



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Parent/Guardian Guide



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DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

400 Taunton Road East
Whitby, Ontario, L1R 2K6
1-800-265-3968 or (905) 666-5500
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Parent/Guardian Guide

What is Durham's Approach to Special Education?

The Durham District School Board recognizes that within the student population a wide spectrum of educational needs may exist. Addressing these needs involves using a range of approaches. Responsibility for a student's education is shared by the student, parents/guardians and school team.

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 and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html>

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

What is a special education program?

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; 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 or developing and implementing a special education program.

What happens at a Case Conference?

The Case Conference is intended to be an informal, problem-solving team. The purpose of the Case Conference is to arrive at the best possible placement to meet the needs of the student. As such, parents/guardians are key players in any decision-making. It is hoped that parents/guardians will feel comfortable and free to participate actively in the discussion of their child's education. Students over 16 years of age may attend the Case Conference and participate fully.

The chairperson of the team will introduce everyone, explain the purpose of the meeting, and encourage parents/guardians to participate fully in the discussions. At the Case Conference the chairperson will ask that a summary of all information be presented to the team. Parents/guardians will be offered an opportunity to review this information. The Case Conference will review all available information about your child. The members will:

- consider and educational assessment of your child;
- consider, 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 they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older

The team may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for your child. Team 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. At this time, the team should describe the nature of the self-contained class or mainstream option to you. Options may also include provincial or demonstration schools run by the Ministry of Education and Training. Transportation may be provided depending on your child's needs, age and the location of the program.

Parents/guardians will be invited to ask questions and to join in the informal discussion.

What is an IPRC?

An Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) is a legal committee of the Durham District School Board. It is mandated under Regulation 181 of the Education Act.

The committee will:

- decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- after considering the options available, the committee will also decide an appropriate placement for your child based on individual needs and strengths;
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Identification is based on parent/guardian or school's realization that the student has issues that need to be addressed with appropriate support. The process includes assessment by school board professionals and the results are shared at school team meetings (or case conferences) with the parents/guardians. If appropriate, then an IPRC may be requested.

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

- The school team may request an IPRC based on their assessment of our child's progress. They will inform you in writing;
- You, as a parent/guardian, have the right to request an IPRC. The request must be written and sent to your child's school principal. The principal shall organize the IPRC and inform you in writing of the process and timelines.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving your request, the principal must provide you with a copy of the Parent/Guardian Guide. Before the IPRC will be held, the principal or chair will provide you with written notice of when the IPRC shall meet (location, date and time). If the date is not convenient you may request an alternate date or time and the principal or chair will try and accommodate your request. Let the school principal know as soon as possible if you cannot attend. If you do not want to attend then the principal will forward to you a copy of the IPRC form and a written statement of the decision of identification and the recommendations of placement after considering the options available.

Who attends an IPRC?

Staff who have come to know and work with your child will attend an IPRC. You as the parent/guardian are key to the meeting. If your child is 16 years or older they should attend. If your child is younger and it is appropriate, they may attend. You may choose and are encouraged to bring a representative(s). If you need an interpreter, one can be provided. There will be three people designated from the board. These may include a Superintendent and/or Principal. It may include the Special Education Officer, or other Education Officers from the central office. Others might include:

- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), or Head of Special Education from the school
- The classroom teacher and/or other teachers from the school
- Facilitators from the family of schools or central team
- Professional support staff – speech and language or psychological services

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. At the IPRC everyone will identify themselves and let you know of their relationship to your child.

How will you know about an IPRC?

At least 10 calendar days in advance of the date, the principal or chair of the IPRC will inform you in writing. It will contain the location, date and time of the meeting. It will ask you if you want to attend. You are welcome to bring other people with you such as a representative from a local community agency. Please let the principal or chair know who else you may be bringing to the IPRC. By appointment, an IPRC may be scheduled outside of school hours.

If you cannot attend let the principal or chair know as soon as possible and they will attempt to provide you with an alternate date or time.

What happens at the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting?

The IPRC is intended to be a formal meeting. The purpose of the IPRC is to formally consider and document your child's strengths and needs.

A regular classroom placement (mainstream placement) should be considered as the first option. Before recommending a placement in a special education class (small class placement) the IPRC must decide whether this placement will meet your child's needs and be consistent with your wishes.

At the IPRC, the chairperson will ask that a summary of strengths and needs be presented to the committee. Parents/guardians will have been offered an opportunity to review this information **prior** to the meeting.

The IPRC will review all available information about your child. The members will:

- consider and educational assessment of your child;
- consider, 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 they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- consider any information 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.

Parents/guardians will be invited to ask questions and to join in the discussion.

A placement decision will usually be made immediately. In addition, an identification and placement decision will be formalized. The chairperson will explain it carefully.

Parents/guardians will be given a written record of the recommendations of the committee.

What decisions can the IPRC make?

- The committee:
- decides if your child is “exceptional”, and if so, designates the area of exceptionality as defined by the Ministry of Education and Training
- will examine placement options based on your child’s needs and strengths where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional
- decides on one of five placement options defined by the Ministry of Education as outlined:
 - a regular class with indirect support
 - a regular class with resource assistance
 - a regular class with withdrawal assistance
 - a special education class with partial integration
 - a special education class full time
- will list the reasons for that choice if placement will be in a self-contained class
- may recommend specific programs or services

What is an IEP?

An IEP is an Individual Education Plan. The IEP is developed by the school with consultation and input from you the parent/guardian, and from the school team and may include input from the central board staff. It must include:

- a statement of the student’s strengths and needs;
- specific education 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; and
- a plan for all macro transitions (such as the transition between grades or schools)

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been formally placed in the program by an IPRC, and the **Principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.** Every student in the fall will receive an updated IEP within 30 working days of the start of school. The IEP is a working document that will be updated for every reporting period, or as student needs and strategies change.

Small Class Placements in the Durham District School Board

Small class placements are only offered at certain schools in the Durham District School Board. Some small classes are only in an elementary setting, some exist only in the secondary setting, and others exist in both.

- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program
- Developmental Program
- Gifted Program
- Practical Learning Program
- School Support Program
- Self Regulation Class
- Structured Learning Class
- Transition to Work Program

If you agree with the IPRC decision?

If you agree, then you will be asked to indicate by signing the IPRC form that you agree with the designation of the exceptionality and the placement. You may take the form home to consider or you may sign the form at the conclusion of the IPRC. You have a maximum of 30 working days.

The appropriate staff will then notify the school that you agree with the decision and that an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of formal placement within the recommended program.

If you disagree with the IPRC decision?

If you disagree with either the identification or the placement, you have 2 options available to you:

1. Within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC. The principal must hold the meeting as soon as possible. Following the meeting, the Chair of the IPRC must advise the parent/guardian of any changes to the decision of the IPRC.

If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you still disagree, then you have 15 calendar days to appeal the decision in writing to the Director of Education, Durham District School Board, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, ON, L1R 2K6

2. Within 30 calendar days of receiving the initial IPRC decision, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision in writing to the Director of Education, Durham District School Board, 400 Taunton Road East, Whitby, ON, L1R 2K6

Review Process

Every identified student shall have his/her exceptionality and placement reviewed by a committee at least once a year.

Parents/guardians and/or students 16 years of age or over are always invited to attend and participate fully in the IPRC review meetings.

The principal or parent/guardian may request a Review after the student has been in a placement for three months. The parent/guardian would write to the principal of the school and request a Review.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision reached at the Review, the parent/guardian may appeal in the same way as described for the original IPRC.

What happens in the IPRC 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 selected by you, the parent/guardian) 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 calendar days after the chair has been selected (unless parents/guardians and the 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/guardian, 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's conclusion. 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 calendar days of receiving the appeal board’s written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (board are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation and may choose to go to the Special Education Tribunal).
- 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 are the Ministry’s provincial and demonstration schools?

The Ministry of Education and Training 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 ADHD and severe learning-disabilities:

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

Amethyst School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone: (519) 453-4400

Trillium School
347 Ontario St. South
Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Telephone: (905) 878-8428

School for the deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON LT9 2M5
Telephone: (905) 878-7195
TTY: (905) 878-7195

School for the deaf/blind:

W. Ross MacDonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Telephone: (519) 759-0730

Robarts School
1515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
Telephone and TTY: (519) 453-4400

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

Special Education Advisory Committee

- Association for Bright Children (ABC)
- Autism Ontario – Durham
- Durham Down Syndrome Association
- Easter Seals Ontario
- Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region
- Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders (OAFCCD)
- VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
- Members At Large
- Trustees

Where can parents/guardians obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- the school principal
- Durham District School Board
400 Taunton Road East
Whitby, ON L1R 2K6
(905) 666-5500 or 1-800-265-3968 or TTY: (905) 666-6943; Website: www.ddsb.ca

Where can I obtain information about Inclusive Student Services Programs and Procedures?

Please contact one of the following:

- Instructional Facilitator/Inclusive Student Services
The Durham District School Board / (905) 666-5500 or 1-800-265-3968 or TTY: (905) 666-6943

- Special Education Officer
The Durham District School Board
(905) 666-5500 or 1-800-265-3968 or TTY: (905) 666-6943

- Members of
The Special Education Advisory Committee
c/o The Superintendent of Education/Inclusive Student Services
The Durham District School Board
(905) 666-5500 or 1-800-265-3968
Ext. 6371 & TTY (905) 666-6943

- Local associations that further the interests of exceptional persons

Helpful Information

NAME

TELEPHONE

Principal: _____

Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT):

Family of Schools or Central Team Members:

Dates to Remember:

