

TRANSITIONS

Special Education Program Guide

TRANSITIONS WITHDRAWAL ASSISTANCE PLACEMENT

Grades 9 to 12

"All student's learn best when instruction, resources and the learning environment are well suited to their particular strengths, interests, need and stages of readiness."

- Learning For All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction, Kindergarten to Grade 12



We build each student's
tomorrow, every day.

Purpose of the Placement

- Provide a program focus which includes social skill development, and self-advocacy skills and independence skills
- Support students to successfully complete the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or Secondary School Certificate (OSSC).
- Facilitate maximum integration for students enrolled in the program by providing support in their regular classes through a learning resource model.

N.B. The Transition Classroom Programs are not treatment programs.

Student Profile

- Mental health challenges to such a degree that academic programming is inaccessible in a regular classroom placement without intensive support;
- Self-regulation and/or sensory integration challenges and executive functioning deficits which undermine success in a regular classroom placement;
- Ability to progress through the Ontario Curriculum with accommodations, as necessary;
- Behaviour may present a physical threat to self or others.

Admission Criteria

- Has been identified as an exceptional student through the IPRC process under the category of Behaviour;
- Has received a specific mental health diagnosis and has been involved in residential and/or ongoing intensive treatment with a mental health professional;
- Requires extensive social skill and self-regulation development;
- Has had ongoing tier one and tier two interventions in a regular classroom placement; and
- Is capable of accessing the Ontario curriculum with accommodations to expectations and the learning environment.

Criteria for Change in Placement

- Behavioural functioning is no longer the most significant determining influence on the student's academic success or social adjustment in school;
- Social and/or academic needs can be met more successfully within a different special class setting;
- The ability to succeed in a regular class with/without learning resource support has been demonstrated through successful integration;
- The student is no longer benefiting from the withdrawal assistance placement.
- Completion of OSSD (or OSSC).

*** Students are eligible to attend secondary school until June of the year that they turn twenty-one years of age.**

Program Resources

Special Education Teacher
Educational Assistant(s)
Learning Support Teacher
Psychologist
Social Worker

Classroom Considerations

- Post emergency and school safety information.
- Provide supply and special subject teachers, (e.g. medical information, allergies, Behavior Management/Safety Plans, evacuation procedures);
- Ensure physical layout of classroom is inviting, well organized and provides a safe environment (e.g. flexible seating, bins for materials, soft lighting, potential weapons are out of sight and reach);
- Post daily visual schedules (e.g. subjects, integration, field trips, special events);
- Post reinforcement descriptors, social skills cues, relaxation techniques, and/or positive incentives for visual reference
- Provide accessible learning materials, including manipulatives;
- Post classroom rules that are written simply, visually and positively;
- In regular class settings collaboratively plan for academic/ behavioural needs with alternative seating options;
- Provide opportunities and space for movement (e.g. personal space to reduce distractions, calming areas)
- Provide access to computers and other assistive technology as required;
- Ensure that each classroom is supplied with a means of communication to contact the Emergency Response Team (e.g., two-way radios, phone);
- Location of locker and proximity washroom facilities



Effective Academic Programming

- Create an Individual Profile of student strengths and needs to share with subject teachers (e.g. information from OSR, psychological assessments, academic assessment, interest inventory, student voice etc.);
- Ensure programming supports the expectations outlined in the students' IEPs in collaboration with the school team and reflects information from Individual Profile;
- Work collaboratively with classroom teachers to support student learning;
- Support assessment for and of learning to assist in programming for each student;
- Understand students' cognitive, language, physical and adaptive capabilities and work in consultation with the school's Program Development Team for clarification when necessary;
- Teach and reinforce strategies for organizational skills to help students organize materials and to develop time management skills;
- Develop knowledge of curriculum at different grade levels and subject areas and collaborate with staff;
- Be mindful that academic success builds self-esteem, which in turn often reduces behaviour difficulties;
- Develop knowledge and use of assistive technology and specialized equipment and support implementation in regular class;
- Use strength-based and evidence-informed programming

"All student's will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences." - Achieving Excellence: Our Renewed Vision For Education in Ontario

Guidance and Career Education

Guidance and Career Education curriculum focuses on skill development that will help students better manage their time, resources, and dealings with other people to improve their opportunities for success both in school and in their future lives. The following courses are designed to recognize the diverse abilities, strengths, and aspirations of all students, providing them with knowledge and skills that will benefit them throughout their lives:

- Learning Strategies courses (GLE 10 and GLE 20) will be offered for students in grades 9 and 10 respectively
- Advanced Learning Strategies (GLE 30 and GLE 40) will be offered for students in grades 11 and 12 respectively

Effective Alternative Programming

- Work in consultation with the multi-disciplinary team, outside agencies, and community resources to develop appropriate alternative programming;
- Develop and implement alternative expectations outlined in the students' Individual Education Plan addressing challenges in the areas of Behaviour and Social Skills and additional areas as required (e.g., personal hygiene, assistive technology, etc.);
- Provide explicit teaching of social skills with a focus on (as applicable) social boundaries, reading social cues, self-esteem building, positive relationships, goal setting, making choices, controlling impulses, reducing aggression towards self and others, and/or developing power/insight into triggers;
- Foster social communication skill development focusing on body language, visual and verbal cues, social language, role modelling, etc.;
- Teach strategies to address anxiety, anger and fear of failure enabling students to identify triggers and to act accordingly;
- Support student self-awareness and self-regulation;
- Broaden knowledge and understanding of various diagnoses: anxiety, depression, ADHD, FASD, OCD;
- Communicate regularly with classroom teachers to support alternative program goals;
- Collaboratively create and update transition plans.

“Every Student is unique and each must have opportunities to achieve success according to his or her own interests, abilities and goals.”

- Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools

Transition Planning

Individualized transition plans that reflect a student's strengths and needs provide the foundation for successful transitional experiences that support the building of student resiliency. Transitions Withdrawal Assistance programs support transition planning in accordance with the following Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 156: Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs.

- All transition plans must be developed in consultation with the parent(s), the student, the postsecondary institution (where appropriate), and relevant community agencies and/or partners, as necessary.
- Every transition plan will identify specific transition goals, support needs, the actions required to achieve the goals, roles and responsibilities, and timelines for the implementation and/or completion of each of the identified actions.

Effective Teaching Strategies

- Utilize and support the use of technology, where appropriate;
- Provide a structured delivery model within the Transitions classroom with clear routines and expectations;
- Use strategies to address various learning modalities (e.g. Visual, Auditory, Tactile/Kinesthetic);
- Employ strategies to support specific mental health concerns consistently between classes (Reference TVDSB “Classroom Strategies for Supporting Students with Mental Health Concerns”);
- Repeat key concepts using various tasks and/or activities;
- Provide and promote a variety of materials which differ in the levels of complexity which incorporate student interests;
- Scaffold instruction, chunk information and provide frequent breaks (e.g. functional body breaks when possible);
- Build a respectful teacher/student relationship, develop trust;
- Encourage discovery learning through exploration of new concepts;
- Develop learning experiences which include the use of frameworks such as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Multiple Intelligences, Bloom’s Taxonomy, Creative Problem Solving, Emotional Intelligence Programs, etc.;
- Provide regular opportunities to discuss academic or social/emotional issues with students (e.g. schedule student conferencing).

Classroom Management

- Consider students’ diagnosis, cognitive abilities, social/ emotional/cultural backgrounds and behavioural needs in program planning;
- Provide and reinforce a clear, structured program with predictable routines;
- Maintain regular communication between home and school;
- Embed well-being strategies into the everyday culture of the classroom (Reference “A Teacher’s Guide: Everyday practices for Mental Health and Well Being in the classroom);
- Ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management among ALL staff members;
- Collect baseline and ABC data when targeting a behaviour and developing an Individual Behaviour Plan;
- Behaviour programs may include any or all of: self-esteem building, making choices, mindset, personal power/insight into triggers, goal setting;
- Teach self-regulatory skills (e.g. recognizing triggers, calming strategies) and self-advocacy skills (e.g. - asking for help appropriately);
- If needed, develop a Management of Aggressive Behaviour Safety Plan in consultation with parents, principal, and system support staff as appropriate;
- Be aware of the Management of Aggressive Behaviour Policy and the need for classroom staff to be trained in and use Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) techniques;
- Create an environment that fosters intrinsic motivation by providing opportunities for success through appropriate course selection;
- Provide behaviour management information to special transportation drivers and communicate regularly with them to ensure follow up;
- Work in collaboration with the principal or vice-principal when behavioural difficulties arise.

Assessment and Evaluation

- Ensure that assessment and evaluation practices follow the accommodations on the IEP;
- Collaborate with classroom teacher to implement assessment for learning, as learning and evaluation practices as outlined in the Growing Success ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS (2010) that allows students to show their learning in a variety of ways (oral testing, one to one teacher conferences, portfolio, product demonstrations);
- Provide students with the expectations being assessed and explain how they are being assessed (e.g. provide models, review checklists, etc.);
- Teach and provide opportunities for student reflection and self-assessment (e.g. student created rubrics, checklists, joint goal setting, questioning, monitoring their own written and oral language, etc.);
- Support classroom teachers to provide assessment using methods suitable to the needs of the student (e.g. allow for oral tests, portfolios, work samples, scribe, use of pictures, use of computers for written responses, reword questions, etc.);
- Use data collection to assess the effectiveness of alternative programming;
- Use ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences) charts, frequency counts, graphing data and tally sheets for Individual Behaviour Plans when targeting behaviours of concern;
- Ensure provision of appropriate accommodations to support student learning (e.g. extended time for tests/exams, scribing or use of assistive technology).

Inclusion

- Consider students' diagnosis, cognitive abilities social/emotional/cultural backgrounds and behavioural needs in program planning;
- Create an environment that fosters intrinsic motivation by providing opportunities for success through appropriate course selection;
- Ensure that classrooms are well prepared for implementation of inclusive practices, peer awareness, priming of student, etc.);
- Provide the classroom teachers with specific background information about the student, guidelines for interaction, specific behaviour programs, and goals for integration;
- Establish opportunities for ongoing communication between Transitions class and classroom teachers to support successful integration;
- Involve students in whole-school initiatives (e.g. assemblies, student-led conferences, special events, leadership opportunities, lunch, Intramurals, extra-curricular activities, etc.);
- Provide opportunities to collaborate with staff when necessary in order to discuss issues that arise when students are integrated (e.g. weekly, biweekly meetings, etc.);
- Provide opportunities with a variety of peers to engage in activities to intentionally foster peer relations and social skills in the withdrawal classroom;
- Offer professional learning opportunities for teachers supporting integration;
- Ensure the information related to Health and Safety are communicated to the teacher (e.g. Safety Plans, Medical Emergency Plans);
- Be aware of the Management of Aggressive Behaviour Policy and the need for staff to be trained in and use Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) techniques with particular emphasis on proactive strategies;
- Provide support to classrooms as needed;
- Maintain regular communication between home and school;
- Work in collaboration with the school team that includes principal or vice-principal, teachers, EA, and Transitions withdrawal teacher when behavioural difficulties arise.

System Support

Special Education- Teacher on Special Assignment

Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) may be accessed as a tier two support through a PDT referral. The role of the TOSA is to use evidence-based approaches to support teachers in implementing best practices, collaborate and effectively communicate with school and system staff to support their efforts on behalf of improved student achievement and well-being.

TVDSB also seeks to build capacity among staff by providing in-service training and professional development to teachers and support staff on an individual and small group basis.

Psychological Services

Psychological Services staff provide ongoing consultation to teacher, learning coordinators, principals, and parents regarding referred students. In the consultation process, parents and educational personnel may receive assistance in the interpretation of psychological assessment results and implications for classroom programming. Psychological services staff also support problem solving, decision making and program development for students with learning, social-emotional, behavioural, and intellectual needs. Individual psychological assessments may be completed upon the recommendation of the Program Development Team in consultation with Psychological Services staff.

School Counselling and Social Work Services

School Support Counsellors, FNMI Counsellors and Social Workers provide short-term individual, family and group counselling to help students who are experiencing social-emotional and mental health barriers to learning. Supports are provided for issues such as mental health concerns, emotions management, coping skills, peer problems, conflict resolution, social skills, life skills, self-esteem and family concerns. Intervention approaches are strength-based, focused on building resiliency and connecting to community resources. School Counselling and Social Work Services can be accessed upon referral by the school team, parent/guardian or student (over the age of 16).

Acronyms Related to Special Education:

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

DD: Developmental Disability

D/HH: Deaf and Hard of Hearing

EA: Educational Assistant

IEP: Individual Education Plan

IPRC: Identification, Placement and Review Committee

LD: Learning Disability

LHIN: Local Health Integration Network

LST: Learning Support Teacher

MID: Mild Intellectual Disability

OT: Occupational Therapist

PDT: Program Development Team

PT: Physiotherapist

SLP: Speech and Language Pathologist

SEA: Special Equipment Amount

SEAC: Special Education Advisory Committee

TOSA: Teacher on Special Assignment

TVDSB: Thames Valley District School Board