



# Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education

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**LEARNING TOGETHER**

Three horizontal bars in purple, yellow, and blue are positioned below the 'LEARNING TOGETHER' text.

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### **What is the purpose of this document?**

The purpose of this Parent/Guardian Guide is to provide you with information about the **Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC)**, and to set out the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as “exceptional”, deciding the pupil’s placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the IPRC. If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the contact information at the end of the document.

#### **Note:**

If you wish to receive this Parent Guide in large print, please contact Student Services at the address or telephone number shown on the cover of this Guide. When used in this Guide, the word “parent” includes guardian.

### **What is 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. Other members of the committee may include a special education coordinator, the resource teacher or special education head from your child’s school, and your child’s classroom teacher. In Ontario, Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up IPRCs. The duties of this committee are listed below.

### **What is the role of the IPRC?**

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the areas of your child’s exceptionality, according to the Categories of Exceptionalities and Definitions provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child such as:
  - regular class with indirect support;
  - regular class with resource assistance;
  - regular class with withdrawal assistance;
  - special education class with partial integration; or
  - special education class full-time. See page 8 for a detailed description of placement options.
- review the identification and placement options noted above, at least once in each school year.

**As part of the annual review process, the location and/or continuation of elementary and secondary regional/resource programs are subject to change.**

### **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...” Students are identified according to the Categories of Exceptionalities and Definitions provided by the Ministry of Education.

### **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, usually by the child’s classroom teacher; and
- includes a plan (called an **Individual Education Plan or IEP**) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education 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. The *Education Act* in Ontario requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils.

### **What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?**

The IEP is an individual plan containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil. It must be developed for your child, in consultation with you, as the parent/guardian. It must include:

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

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

### **How is an IPRC meeting requested?**

The principal of your child's school:

- must request an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- 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 receiving your request or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement noting an approximate date when the IPRC will meet.

### **May parents attend the IPRC meeting?**

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

- to be present at and participate in all of the Committee's discussions about their child; and
- to be present when the Committee's identification and placement decision is made.

### **Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?**

- the principal of your child's school;
- 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 – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. You can request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.

### **Who may request that others attend?**

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, the chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, a case conference will be held. During the case conference, information about your child that will be considered by the IPRC will be discussed including the results of assessments or a summary of information. Copies of written information will be shared between school staff and parents.

### **What if parents are unable to attend the scheduled meeting?**

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

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; **or**
- let the school principal know that you will not be attending, and 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.

### **What happens at an IPRC meeting?**

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC members will review all available information about your child.
- The Committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program 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 are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the Committee will make its decision.

### **What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?**

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 to it, 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 in its written statement of decision.

### **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;
- where 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; and
  - any IPRC recommendations regarding a special education program (including any referrals to the Ministry's provincial and demonstration schools);
  - where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

### **What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?**

- If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. 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 you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

### **Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?**

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal receives written notice from you, the parent, dispensing with the annual review.
- You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for three months.

### **What does a review IPRC consider and decide?**

- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.
- With your written permission, 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.

### **What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?**

- If you do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by 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 decision, file a notice of appeal with the:

**Director of Education  
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board  
156 Ann Street  
Belleville, Ontario K8N 3L3**

- If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

### **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:

**Director of Education  
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board  
156 Ann Street  
Belleville, Ontario K8N 3L3**

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

### **What happens in the appeal process?**

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board will establish a Special Education Appeal Board to hear the appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent) who has 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.
- The parent and child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in all discussions.
- The appeal board must make its recommendation within three 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 with reasons, in writing, to the parent and to the school board.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the District School Board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation).

The parent may accept the decision of the District School Board, or 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 special education placement options are provided by the board?**

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board provides the following range of Special Education Programs and Services:

### **Regular Class with Indirect Support**

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

### **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.

### **Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance**

- The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50% of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.

### **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 Regulation 298, Section 31, for at least 50% of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.

### **Special Education Class Full-Time**

- The student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class, where the student - teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, Section 31, for the entire school day.

**As part of the annual review process, the location and/or continuation of elementary and secondary regional/resource programs are subject to change.**

## **What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?**

The Ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled, 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. Placements in Provincial Demonstration schools are limited and are open to all students in Ontario. Admission to these schools is determined by the Admissions Committee for each school, following referral by an IPRC.

### **Demonstration Schools for English-Speaking Students:**

#### **The School for Students with Severe Learning Disabilities:**

Sagonaska School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville ON K8P 1B2  
Phone: (613) 967-2830

#### **The School for the Deaf:**

The Sir James Whitney School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville ON K8P 1B2  
Telephone and TTY: (613) 967-2823



**The School for the Blind and Deaf-blind:**

The W. Ross Macdonald School  
350 Brant Avenue  
Brantford ON N3T 3J9  
Phone: (519) 759-0730

**Where can parents obtain additional information?**

Additional information can be obtained from the principal of your child's school and/or by contacting:

**Student Services**  
**Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board**  
**156 Ann Street**  
**Belleville, Ontario K8N 3L3**  
**(613) 966-1170**  
**FAX: (613) 966-9322**  
**[www.HPEschools.ca](http://www.HPEschools.ca)**  
**E-mail: [student.services@hpedsb.on.ca](mailto:student.services@hpedsb.on.ca)**

**Superintendent of Education – Student Services**  
**Ken Dostaler**  
**156 Ann Street**  
**Belleville, Ontario K8N 3L3**  
**(613) 966-1170, extension 62312**  
**FAX: (613) 966-9322**

**NOTES:**