



## **Special Education Services** **Wagmatcookewey School**

### ***Inclusive Education and our Approach to Special Education Services***

Wagmatcookewey School is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students. We are an inclusive school, which is based on the idea that each and every student is welcomed, valued, and treated fairly. When considering special education services, we follow the guiding principle of, “only as special as necessary” for students to meet their full potential.

While the vast majority of students will be successful in the typical classroom following the core curriculum, some will require additional support and interventions to reach their full potential. Whenever possible, these supports/interventions are provided within the classroom, alongside their peers and under the direction and supervision of the classroom teacher (e.g., individual education plans, assistive technology). However, some of these interventions may take place outside the typical classroom (e.g., pull-out speech language therapy support). A small percentage of students will require more intensive support (either full- or part-time) in a specialised learning setting within the school to meet their needs (e.g., learning centre).

### ***Available Special Education Services***

- School Psychology services
  - Learning assessments
  - ADHD assessments
  - Autism assessments
  - Behavioural consultation/support
- Speech Language Therapy services
  - Speech/language assessments
  - Speech/language intervention
- Resource support
  - Small-group or one-on-one resource for reading/writing is available to students in grades 3-7
- Educational Assistants
  - Support individual education plans (IEPs)
  - May also support student self-care, safety, positive behaviour, and independence skills (individual needs will vary by student)

- Learning Centre
  - Specialized learning environment for students with high levels of special needs. The learning centre curriculum follows the STAR program, an evidence-based program for teaching students with autism spectrum disorders
- Autism Programming Coordinator
  - Working closely with families, classrooms teachers, support staff, and outside resources to develop student specific programs/activities to support individual student needs and develop personal strengths
- Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey
  - We can access additional resource people, programs, and consultants through our MK family of schools

### ***How to Access Special Education Services***

Typically, the program planning process is followed in order for a student to access special education services (see Program Planning Process document for further details). This will help ensure that special education services are used in an efficient, planful manner. It also allows for better tracking and monitoring of referrals and use of special education services for program evaluation purposes. Exceptions to this process can be made at the principal's discretion.

### ***Other Specialty Services***

- School Elder
  - Provides culturally appropriate guidance support to students
- Adolescent Outreach Services (Nova Scotia Health)
  - Provides early intervention services to youth aged 12-19 years of age at risk of mental health or substance use concerns
  - The Adolescent Outreach Worker can offer group or one-on-one education and programming; provide connection and/or a referral to other supports that youth may require
- Youth Health Center Nurse (Nova Scotia Health)
  - Provides clinical and supportive services to anyone in the community ages 12-19
  - Clinical services include: screening for sexually transmitted infections, performing pregnancy tests, discussing birth control options, and offering emergency contraceptive pills
  - Supportive services include: referrals to other helpers or agencies (e.g., Child & Adolescent Mental Health & Addictions Services) and providing confidential, non-judgmental information about teenage issues such as relationships, healthy sexuality, self-esteem, stress, and addictions

### ***Roles and Responsibilities with Respect to Special Education***

All staff at Wagmatcookewey School are valued equally and are recognized to have important roles to play in our students' education. We honour and respect the diverse skills, experience and knowledge of our staff members.

### ***Principal's Responsibilities***

The principal is the leader of the school and has overall responsibility for the school, including teachers and other staff (*Education Act*, section 38(1)). The principal has the sole authority to approve program planning team recommendations, including the assignment of educational assistants.

### ***Teachers' Responsibilities***

Teachers are responsible for teaching **all** students who are placed under their supervision and care, regardless of their ability level or special needs. This includes responsibility for safety and well-being, as well as program planning (including IEP development), implementation, evaluation of student progress, and reporting. This is not a responsibility that can be transferred or delegated to non-teaching staff (*Education Act*, sections 26 and 38). Further, the teacher serves as the primary contact with parents and guardians.

### ***Educational Assistant Responsibilities***

Educational assistants (EAs) support the implementation of student IEPs. They are not expected to create IEPs or evaluate student progress. Depending on the needs of the individual student, the EA may also be expected to assist with personal care and/or safety/behaviour management.

### ***Parental Involvement***

Parents have a duty and a responsibility to support their children in achieving success at school. They are an integral part of their children's education and should be involved in program planning from the outset (*Education Act*, Section 25).