indicate that the parent disagrees with the decision based on the following:

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

What Happens in the Appeal Process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The school board will establish a special education appeal board to hear the appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three individuals (one of whom is selected by 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 they have been selected (unless parents and school 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.
- The parent, and the pupil, if 16 years old of age or older, 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 recommendation that the decision be implemented;
- disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the school board about the pupil's identification, placement, or both.

The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing to the parent, the pupil 16 years of age or older, to the Chair of the Committee, to the Director of Education, and

to 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.)

The parent may accept the decision of the school board or may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. A hearing may be requested in 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/Guardians?

Many organizations provide assistance to parents of exceptional pupils. This information can be obtained on the Board Special Education and Learning Services website [here](#), or through the Superintendent of Special Education and Learning Services or 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 DPCDSB's Board SEAC [website](#).

As well, associations with representations on the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) can be found on the following SEAC website [page](#).

Special Education Programs and Services

Additional information regarding the Board's Special Education Programs and Services can be found on the DPCDSB Special Education and Learning Services [website](#).

What are the Ministry's Provincial Demonstration Schools?

There are several provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario. These schools include residential placement for exceptional pupils with severe needs 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 Ministry of Education Provincial and Demonstration [School Branch site](#), the DPCDSB Special Education and Learning Services [website](#) or the Ministry of Education [website](#).

This guide reflects Ontario Regulation 181/98.

It is available in large print, and Braille upon request.