

## SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

### Definitions:

**SE** – Special Education

**EA** – Education Assistant

**Special Needs** - A student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, has a learning disability or a special gift or talent.

**Adopted or Accommodated** - The regular program of studies is pursued and the learning outcomes are retained but teaching and assessment strategies are designed to accommodate the student's special needs.

**Modified** - The learning outcomes are altered and directly related to practical knowledge for daily living. Letter grades and percentages are replaced with comments on student ability, ways to support learning and where further attention is needed.

### Special Education and Acceptance at Nelson Christian Community School (NCCS)

Due to the small size of NCCS, we have limited resources to support Special Needs students. Acceptance of Special Needs students into NCCS is dependent upon:

- A. The identified learning needs of a student and the ability of the school to meet those needs (physically and financially);
- B. The ability of the school to access funding to support a student's modified or accommodated program;
- C. The ability of the school to hire needed, qualified Educational Assistants;
- D. The ability of the school to access support services for the student;
- E. NCCS does not accept students with a history of behavioural concerns.

NCCS wants each student that attends the school to be successful – academically, socially and emotionally. If we do not feel that we can adequately meet a student's needs, we will not accept a student into our program(s).

Students with mild/moderate learning needs, that are not funded, may be accepted in to NCCS if we can meet the accommodations needed. Families may be asked to financially contribute above tuition to cover costs such as:

- A. Individual testing by a specialist;
- B. Classroom support tools and/or specialized technology;
- C. Educational Assistant time for pull-outs;
- D. Tutoring or specialist supports.

### Identification of Special Needs Students

A classroom teacher or administration can flag a student with learning concerns. This needs to be done as early as possible in the school year. The concerns are communicated to the SE Administrator in written form. The following procedure is followed:

- A. The teacher, SE Administrator and Principal meet to discuss the concern(s).
- B. The observation of the student by the SE Administrator and/or the Principal may occur.
- C. As needed, the Teacher may request or conduct basic testing of the student using:
  - i. The Canadian Achievement Tests (CAT) to ascertain the achievement level.
  - ii. A Cognitive Ability Test to ascertain the ability level.
  - iii. Reading Tests to ascertain if there are reading problems.
- D. The family is contacted to discuss concerns.
- E. Additional testing from an outside source may be requested at the expense of the family – medical, education-psychological test, speech assessment, etc. The school partners with the family to help recommend professionals to visit.
- F. As needed, the student may be placed on an Accommodated Program, with a documented Accommodated Program Plan.
- G. The family meets with the classroom teacher (and possibly administration) to discuss accommodations needed.
- H. Once a student has been tested and if the results specify a diagnosis that qualifies for funding, the student will be placed on an Individual Education Program (IEP).
- I. The BC Learning Outcomes guide the process of determining whether a student needs accommodations or medications.
- J. In the case of a significant learning disability, the whole program may need to be modified in which case special outcomes are developed. These are documented on the IEP.

### **Consultation to Determine when IEP's are Required**

NCCS consults with the assigned teacher to determine if an IEP is necessary. An IEP is NOT to be developed if the student:

- A. Requires only a few adaptations to materials, instruction or assessment methods;
- B. Does not need modifications to learning outcomes.
- C. If an IEP is required, the procedures for its development are followed including consultation with the parent.

### **IEP Document Requirements**

The IEP document is designed to meet individual student needs. Once a signed IEP is in place, NCCS follows the outlined objectives, goals and outcomes unless it is agreed upon by all parties that they need to be changed.

- A. The essential elements of an IEP are as follows:
  - i. Current strengths and needs;
  - ii. A list of support services as needed by the student;
  - iii. A list of adapted or modified materials, instruction or assessment methods;
  - iv. Present levels of educational performance and goals with measurable objectives for each goal;
  - v. Strategies to meet the goals which are set at high but attainable levels;
  - vi. Settings where the educational program is provided;
  - vii. The names of all the personnel who will be providing the educational program and support services;
  - viii. Period of time and process for the review of the IEP;

- ix. Evidence of evaluation and review – revisions and tracking of achievement;
- x. Plans for the next transition point in the student’s education.
- B. A special needs category is assigned according to the definition, identification and service delivery found in the “Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines” and using the “Special Education Services Categories Checklists”.
- C. Each completed IEP is approved and signed by the teacher, SE Administration, parent and Principal.

### **Educational Support Document**

Students who do not need an IEP, but require educational assistance, may have an Accommodated Program prepared for them.

- A. This document consists of different strategies to assist the student in learning.
- B. This document is not to be confused with an IEP, which is a formal document to assist students. It does not require an IEP team approach nor does it require periodic reviews to readjust when necessary, as in an IEP.
- C. The support document may be prepared by the teacher.

### **Special Needs Student Resources**

Students with special needs are offered additional support to their educational program once they are appropriately assessed and identified. Parents must submit or disclose all documentation that is necessary for the special education department to make an appropriate assessment, apply for funding and write an IEP.

### **Special Funding**

Students who meet criteria for Levels 1, 2, or 3 needs can qualify for additional funds to supplement their educational program and fulfill their IEP.

- A. All required documentation is submitted to the SE Administrator.
- B. A completed IEP is signed and on file.
- C. A special budget is created and reviewed regularly throughout the year.
- D. Students receive additional SE services on a regular basis, other than learning assistance, speech language services, counselling, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and Psychology services.

### **Specially Funded Students**

Students who are expected to meet the requirements for special funding, according to the categories specified by the Ministry of Education or have had special funding in the past, are referred to the SE Administration.

- A. The application process for Special Funding begins with all necessary documentation being assembled according to Ministry guidelines. This includes current documentation to support diagnosis, current IEP (if applicable) and any other relevant information to the student’s case.
- B. SE Administration assesses the measure of funding that is granted for a student and this office attends to all budgetary matters.
- C. The SE Administration begins the process of assembling a service team to meet the student’s needs. The service team is put together within 30 days.

- D. The SE Administration, in conjunction with the teacher, creates the IEP document which is approved by the Principal.
- E. Once the needs have been identified and the IEP has been approved, the SE Administrator compiles a budget detailing the student's needs.
- F. The budget is approved before any expenditure is made. All expenditures are in direct relation to the student's learning needs and goals.