



**CALVIN  
CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL**

**Special Education Handbook  
2016/2017**

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**CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - HAMILTON**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK**  
*“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” Psalm 119:105*

The mission of the Calvin Christian School's (CCS) special education department is to provide inclusive education which recognizes that each child is uniquely created by God with a distinctive learning style and ability. Due to their learning differences, some children need classroom accommodations or program modifications to experience success in their learning. At CCS, students with learning exceptionalities are integrated into the regular classroom to the fullest extent possible. The special education teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to make appropriate classroom accommodations. They also teach withdrawal classes for students who are in need of individual or small group instruction for one or more subjects. Participation in the special education program is preceded by a process consisting of a referral, an assessment procedure, and a placement decision. The *Special Education Handbook* is designed to give a better understanding of the CCS special education procedures, planning and documentation.

### **REFERRAL FOR ASSESSMENT**

If a student is experiencing significant deficits in academic development within the classroom, the classroom teacher will discuss concerns with the parents and the special education staff. The teacher will gather relevant information about the student and will review the documentation contained in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). The teacher will initiate the referral process by completing a special education referral form and submitting it to the special education department. Parents may also notify the teacher of a concern and initiate the request for an assessment. The referral form outlines areas of concern, specific reasons for referral, and a description of attempts that have been made to address the area of concern. When the principal approves the referral for assessment, the parents are asked to give written permission for the assessment to proceed.

### **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**

The special education teacher will use classroom data, observations, Ontario Student Records, and assessment tools to provide an *informal assessment*. This type of assessment provides a point of reference for individual students in order to help the teacher develop necessary instructional practices or interventions. It may indicate the need for some withdrawal instruction by the special education teacher to help the student make progress in specific areas of need. The following is a list of some assessment tools that may be used by the special education teacher in an informal assessment:

- Kauffman Tests of Educational Achievement, Third Edition (KTEA-3): provides a standardized individual assessment of key academic skills in reading, math, written language, and oral language.
- KeyMath -3, Canadian Edition: provides a standardized individual assessment of essential mathematical concepts and skills.
- Qualitative Reading Inventory, Fourth Edition (QRI -4): provides a research-based inventory to assess an individual's word identification, fluency, and comprehension. It also provides suggestions for intervention instruction.
- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): provides a standardized group assessment of language and mathematics
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Third Edition (PPVT-III): provides a standardized individual assessment of oral receptive language skills.

If further assessment is needed, a student will be referred to a psychologist for a *diagnostic assessment*, such as a Psycho-Educational Assessment. This type of assessment would provide more specific analytical information, such as whether the learning difficulties are related to specific learning disabilities or executive functioning deficits. Information acquired through a diagnostic assessment would help the classroom teacher or special education teacher develop more explicit and effective instruction.

### **ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Test scores for informal or diagnostic assessments are generally established on norm-referenced criteria. A norm-referenced assessment is developed by creating the test items and then directing the test to a large group of students that will be used as the source of comparison. A statistic system is used to decide how test results will be interpreted and what performance levels are assigned to the score results. The assessment is used to compare large numbers of students, and provide feedback on whether the students scored above average, average, or below average than others on the same assessment. The results also help determine a child's strengths and needs compared to his own overall ability. The scores are used to find out if students have obtained necessary skills and knowledge, and to provide information for differentiated and effective lesson preparation.

Common types of standardized test scores and their established average score on assessment include:

- **Standard Score:** Performance levels are calculated based on the differences among student scores in the statistical average, and are expressed as standard deviations or variations. The variations establish what scores fall within average, above average, or below average range. Most tests have an average score of 100, and a standard deviation of 15.
- **Age Equivalent (A.E.) or Grade Equivalent (G.E.):** The A.E. and G.E. are referred to as developmental scores. The students are expected to meet their age or grade developmental equivalence in comparison to peers.
- **Percentile:** A score at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile is within the average range. A student who scores at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile performed as well as 50 percent of students of his age in the development of the test. For example, the '25<sup>th</sup> percentile' means that 25% of students that age would score lower, and 75% would score higher.
- **Range:** refers to the categories of scores on psychological and educational tests.

For example:

Very Superior: 98<sup>th</sup> percentile or greater

Very High Range: 91<sup>st</sup>-97<sup>th</sup> percentile

High Average: 75<sup>th</sup>-90<sup>th</sup> percentile

Average: 25<sup>th</sup>-74<sup>th</sup> percentile

Low Average: 9<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> percentile

Very Low: 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> percentile

Extremely Low: less than the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile

(*Special Education Handbook*, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board)

## PLACEMENT DECISIONS

Once the informal academic assessment is complete, the special education teacher will prepare an *Assessment Report* outlining the reason for assessment, background information, assessment results, and recommendations for classroom instruction. The report will be shared with the teachers and parents, and plans for support will be discussed. In the case that a student has received a diagnostic assessment by a psychologist, the psychologist will generally meet with the teachers and parents to share the results of the assessment and to make recommendations for support. In some situations, a student may have need of an accommodation to help achieve success in the regular classroom. At other times a student may require a program modification, a course audit, alternate program expectations, or special education withdrawal support to address a specific area of need.

**Accommodations** are the special teaching strategies and significant supports that are frequently provided to allow a student to demonstrate learning and achieve social success. Accommodations do not change the curriculum expectations for the grade. The supports help the student to achieve success in the regular grade expectations. The supports are outlined in the student's Student Profile. The accommodations are outlined in three categories, including environmental and organizational accommodations, instructional accommodations, and evaluation accommodations.

- *Environmental and organizational accommodations* refer to supports in the physical environment of the classroom or school
- *Instructional accommodations* are adjustments in teaching strategies to allow the student to progress through the regular program
- *Evaluation accommodations* are changes in assessment methods to allow the student to demonstrate learning
- Additional notes related to CCS procedures:
  - Students from grades 7 and 8 may be asked to join Homework Club for assistance with homework organization (*organizational accommodation*); the selection of students is based on student need and is determined by the teachers

**Modifications** are changes made in the regular grade program requirements to meet the learning needs of the student. The changes may indicate the requirement for the student to achieve expectations from a different grade level, or they may be changes in complexity or number of expectations from the current grade. Learning expectations for a modified program are outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

- Math:
  - The student works in an out-of-level math program (i.e. *PRISM* math series)
  - Instruction usually takes place outside of the regular classroom
  - The special education teacher provides instruction and assessment
- Reading, Spelling:
  - The student works in an out-of level language program (i.e., *SRA Reading Mastery* series)
  - Instruction usually takes place outside of the regular classroom
  - The special education teacher provides instruction and assessment
- Writing:
  - Regular classroom assignment expectations are reduced and/or simplified,

- with an emphasis on fundamental skills of writing
  - Instruction usually takes place within the regular classroom
  - The classroom teacher provides instruction and assessment
- Content Subjects (Bible, History, Geography, Science):
  - Regular classroom assignment expectations are reduced and/or simplified, with an emphasis on the most relevant and easily understood concepts from daily lesson plans
  - Several key concepts are selected from each unit of study for assessment
  - Instruction usually takes place within the regular classroom
  - The classroom teacher provides instruction and assessment; assessment format may vary, according to student needs

**Alternate** program expectations may also be developed to help students with special needs acquire skills that are not outlined in the regular program. Goals for an alternate program are outlined in the student's *Individual Education Plan* (IEP).

- Expectations are developed for social, emotional management, and personal management skills, based on individual student needs
- Instruction usually takes place outside of the regular classroom
- The special education teacher provides instruction and assessment

**Audit:** In some cases, it may be necessary for a student to audit a class. Auditing a class means that the student attends classes, but is not evaluated for any of the activities and assignments. The classes to be audited are listed in the *Student Profile* document, and most often include music and French.

**Special education withdrawal support** is provided when a student is struggling to meet grade level expectations, and requires special instruction to acquire specific learning skills. The student participates in the regular classroom program, but receives additional instruction outside of the classroom on a regular basis, from a special education teacher.

### **TERM REPORT CARDS**

Special education program supports or modifications are indicated on the term report card by the classroom teacher or the special education teacher. The following indicators will appear on a student's report card, based on the level of support that the student is receiving:

**Accommodations:** The classroom teacher records achievement on the report card, based on regular expectations for the grade level. The accommodated program is indicated on the report card.

**Modifications (instruction by classroom teacher):** The classroom teacher records achievement on the report card, based on modified goals outlined in the student's IEP. The modified program is indicated on the report card.

**Modifications (instruction by special education teacher):** The special education teacher records achievement on a separate form, based on modified goals outlined in the student's IEP. The modified program is indicated on the report card.

**Alternative Program:** Progress is reported by the special education teacher on a separate

form.

**Audit:** The audited program is indicated on the report card.

**Special Education Withdrawal Support:** The classroom teacher records achievement on the term report card, based on the regular expectations for the grade level. The special education teacher also provides a term report, stating progress in specific skill areas. Special education withdrawal support is indicated on the report card.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT CARD FORMS**

### **Modified Program (instruction by special education teacher)**

The special education term report is completed by the special education teacher. The special education teacher will:

- Use the *Individual Education Plan* as the framework for term reports
- Use form outline
- List the expectations that have been addressed during the term
- Give comments on progress, including a statement of achievement
- Number comments in correspondence with learning expectations for easy reference
- Give general comments, if needed, and list next steps

### **Special Education Withdrawal Support: Reading**

The special education term report is completed by the special education teacher. The special education teacher will:

- Use form outline
- Check off the specific learning skills that have been addressed during the term
- Give comments on progress, including a statement of achievement
- Give general comments, if needed, and list next steps

### **Special Education Withdrawal Support: Writing**

The special education term report is completed by the special education teacher. The special education teacher will:

- Use form outline
- Check off the specific learning skills that have been addressed during the term
- Give comments on progress, including a statement of achievement
- Give general comments, if needed, and list next steps

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION DOCUMENTS**

### **Student Profile**

The *Student Profile* is developed by the special education teacher to communicate specific student needs to the classroom teacher(s). The *Student Profile* includes an overview of a student's areas of strength and need, current achievement levels, relevant educational history, special education program description, health support services being provided (if applicable), as well as necessary classroom accommodations. The document

is updated regularly in consultation with classroom teachers and is filed in the student's OSR at the end of the school year.

### **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

In the case that a student participates in modified or alternative programs, the IEP document is established to outline student information and program expectations for the school year. The document includes the following information:

- A statement of the student's exceptionality or main difficulty
- Relevant medical/health information (i.e., diabetes, allergies)
- Relevant equipment needs (i.e., corrective eye glasses; assistive computer software programs)
- Findings of diagnostic assessment, including specific areas of strength or need, with range and percentile results
- An outline of the modified or alternative program, including annual program goals, specific learning expectations, recommended teaching and assessment strategies, and a list of resources to be used

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMS**

#### **Developmental Skills**

- Attention/Focus
  - sustain attention during individual and group tasks
  - maintain alertness and effort during processing/procedures
  - give attention to detail and accuracy
  - follow through on instructions and finish work on time
  - listen when spoken to directly
  - organize materials
  - initiate, prioritize, and sequence tasks
  - ability to multi-task
  - remain seated and engage in activities appropriately
- Auditory Processing:
  - Auditory Discrimination: ability to distinguish and differentiate auditory stimuli, including the ability to process speech sounds presented under unclear conditions
  - Auditory Decoding: ability to quickly and accurately decode speech sounds
  - Auditory Memory (see Memory)
  - Auditory Attention: ability to focus auditory attention on stimuli for a period of time without losing context or content of presentation
  - Dichotic Listening: auditory performance with competing sounds, such as background noise; bringing together or ignoring different sounds presented simultaneously to each ear
- Cognitive Skills: the act or process of knowing
  - Cognitive Efficiency: ability to process information automatically
  - Cognitive Flexibility: speed in performing the task of processing information
  - Cognitive Processing: ability to process information, including the ability to perceive, think about, understand, and remember
- Comprehension-Knowledge: depth of language-based knowledge, including the ability to verbally communicate knowledge and understanding

- Executive Function (more information available on request): the ability to regulate behaviour and emotions as well as to plan, organize and complete tasks.
  - Time Management
  - Planning/Prioritization
  - Organization
  - Working Memory
  - Flexibility
  - Sustained Attention
  - Emotional Control
  - Goal-directed Persistence
  - Metacognition
  - Task Initiation
  - Response Inhibition
  - Stress Tolerance
- General Ability Index: a combined measurement of verbal comprehension and perceptual reasoning
- General Intellectual Functioning (Full-Scale Intelligence): a combined measurement of verbal comprehension, working memory, perceptual reasoning, and processing speed
- Higher Order Thinking
  - Ability to grasp verbal and nonverbal concepts
  - Ability to solve problems using unfamiliar information or new procedures
  - Capacity to draw conclusions and understand cause-and-effect relationships
  - Ability to reason and form ideas
- Intellectual Development: a measurement of overall thinking and reasoning skills, including performance in academic subjects
- Memory
  - Auditory Memory (Verbal Memory, Fading Memory): ability to recall words and digits, including memory of meaning; ability to process speech information before it fades from memory
  - Visual Memory: ability to store and recall visual images
  - Long-Term Memory: ability to store and recall information for relatively long periods of time
  - Short-Term Memory: ability to hold information in immediate awareness and use it within a few seconds
  - Working Memory: hold information in immediate awareness while performing a mental operation on the information; ability to concentrate and perform sequencing skills
  - Rote Memory: ability to quickly recall material that has been learned through repetition
- Metacognitive Skills: the ability to be aware of one's own ability, to understand the learning process, and to organize the tasks that are to be performed, including planning, setting goals, initiating work, and monitoring the correction of errors.
- Motor Skills: involves movement or muscular activity
  - Motor Planning: ability to think through the movements that the body must make to perform basic or complex tasks
  - Body Awareness: to perform movement tasks using sensory systems, such



- as moving around in a cluttered environment
  - Perceptual Motor Development: the development of eye-hand coordination skills that are required for drawing and writing
  - Perceptual-Motor Processing: the ability to select and perform a movement, based on the perception of environmental information and past movement stored in memory
  - Psychomotor: sensory and perceptual effects on motor coordination
  - Gross Motor Coordination: movement that involves balance, coordination, and use of large muscle groups to proficiently perform skills such as running, jumping, kicking, etc.
  - Fine Motor Coordination: coordinated movements of the eye and hand, operating in connection with thought patterns, to perform smaller, exact motions, using the small muscles of the fingers and hand
  - Visual Motor Coordination: the ability to combine vision with the movement of the body
  - Graphomotor: ability to use fine motor skills in the process of writing
    - Forms letters correctly
    - Uses consistent spacing
    - Stays on the line
    - Forms letters automatically
    - Keeps up with the flow of ideas
- Non Verbal Skills: ability to assign meaning to non verbal experiences
  - Non Verbal Processing: ability to efficiently process non verbal information such as symbols and pictures, or actions and expressions of others
  - Non Verbal Reasoning (Perceptual Reasoning/Perceptual Organization): ability to examine a problem, to organize thoughts, and to use visual-spatial and visual-motor skills to solve a specific problem
  - Fluid Reasoning: ability to use logical problem solving skills in new situations (visual tasks, such as patterning and balancing)
- Perception: to be aware of the environment through sensory stimulation, as part of the development of cognitive understanding
- Oral Language
  - Expressive Language: ability to retrieve thoughts, formulate thoughts, and precisely and clearly express thoughts and feelings, ask and respond to questions, retell events, and carry on a conversation
    - Phonology: ability to use the sound system
    - Morphology and Syntax: suitable use of word order and word forms
    - Semantics: choose appropriate words to express a thought
    - Use a wide variety of language functions
  - Receptive Language: ability to interpret and understand what is being said by others
- Phonological Awareness: skills related to analyzing and synthesizing speech sounds
- Phonological Processing: an auditory processing skill relating to words, but in the absence of print; ability to detect and discriminate differences in phonemes or speech sounds
- Sensory Integration: ability to process everyday sensations coming from the

- environment or within the body, such as touch, movement, sound, smells, tastes, and sights
- Sensory Modulation: ability to regulate information that comes through the senses
    - Hypersensitivity: sensations feel too intense and are perceived as a threat
    - Hyposensitivity: sensations are slow to be perceived or not perceived at all
  - Speed Naming: ability to rapidly access and produce familiar words or to identify numbers and letters in alternating patterns
  - Verbal Skills
    - Verbal Processing: ability to understand and recall spoken information
    - Verbal Comprehension: measurement of the ability to perform a variety of tasks related to language
      - Receptive language: words understood
      - Expressive language: words used and understood
      - Problem solving, social judgement and reasoning, using language
      - General knowledge gained through the use of language (e.g., names of countries, oceans, etc.)
      - Thinking with words
      - Ability to perform spoken analogies, comparisons, and investigations
  - Visual Motor Coordination: integrate visual and motor abilities
  - Visual-Spatial Thinking (Visual-Spatial Organization)
    - Visual Perception (Visual Processing): ability to perceive, organize, and analyze visual patterns
      - Visual Abstract Reasoning: ability to see relationships in objects and designs, no memory component
      - Visual Analogical Reasoning: ability to understand visual patterns, completing and understanding design and sequence, with memory component
      - Visual Constructional Problem-Solving: solving a construction problem, using a visual design
      - Processing Speed: a measurement of the ability to quickly understand and respond to visual information
    - Visual Tracking: ability to read printed letters and words, with precision, without confusing letters, skipping words or phrases, omitting syllables, dropping word endings, mispronouncing words, or losing place on the page
    - Visual Sequential Memory: ability to remember from immediate recall a series of forms
    - Visual Spatial Relations: ability to determine the positions of two or more objects in relation to each other
    - Visual Discrimination: ability to identify and distinguish visual symbols fluently
    - Visual Attention: ability to focus visual attention on stimuli for a period of time without losing context or content of presentation

## **Academic Skills**

### Written Expression (more detailed description available, as needed)

- Conventions: use correct spelling, mechanics, and word form (grammar usage)
- Development of Ideas: select a topic, generate ideas, classify, sort, and order ideas, use details, examples, and descriptions
- Organization of Ideas: include beginning, middle, and end, refer to the main theme, sequence ideas, use pacing, use a variety of writing formats
- Word Choice: use descriptive language to clarify meaning, such as specific nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
- Sentence Structure and Fluency: write simple sentences with fluency, use joining words for a compound sentence, use words to indicate time and sequence
- Research Skills: gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of materials

### Math Skills

- Numerical Operations (Computation): ability to perform mathematical calculations, and to remember necessary steps in procedures
- Math Fact Fluency: ability to automatically and quickly solve basic operation math facts
- Fluency: ability to quickly solve basic operation facts
- Mathematic Reasoning (Concepts and Application): ability to understand mathematic concepts (e.g., geometry, time, money, etc.) and to use the mathematics to solve a problem

### Reading Skills (more detailed description available, as needed)

- Phonological Awareness: relates only to speech sounds, not to alphabet letters of sound-spellings
  - Rhyming awareness
  - Sentence segmentation
  - Syllable-structure awareness
  - Onset-rime awareness
  - Phonemic awareness: phoneme identification, phoneme isolation (initial/final), phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation
- Word Study
  - Tracking words on a page
  - Alphabet skills
  - Phonics and word analysis: match letters with sounds, produce letter sounds, identify common letter pattern sounds, read words by blending letters, identify words within words, recognize visual features of words
- Word Attack
  - Use visual cues (graphophonic): phonics and word analysis skills
  - Use meaning cues (semantic) : background knowledge, pictures, context cues, recognize miscues that don't make sense, self-correct miscues
  - Use language structure cues (syntactic): predictable word order, language patterns
- Oral Reading
  - Automatically read and understand high-frequency words
  - Read aloud with accuracy and at a sufficient rate
  - Read aloud with appropriate expression: voice inflection, punctuation cues
- Passage Comprehension-Knowledge:

- Identify and use comprehension (thinking) strategies before, during, and after reading: connect to what is known, make predictions, visualize a scene, identify main idea and supporting details, look back for information, summarize, conclude, evaluate
- Develop vocabulary skills: read words and provide meanings
- Story structure: follow literary elements of stories, identify genre, identify literary devices
- Informational Structure: organize and sequence information, identify main idea and supporting details, understand compare/contrast and cause/effect relationships

### **Social, Emotional, and Behavioural Functioning**

- Emotional Regulation: manages frustration and anxiety, moderates emotions
- Initiation: shows interest in school work, completes classroom and homework assignments on time
- Self-Esteem/Confidence: feels adequate and worthwhile
- Self-Help Skills: carries out daily activities with a minimum of assistance
- Self-Regulation: monitors and self-regulates actions
  - Impulsivity: does not interrupt, thinks before acting or speaking, shows patience
  - Activity: is able to remain seated without excessive motion
  - Cooperation: takes turns, follows instructions and rules, does not argue or pout
  - Aggression: does not bully, threaten, destroy items, and physically or verbally abuse others
  - Non-Aggression: does not tease, tattle, talk too loudly, annoy others, talk nonsense, use vulgar language, or display self stimulatory behaviours
- Social Involvement
  - Understands non-verbal communication
  - Adjusts to transitions and new situations
  - Interacts comfortably, is not withdrawn or detached from others, forms friendships
  - Accurately judges social situations, understands others

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

For complex student difficulties, the special education department will recommend assessment by community health care providers. The family physician may provide referrals to specialists such as a pediatrician, psychiatrist, counsellor, audiologist, or others. The specialists may be able to provide a diagnosis, provide treatment, recommend school accommodations, attend school team meetings, recommend city support services, and recommend IEP plans and behaviour plans. Early intervention is essential for determining and providing for student needs. For services that are not funded through OHIP, families may be eligible for some funding through an extended health plan. For students with exceptional needs, families may investigate eligibility for Ontario and Canadian disability tax credits and grants.

The CCS special education web page is updated regularly to provide websites and articles with information about special education topics, and for home and school suggestions. Community services are listed which provide support for children that have behavioural, CCS-Hamilton

emotional, or developmental difficulties.

Some services that may be available at CCS include:

- Health Support Services
  - Personal Support Worker (PSW), may be referred to as paraeducator:
    - funded or partially funded through the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)
    - employed by Calvin Christian School
    - assists a student with medical or health needs and may also be assigned some educational support duties
  - Occupational Therapist (OT):
    - funded privately or through CCAC
    - employed through an agency or private practice
    - provides assessment and recommended treatments for students with daily living and working skills needs
  - Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP):
    - funded privately or through CCAC
    - employed through an agency or private practice
    - provides assessment and recommended treatments for students with speech and language needs
  - Physiotherapist (PT):
    - funded privately or through CCAC
    - employed through an agency or private practice
    - provides assessment and recommended treatments for students with mobility needs
  - Nurse:
    - funded privately or through CCAC
    - employed through an agency or private practice
    - provides medical care for students with health needs
- Support Services
  - Teacher Assistant (TA), may be referred to as paraeducator
    - funded by Calvin Christian School
    - employed by Calvin Christian School
    - provides support to classroom teacher
  - Educational Assistant (EA), may be referred to as paraeducator
    - funded privately or by Calvin Christian School
    - employed by Calvin Christian School
    - provides educational support to students with academic needs

### **THE NEXT STEP PROGRAM**

The *Next Step* program was developed to assist teachers in meeting the needs of students with high performance results in academic subjects. The extended learning opportunities are aimed at student interests and allow the student to experience further growth by developing higher-order learning and thinking skills. A variety of resources are available including iPad apps, project-based activities, levelled language activities in English, French, and Spanish, manipulative learning games, and instrumental music. For more information about the *Next Step* program, visit the special education page on the CCS website.

