

NOVEMBER 21, 2018

**SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY
FOR
PENELAKUT ISLAND LEARNING CENTRE**



Preamble

Our school and community will aim to guide students' learning in a way that includes our language, culture and traditions. Our special educational program will give our students the tools to understand themselves and the world around them and enable them to live independent lives.

Special Education Philosophy

- All children have a right to obtain an education in the setting most appropriate for his or her needs.
- The education of children should take place in the least restrictive, most normalized education setting in which these children can benefit.
- All children have the right to access an education that encompasses their spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development to prepare them adequately for lifelong learning.

Special Education Policy Goals

- To provide a continuum of service for First Nations students with special needs.
- To provide procedures for the identification and assessment of students with special needs.
- To attempt to address special needs as early as possible, recognizing the benefits of early intervention.
- To foster and maintain cooperative relationships with agencies and associations that provide social services to the special needs population, such as Headstart programs.
- To plan appropriate and useful professional development to assist school personnel in learning how to teach students with a variety of special needs.

Code of Ethics

- School personnel will speak and act toward students and parents with respect and dignity, and will deal judiciously with them, always mindful of their rights and sensibilities.

- School personnel will respect the confidential nature of information concerning students and will follow the procedures outlined in the Record Keeping Policy.
- School personnel will recognize that a privileged relationship exists and will refrain from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
- The teacher will be willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/caregivers the quality of service rendered by the teacher and the practices employed in discharging professional duties.

Identification of Special Needs

- Classroom-based assessments will be used to determine students' strengths and areas of difficulty.
- Every effort will be made to identify and support those students experiencing difficulty as early as possible.
- Once a difficulty is recognized, it is the responsibility of the key people involved in the student's education to determine the need for additional assessments. Key people may include parents, teachers, administrators, support staff and health professionals.
- A school-based team will be formed to discuss the needs of students experiencing difficulties and to discuss educational options.
- The school-based team will arrange for the student assessment.
- A written consent form will be signed by the parent/caregiver before assessments, other than those conducted in class by the teacher, will be conducted.
- The results of any assessment conducted will be shared with the parents/caregivers. Every effort will be made to ensure the parents/caregivers understands the results. Parents/caregivers will be encouraged to bring a family member or friend for support to any discussions involving their child.
- An individual Education Plan will be developed for every child requiring specialized services. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) (see specifically the Penelakut Island Learning Centre IEP Policy)
- The school-based team will be responsible for developing an IEP for students requiring specialized services to ensure the needs of the learner will be met.
- The IEP will be treated as a working document and will be formally reviewed at least three times a year.
- The IEP will contain the following:

- A summary of the student's strengths and needs;
- Annual long term goal;
- Short term objectives;
- Specific materials and strategies to be used;
- Recommendations for specific support services;
- Identification of responsibility areas for each team member;
- Review dates.

Record Keeping Policy

- A separate special education student file will be set up for all students that includes their assessment results, signed parent/caregiver consent forms, IEP's, health reports, and reports from other relevant community agencies.
- Student files will be kept in a locked filing cabinet located in the school office.
- Only authorized personnel will access records. Authorized personnel are defined as the school staff working for the benefit of the student.
- Written parental/caregiver consent must be obtained before non-authorized personnel can access student files.
- Parents/caregivers can access their student's file in the presence of someone who can help them interpret the contents.
- If parents/caregivers object to the contents of their child's file, they may follow the appeal process outlined in this policy.

Transitions

- We recognize the importance of the following transitions in a student's life and will endeavor to provide the necessary supports to ensure that students have as little disruption in their education as possible.
 - Home to daycare and Head Start
 - Preschool to school
 - Primary to intermediate
 - Elementary to secondary
 - School to work or post-secondary
 - First Nations school to provincial school
 - Provincial school to First Nations School

- We recognize the extra care required in assisting students with special needs in the area of transitions and will make every effort to support these students in a manner that meets their individual needs.
- In cases where students are transitioning between schools, student files will be requested/released in a timely manner according to our record keeping policy to ensure that student services are not disrupted.
- Effort will be made to communicate with other relevant agencies in a cooperative manner to ensure student services are not disrupted and adequate supports are in place for the student.

Community Consultation Policy

We are committed to involving all interested parents, teachers, administrators, students, community members, and community professionals in the design of our special education approaches and strategies. To ensure widespread participation, we will establish an Advisory Committee to draft policies for our school and oversee the ongoing implementation of our special education programming. The Advisory Committee will also ensure that regular communications are sent to all parents and community members regarding our special education programming.

Appeal Process for Special Education

- We will endeavor, to the best of our ability, to provide a fair and equitable process of appeal when a student or parent/caregiver disagrees with a decision made by the School-Based Team and/or school administration.
- A written appeal, including a complainant's concerns, must be forwarded to the school administration to start the appeal process.
- An Appeal Committee will be appointed to deal with appeals that arise.
- Upon receiving the appeal, a decision will be made as soon as practical.

Evaluation

- We will strive to review our programs on an ongoing basis to ensure accountability. Our evaluation will include an ongoing review of student progress, a School-Based Team/administrator review of services to students throughout the year, and parental/caregiver satisfaction of the education provided to their children.

- We will provide feedback to FNEESC and the FNSA on the effectiveness and usefulness of the programs and services organized at a regional level.
- We will contribute to a 'best practices' collection of special education programs and services document to be compiled by FNEESC and the FNSA to share the successes and challenges of various communities.

Source: FNSA Special Education Policy Framework