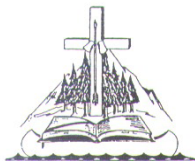


# A Parent's Guide

To the Identification, Placement,  
and Review Committee Process



**Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board**



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*Revised February 2005*

## Section I - Introduction

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### Using this Guide

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The Ministry of Education has outlined a formal process involving a committee, the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) to identify students who are exceptional. The purpose of this document is to provide a guide for parents<sup>1</sup> regarding the IPRC process.

It has been developed in a *Question & Answer* format for ease of use. Many of the terms and expressions used in this handbook may be unfamiliar. If you have questions or require further clarification about the terms, expressions or any items covered in this *Guide*, we encourage you to discuss these with the Principal of your child's school. We hope that parents and other members of our school communities will use this *Guide* as a resource for understanding the IPRC process.

In addition to this *Guide*, a companion document, *A Parent's Guide to the Individual Education Plan*, has been developed. A copy of this document can be obtained from the Principal of your child's school.

Our hope is to periodically revise this document to make it a better resource to parents. Your comments and suggestions are most helpful. Send your comments on this document to our email address at [sped@smcgsb.on.ca](mailto:sped@smcgsb.on.ca) or leave a message at 722-3555, ext. 247.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this Guide, "parents" will refer to both parents and guardians.

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## Background

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As all children are created in the image of God, they bring with them their own unique gifts and talents. We recognise and value that all students are unique and special in their own way and that some have diverse and exceptional learning needs. At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, we strive to meet the learning needs of all students within an inclusive environment.

As the child's primary care-giver and educator, the role of the parent is a very important and crucial one in a child's education. Education is truly a partnership between home, school and parish, with the ultimate goal being what is best for the child. At the Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC), information from the parents of the student is extremely important. At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, we value parental input and look forward to your participation.

At Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, we have developed our special education program based on a philosophy of inclusion. This philosophy expresses our belief that the learning needs of all students are best served within their local school. Inclusion means that students with exceptional needs fully participate in the activities of the school. Learning takes place in regular classrooms along with other students of the same age group. Depending on the individual needs of the student, as outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), the classroom environment may be augmented by teaching opportunities in the school's resource room. In our inclusive model, support for student learning is available in the student's neighbourhood school.

Our values and philosophy are articulated in our mission and vision statements.

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## **Our Mission**

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The Catholic schools of Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka, rooted in a rich tradition of faith, family and community values, are committed to education as lifelong growth.

Our response to personal and societal challenges has helped to form a vibrant school system which is resolute in its commitment to academic excellence nurtured within a faith-filled, Catholic environment. As communities of faith, Catholic schools are called to be visible signs of Christ in the modern world.

The Gospel calls our Catholic school system to service, preserving the richness of our heritage while meeting the challenges of an ever-changing society by:

- fostering the development of self-motivated, unselfish, responsible students
- inviting staff, parents, students and clergy to active participation in our school community
- accepting the responsibility of participation
- living joyous faith-filled lives which call others to witness to the faith
- communicating openly
- respecting and enhancing individual rights and dignity.

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## **Our Vision**

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We are a faith-filled Catholic learning community dedicated to excellence.

## Section II – Questions & Answers

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### The Exceptional Student

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#### How is an exceptional student defined?

All students are unique. They come to school with special gifts to share and needs to be filled. The *Education Act*, the legal rules and regulations that govern how school boards operate, defines an exceptional student as:

“a student whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program...”

Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education. Definitions of these exceptionalities can be found in Appendix 2 of this *Guide* on page 20.

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### The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee

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#### What is the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee?

The Ministry of Education, in Regulation 181/98 of the *Education Act*, requires that all school boards set up Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRC). An IPRC team is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a Principal or a Superintendent of Education.

## **What is the role of the IPRC?**

The IPRC perform the following two functions:

- the Committee determines whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional and identifies the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education (see Appendix 2)
- the Committee determines an appropriate placement for your child, in accordance with our Board philosophy of inclusion, and reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

## **How is an IPRC meeting requested?**

An IPRC meeting may be requested by you, the parent, or by the Principal of your child's school. The Principal will arrange the meeting upon receiving your request in writing. The IPRC process is a formal one that school boards are obliged to follow. As a parent, please be aware that there are some defined timelines associated with this process.

Within 15 days of receiving your written request, the Principal will provide you a copy of this *Guide* and a written statement indicating approximately when the IPRC will be held.

We recognize that the legal requirements of the IPRC process may seem very formal. At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, it is our intention to keep the student and his or her needs and interests at the heart of this process. We sincerely wish to work together with you, the parent, to provide your child with an educational experience to best meet their needs.

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## **Attending the IPRC Meeting**

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### **May parents attend the IPRC meeting?**

At the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, we recognize that parents have valuable information regarding their child. We encourage and welcome parental involvement in the IPRC process. Ministry of Education regulations entitle parents and students (if 16 years of age or older) to be present at and participate in all IPRC discussions about your child and to be present when the Committee's identification and placement decisions are made.

### **Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?**

In addition to the IPRC members, the parents and student, other people who can bring their expertise or knowledge of the student may be invited to attend an IPRC meeting. These include:

- your child's teacher, special education staff, Board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification
- a person who may represent and support you or speak on behalf of you or your child, if you wish
- an interpreter, if one is required.

Either you or the Principal may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

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## **Establishing IPRC Meetings**

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### **What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?**

Legislation requires that the Principal provide you with written notification of the meeting at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. This written notification will indicate the date, time, and place of the meeting, and it will invite and encourage you to attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

### **What if parents are unable to attend the scheduled meeting?**

If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, please contact your child's Principal to arrange an alternative date or time. If you choose not to attend the meeting, we also encourage you to notify the school. The meeting can proceed in your absence.

After the meeting, the Principal will forward to you the IPRC *Written Statement of Decision* that you would have received if you had attended the meeting. This is a form document summarizing the decisions made at the meeting. If you have any questions about this document, please contact your child's Principal.

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## **At the Meeting**

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### **What happens at an IPRC meeting?**

The Principal introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting. The objective of the meeting is to determine whether or not your child is exceptional under the Ministry of Education definitions, and what placement within the school will best suit your child's learning needs.

The IPRC is the forum for a formal discussion around your child's needs and progress. During the meeting information about your child will be shared. Those at the meeting recognize and respect the need for confidentiality. The IPRC will review and discuss all information about your child including:

- a review and discussion of assessments and reports about your child
- a discussion of your child's strengths and needs
- consideration of additional information that you or others contribute about your child
- any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for your child.

You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion. After considering all the information presented to it, and the IPRC is satisfied with the designation of exceptionality and the best placement for your child and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, the Committee documents its decision in the *Written Statement of Decision*.

#### **What will the IPRC's *Written Statement of Decision* include?**

The format of the IPRC's *Written Statement of Decision* is based on Ministry of Education regulation. It will indicate:

- whether your child has been identified as exceptional and, if so, in what way is your child exceptional

- a description of your child's strengths and needs
- an appropriate placement decision
- the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education.

The *Written Statement of Decision* also includes an area where parents can record their comments.

### **What is a special education program?**

As no two children are exactly alike, each child has different learning needs. We recognise that all students progress and learn at their own pace and in their own unique way. The Ontario School Curriculum is the classroom teacher's guide to the content and level to be taught at each grade. Classroom teachers modify assignments and may vary learning goals for each child as needed. For students whose learning needs are best served by a program that differs significantly from the Ontario School Curriculum, we develop an individualized education program. A special education program is defined in the *Education Act* as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation
- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific expectations and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional student.

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## Developing Programs for Exceptional Students

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### What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the *Education Act* as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

These programs and services may include:

- additional support in the classroom
- program support outside the regular classroom
- curriculum modifications and accommodations (see pages 9 & 10 of the *Parent's Guide to the Individual Education Plan*)
- educational and other assessment services

- professional staff to support student educational needs such as:
  - deaf and hard of hearing
  - speech-language
  - blind and low vision
  - social skills
  
- work experience
  
- gifted screening
  
- Section 20 class (through referral only)
  
- peer tutor/peer ministry
  
- services through the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)
  
- speech and language services.

### **What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?**

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a document developed at your child's school by the classroom teacher and the IEP Team (Principal, Special Education Resource Teacher) in consultation with the parent and student. The IEP may be

in addition to, or in place of, the Ontario School Curriculum.

For more information on the Individual Education Plan (IEP), please refer to *A Parent's Guide to the Individual Education Plan*, a companion guide to this document, available from the Principal of your child's school.

The IEP may include:

- specific educational expectations
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received by your child
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed
- a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary activities, such as work, further education, or community living, for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness).

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after the start of the school year or after an IPRC meeting. In the case of Secondary School, the IEP must be completed within 30 school days of the beginning of each semester. These timelines enable the schools to provide appropriate programming for the child. The IEP is a “living document” and will change as your child’s educational needs change. A copy of the child’s IEP is given to the parents.

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## After the Meeting

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### **What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?**

If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to sign the *Written Statement of Decision* indicating that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The *Written Statement of Decision* may be signed by you at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned. If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional student and you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the Principal of your child's school will ensure that a special education program is provided, and that an Individual Education Plan is developed for your child.

If you do not agree with the IPRC decision, please see page 15 for further information.

### **Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?**

A review IPRC meeting is held at least once in each school year, unless the Principal of your child's school receives written notice from the parent dispensing with the annual review. You may request a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for three months.

### **What does a review consider and decide?**

The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered. The Committee conducting the review will examine the progress your child has made in relation to the Individual Education Plan. The Committee will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

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## **If Parents Disagree with the IPRC Decision**

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### **What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?**

We recognise and appreciate that the partners in your child's education may not always agree regarding what is best for your child. The decisions of the IPRC have important implications as to how your child's education will be delivered. We believe that a child's interests are best served when all education partners come to an agreement or consensus. There are times when not all share the same views and opinions and we need to work through these differences. As the IPRC is a formal process, the means to settle differences around the IPRC decision is also very formal with specific timelines.

If you do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, there are two options available to parents:

- within 15 days of receipt of the IPRC decision you can request that a second meeting be held to discuss your concerns. This request is made to the Principal of your child's school. If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision
- within 30 days of receipt of the IPRC decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, 46 Alliance Boulevard, Barrie, L4M 5K3.

It is important that the notice of appeal indicates the IPRC decision with which you disagree, and must include a statement that outlines your reasons for disagreeing with the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal, the Board will instruct the Principal to implement the IPRC decision.

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## **The Appeal Process**

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### **What happens in the appeal process?**

In the event that consensus can not be reached, the appeal process involves the following steps:

- the appeal board will be composed of three people (one of whom is selected by you, the parent) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal
- the chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless an extension of time is mutually agreed upon by all parties)
- the appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview anyone, including you and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal
- the appeal board must make its recommendation within three days of the conclusion of the meeting. It may:
  - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented, or
  - disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the Board about your child's identification, placement, or both

- the appeal board will report its recommendations in writing, to you and to the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, providing the reasons for its recommendations
- within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations
- you may accept the actions to be taken by the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB, or you may further appeal to a Special Education Tribunal
- you may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal
- information about making an application to the Tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

## Section III - Appendices

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### Appendix 1

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#### Organizations available to assist parents

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children. Below are the organizations that are eligible for membership to the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

SEAC consists of members of the respective stakeholder organizations who are elected or appointed by their organizations to sit on this Committee and provide the Board with advice on all matters related to special education. Representing an organization on SEAC is another way that parents can become involved in their child's education. If you belong to one of the following organizations and have an interest in becoming involved with SEAC, we encourage you to make your wishes known to the chair/president of your organization, or you may visit the SEAC website at [www.seaclearning.ca](http://www.seaclearning.ca)

Association for Bright Children - Simcoe County Chapter

Association of Parents of Blind Children (CNIB)

Autism Society of Ontario - Simcoe Chapter

Candlelighters Simcoe

Catulpa Child and Family Services

Collingwood Community Living E3

Community Living Huronia

Community Living - South Muskoka

Community Living Association for South Simcoe  
The Easter Seals Society  
Huronian Hearing Impaired  
Integration Action Group  
Learning Disabilities Association of Huronia  
Learning Disabilities Association of South Simcoe  
Orillia and District Association for Community Living  
Parents of Down Syndrome (PODS)  
Simcoe Community Services  
Simcoe County Association for Children and Adults with Learning  
Disabilities  
Simcoe County Chapter of VOICE

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## Appendix 2

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### Categories and Definitions of Exceptional Students

For the purpose of the Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) process, the Ministry of Education has developed five categories of exceptionality. Three of these categories (bold) are further divided into sub-categories (italics). If you require further information about a particular exceptionality, please contact the Principal of your child's school.

#### **Behaviour**

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships
- excessive fears or anxieties
- a tendency to compulsive reaction

- an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

## Communication

### *Autism*

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

- disturbances in:
  - rate of educational development
  - ability to relate to the environment
  - mobility
  - perception, speech and language
- lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

### *Language Impairment*

A learning disability characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication
- include one or more of the following:
  - language delay

- dysfluency
- voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

### *Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

### *Speech Impairment*

A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm and stress.

### *Learning Disability*

A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

Is not primarily the result of:

- impairment of vision
- impairment of hearing
- physical disability
- primary emotional disturbance
- cultural difference.

Results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:

- receptive language (listening, reading)
- language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating)
- expressive language (talking, spelling, writing)
- mathematical computations

May be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:

- a perceptual handicap
- a brain injury
- minimal brain dysfunction
- dyslexia
- developmental aphasia.

## **Intellectual**

### *Giftedness*

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

### *Mild Intellectual Disability*

A learning disorder characterized by:

- an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service
- an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development
- a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

#### *Developmental Disability*

- an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development
- an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development
- a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

### **Physical**

#### *Physical Disability*

A condition with such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

#### *Blind and Low Vision*

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

## **Multiple**

### *Multiple Exceptionalities*

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

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## **Appendix 3**

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### **Ministry of Education Provincial and Demonstration Schools**

The Ministry of Education operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind, have severe learning disabilities, as well as those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These schools service a very small number of students across the province and are intended to deliver educational programs to students whose learning challenges are

very great. Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

**Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with ADHD and severe learning disabilities:**

Sagonaska School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville, Ontario  
K8P 1B2  
Phone: (613) 967-2830

Trillium School  
347 Ontario Street South  
Milton, Ontario  
L9T 3X9  
Phone: (905) 878-8428

Amethyst School  
1090 Highbury Avenue  
London, Ontario  
N5Y 4V9  
Phone: (519) 453-4408

**Schools for the deaf:**

Ernest C. Drury School  
255 Ontario Street South  
Milton, Ontario  
L9T 2M5  
Phone: (905) 878-2851  
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Robarts School  
1090 Highbury Avenue  
P.O. Box 7360, Station E  
London, Ontario  
N5Y 4V9  
Phone & TTY: (519) 543-4400

Sir James Whitney School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville, Ontario  
K8P 1B2  
Phone & TTY: (613) 967-2823

**School for the blind and deaf-blind:**

W. Ross Macdonald School  
350 Brant Avenue  
Brantford, Ontario  
N3T 3J9  
Phone: (519) 759-0730

**Francophone school for the deaf and those with learning disabilities:**

Centre Jules-Léger  
281 rue Lanark  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Z 6R8  
Phone: (613) 761-9300  
TTY: (613) 761-9302 & (613) 761-9304

**Additional information can be obtained from:**

Principal of your child's school, or

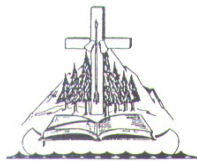
Superintendent of Programme and Services  
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board  
46 Alliance Boulevard  
Barrie, Ontario  
L4M 5K3  
Phone: (705) 722-3555

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## Notes & Questions

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Please use these additional pages to record notes or questions you may have for the Principal of your child's school or the IPRC.



**Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board**