

# Special Education Guidelines

*For Elementary and Secondary Schools*



## Communication

Administrators or special education staff should connect with families (phone call) in Special Needs Programs to ensure parents have information about how back to school will look for their child so that they are able to make informed decisions. Share the program changes with families prior to start up.

## Teaching and Learning (Special Needs Programs)

The following guidelines should be used to guide the planning of program delivery in Special Education Programs. These guidelines should be reviewed at the end of the first quad in Secondary and on October 13, 2020 for elementary schools.

### Programming

- Administrators and/or special education teachers should have a method of communication with custodial in order to operationalize cleaning
- Students in special needs classes will be self-contained with minimal integration. Any exceptions to this rule will require administrator approval.
- Ball pits will be closed.
- Snoezelen rooms should be cleaned between uses by custodian
- Bikes should be cleaned between uses with student
- In Secondary, there will be no vocational placements in the first quad.
- Students should have their own individual set (bag or bin) of school supplies for their exclusive use. Sharing of supplies should be minimized as much as is realistically possible.
- If possible, students should be shown how to clean devices between uses if shared between students – sharing should be limited
- Fieldtrips will be limited to those that involve exposure to the outdoors and physical activity, such as walks within the neighbourhood.
- Cooking will still be permitted, but food is not to be shared outside of the classroom.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- Classrooms will not have use of microwaves for heating lunches.
- In order to develop responsibility, instruction in proper cleaning will be part of special needs programming. Students will be taught, encouraged, and supported to wipe down surfaces and equipment (hand over hand when need be). When finished at a location or with an item, students will be supported to spray and wipe the surface and return item
- Key learnings in IEP should include typical skills such as basic literacy and numeracy, social emotional skills, vocational skills, as well as an increased emphasis on life skills such as handwashing, boundaries and distancing.
- Community partners such as those providing School Based Rehab Services (OT, Speech, PT) are often an integral part of a child's program. It will be at the principal's discretion (in collaboration with special ed team and parents) to determine which visitors should be in person and which can be virtual.
- Nurses are an essential member of the student team and will be permitted access.
- All guests are to be admitted by appointment only. Visitors must be masked, wear identification and must sign in at the office and the classroom.

- Staggered entry and exit should be considered for all Special Needs classes. If possible, avoid having students in special needs classes arrive all at the same time. Teachers should work with Shawn Mulligan to coordinate pick up and drop off times that work for the special needs program.
- Efforts should be made to encourage parents to transport students as they are able. Taxis should be considered a last resort in order to help maximize availability for families without options.

## Physical Space and the Environment

The following guidelines should be used to guide the physical setup of Special Needs Classrooms:

### Physical Classroom Space

- Staff should remove "extra" furniture in order to provide extra spacing
- Program staff may opt to split students into groups by functioning rather than divide group into equal groups based on numbers.
- SSPs may move between special needs rooms if required and attempts will be made to avoid limiting staff to one room for the entire school day.
- Classroom spaces should be clearly marked to illustrate boundaries and distancing. Students should be explicitly taught how to navigate the classroom(s) environment.
- Visuals should be posted highlighting expectations and safe practices.
- Students in secondary special needs programs will be allowed to use lockers when deemed necessary by program staff. Lockers will be spaced out to allow for distancing.
- When possible, automated sanitizer stations will be mounted in special needs spaces.

### Meetings

- Meetings/case conferences at school sites should be minimized.
- Continue to use teams meetings as often as possible.
- When face to face meetings are necessary, social distancing rules must be followed.
- Guests attending in person meetings must self-screen, sanitize, and wear a mask.
- Those attending meetings in our school buildings must sign in at the office.
- Visitors will be permitted by appointment only or in the case of an emergency.

## Visitors

Community partners are an integral part of the educational team for students with special education needs. Those providing School Based Rehab Services (OT, Speech, PT) often provide direct intervention with students. It will be at the principal's discretion (in collaboration with Special Education team and parents) to determine which visitors should be in person and which can be virtual. The following guidelines will support administrators to collaborate with partners while reducing the risk of infection:

- Nurses are an essential member of the student team and will be permitted access to classrooms as communicated by the partner agency(LHIN, VON, ParaMed)
- Guests are to be admitted by appointment only.
- Visitors must be masked at all times.
- Partner agencies will provide staff (visitors) with appropriate PPE.

- Visitors will wear identification tags/guest lanyards.
- Visitors from approved agencies will not have to complete screen for each visit as they will complete with their organization.
- Visitors must sign in at the office as well as the classroom or meeting space.
- Staff will keep a daily log of anyone who accesses special needs spaces and/or meeting rooms. Sign in sheets will be posted in each room.
- Meetings spaces will be cleaned between visits. Staff to inform custodian.
- Case conferences can be held in person when the space allows for safe distancing. If there are too many people to meet safely in the space available, the meeting will be held virtually.

## Personal Health and Safety

The following recommendations will help ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff:

- Staff will follow the process in place to call a custodian when there is cleaning required.
- For students who are medically fragile, families should discuss specific appropriate PPE needs with their Health Care Provider and share information with the school. Students may require masks, face shields, goggles or gowns.

### PPE

- Younger students and students who are mask exempt, may not wear masks. All staff should wear a mask as well as a shield when working closely with students not wearing a mask. Students who are mask exempt should be identified.
- Staff who wear clear masks as required by student need should observe distancing protocols.

### Toileting

- Toileting guidelines will be posted in each washroom to remind staff of the important steps to follow.
- Health unit recommendations suggest that: “The only PPE a staff would need to wear while assisting a child while toileting is what they normally would have worn prior to COVID.”
- PPE will be provided

#### Guidelines include:

1. Clean your hands. Put on gloves if you will be coming into contact with stool or urine.
2. Assist the student onto the toilet if necessary.
3. While risk is minimal, gowns may be worn if there are spray concerns.
4. Encourage student to wipe themselves from front to back if they are able and assist if necessary.
5. Help the student to get dressed (or diapered).
6. Remove gloves and clean your hands with soap and water.
7. Assist the student to wash their hands with soap and water.
8. Return student to a supervised area.
9. If the toilet seat is soiled, call a custodian to clean and disinfect toilet or toilet ring.