



Wellington Catholic
District School Board
We Have Faith in Education

Special Education Parent Guide

Message to Parents

The Wellington Catholic District School Board welcomes you and your child into our school system. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you as a partner in Catholic Education.

*As members of the Wellington Catholic District School Board
we are committed to our Board's Mission Statement and Governing Values*

Mission Statement

To continue to build a vibrant Catholic community committed to the celebration of each individual by fostering a love of learning, through quality educational experiences, enabling all to respond in a Christian way to the challenges of life.

Governing Values

We Know

- That witnessing the Good News of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Catholic Education.
- That each learner is entitled to quality Catholic education.
- That Catholic Education is a shared responsibility of home, Church, school, and community.
- That we are all unique and precious gifts of God.
- That our commitment is to foster the dignity and growth of each person in a nurturing, safe environment.
- That positive attitudes lead to success and happiness.
- That as Catholics we are called by our faith to serve others.
- That as an educational system we are committed to the official languages of Canada.

Our Educational Philosophy

As members of the Wellington Catholic District School Board we believe

- that all students should be integrated into the community school at both the elementary and secondary level for instructional purposes;
- that all students should be integrated into the regular classroom for as much of the instructional day as possible;
- in the Christian value of respect for personhood;
- that all parents have the right to expect equality of educational opportunity and attainment for their son/daughter;
- that all students have the right to:
 - a Christian experience of community;
 - learning opportunities that are committed to individual needs;
 - student evaluation that furthers developmental growth and learning;
 - support assistance when it is required to ensure equal opportunity

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parent guide is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set out for you 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. Parents are encouraged to be involved in all phases of this process.

Notes: If you wish to receive this parent guide in a Braille, an alternative format, please contact the board.

When used in this guide, the word "parent" includes guardian.

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.

Special Services provided through the Board include:

- System Assessment and Program Services
- Speech and Language Services
- Psychological Services for students with learning difficulties and behavioural needs
- Social Work Counselling Services

At the school level Special Services may include:

- Special Education Resource Teacher assisting in assessment and student program services
- Educational Assistants
- Counselling and Skill Development Services
- Child and Youth Care Workers

All of the above personnel help to develop and support special education programs and services. Where required, services are also available from specialist teachers for students with hearing and visual impairments. In addition, the Home Care School Health Support program refers to the services that are provided to exceptional students with physical/medical needs. These services may involve a Registered Nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, and a Nutritionist. These visits and or consultations with parents and school personnel take place in the school.

Who is an exceptional pupil?

An exceptional pupil is one “whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he/she is considered to need placement in a special education program.” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

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 specific expectations and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

Such programming might be provided within a regular class, in a regular class with withdrawal or in facilities outside the student’s home school for some of our exceptional students.

What placements are available for exceptional students?

1. Regular Classroom Placement

Many students with special needs are taught within the regular classroom setting with appropriate special education services. We consider it important that all children be an integral part of their peer group.

2. Regular Classroom Placement with Special Education Withdrawal

There may be a need to withdraw a student from the classroom to address specific areas of need. The student continues on their IEP in the regular classroom setting, but receives additional support from qualified staff. The amount of withdrawal support is dependent upon the particular needs of the student.

3. Designated Placement

For some of our exceptional students it may be necessary to provide alternative programs and facilities outside their home schools. This placement may include schools for the deaf or blind, care, treatment or correctional centres, or other appropriate settings. In some cases, it may be necessary to purchase services.

What is an IPRC?

An IPRC is an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (Regulation 181/98). It is composed of the school principal, the special education resource teacher, and a teacher representative.

The IPRC's function is to:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the area(s) of your child's exceptionality;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child.
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the meeting.

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 of approximately 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 committee discussions about your 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
- 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 may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

Who may request that they 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 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 it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if Parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the IPRC meeting. However, if you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school principal know 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 identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a regular classroom placement with Special Education withdrawal or a designated placement, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of 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 IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and if you **agree** with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, 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.

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,
 - 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
 - the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services;

- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a regular classroom placement with Special Education withdrawal or a designated placement, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of 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.

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 of the school at which the special education program is being provided 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 3 months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP. It will consider the same type of information that was originally considered by the IPRC, as well as any new information.
- 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 of Education.

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:

- 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 may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent, and your 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 3 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 in writing, to you and to the school board, 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 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 is an Individual Educational Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is a written plan. It is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. It also describes the student's progress.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed for each exceptional child, in consultation with parents. It must include:

- 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, 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.

What is available to assist parents?

The **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)** holds monthly public meetings to make recommendations to the Wellington Catholic DSB concerning the establishment and development of special education programs and services. SEAC provides specific information, advice, and assistance to parents/guardians whose children may require additional support. For more information on SEAC please call 821-4640, Ext. 209.