



A Parent's Guide to IPRCs - Identification, Placement & Review Committees

OUR VISION

*Inspired by our rich heritage and challenged by the struggles
of our past, we are an inclusive Catholic educational
community, called to express our mission as Church, to pass on
the Good News of Jesus Christ, to make it relevant in the
world today, and to be the hope for the future.*

THE RENFREW COUNTY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Special Education Support Services

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board strives to integrate children with special needs into the mainstream of school life.

We believe regular, neighbourhood schools—and whenever possible, regular classrooms within those schools—are the best first choice for all our students. All students are thereby given the greatest opportunity to participate in the life of their school community. This philosophy of inclusion is our mandate from the Ontario Ministry of Education. It is also a philosophy manifest in our claim to Catholic Christian community.

Inclusion—attitudes and mechanisms that encourage students toward fullest possible participation in school life—allows children to play, pray and learn with their friends, in age-appropriate peer groups.

Sometimes, however, a student's needs exceed accommodation that can be practically provided in a regular classroom. In such cases, the school board strives to develop special placements that best meet the unique needs of each individual student.

As Catholics, and as educators, we accept the infinite value of all God's children. Our goal is to deliver nurturing programs to enable all students to achieve their full learning potential, equipping them to follow their individual pilgrimages with hope and bright expectation.

The purpose of this guide is to provide parents* with information regarding procedures to identify a student as "exceptional", to assist in the development of an appropriate placement plan for exceptional students, and to outline mechanisms of appeal if a parent disagrees with the educational placement of their child.

It is the policy of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board to encourage full participation of parents throughout any student evaluation and planning process.

Throughout this guide the word "parent" is intended to refer equally to a child's guardian. It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

The Education Act requires that school board provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. This parent guide will provide you with information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), as well as the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional" and deciding or appealing the placement determined by the IPRC. If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board's contact information at the end of this document.

WHAT IS AN IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 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.

Within the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board, IPRC members include: a principal or supervisory officer, a special education teacher, and a classroom teacher. Parents are invited to attend the meeting.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN 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 and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- Decide on an appropriate placement for your child and;
- Review the identification and placement at least once in a school year.

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.

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 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 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

The IEP must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- A description of the student's strengths and needs and 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
- A transition plan that includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where the student requires support.

The IEP must be completed within 30 school 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 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 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 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 HAPPENS DURING AN IPRC MEETING?

The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting. The IPRC will review all available information about your child.

The Committee will:

- ⇒ Consider an educational assessment for 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 special education programs or special education services for the 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 of the information has been presented and considered, the Committee will make its decision.



WHAT IF PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE SCHEDULED MEETING?

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

- Contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date and/or time; or
- Let the school principal know 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 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 favor 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 for that decision 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;
- 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 special education class, the reasons for that decision.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE IPRC 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 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 or the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an IEP for your child.

CAN MY CHILD'S PLACEMENT BE REVIEWED?

A *review IPRC* meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school received 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.

THE REVIEW IPRC - CONSIDERATIONS AND DECISIONS

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.
- ⇒ 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.

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;
- 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 the Director of Education, Renfrew County Catholic District School Board, 499 Pembroke Street West, Pembroke, ON, K8A 5P1.

The notice of the appeal must indicate the decision with which you disagree, and include a statement that sets out the reasons for disagreeing.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE APPEAL PROCESS?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

1. The board will establish a Special Education Appeal Board to hear your appeal. The Appeal Board will be composed of three people (one of who is to be selected by you, the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
2. 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).
3. 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.
4. 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 the 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.



SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN OUR BOARD

The Renfrew County Catholic DSB provides Special Education through Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) in each school. In some cases, SERTs work with students in the regular classroom, and in other cases, students are withdrawn.

For more information about Special Education Services and Programs, please review the Board's Special Education Plan available online at the Board's website - rccdsb.edu.on.ca, or by contacting your child's principal or the Superintendent of your child's school.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST PARENTS?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and supports to parents of exceptional children:

- ⇒ Association for Bright Children of Ontario
- ⇒ Autism Ontario
- ⇒ Down Syndrome Association of Ontario
- ⇒ Easter Seals Ontario
- ⇒ Learning Disability Association of Ontario
- ⇒ Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley

**The Renfrew County Catholic
District School Board**

499 Pembroke Street West

Pembroke, ON K8A 5P1

(613) 735-1031/1-800-267-0191

Email: boardoffice@rccdsb.edu.on.ca

Website: www.rccdsb.edu.on.ca



What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The Ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, who are Blind or have Low-Vision, who are Deaf-Blind, and/or who have severe Learning Disabilities, as well as those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for student who live too far from the school to travel daily.

Demonstration Schools for English-speaking students with severe Learning Disabilities:

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
613-967-2830

Trillium School

348 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 3X9
905-878-2851

Amethyst School

515 Cheapside Street
London, ON N5V 3N9
519-453-4400

Demonstration Schools for the Deaf:

Ernest C. Drury School

255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 2M5
905-878-2851

Sir James Whitney School

350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
613-967-2823

Demonstration School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind:

W. Ross MacDonald School

350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
519-579-0730

ABOUT THIS PARENT GUIDE

This Parent Guide reflects the changes required by Ontario regulation 181/98. It has been produced by the Special Education Department, in cooperation with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

- ⇒ We can provide braille, large-print or audio for communications about your child's Special Education needs.
- ⇒ An interpreter can be made available, if you are not at ease in using English for discussions with your classroom teacher or other school staff concerning Special Education matters.
- ⇒ More information about Special Education program services is available on our website, www.rccdsb.edu.on.ca or by reaching out directly to your child's school.