

Special Education Department Plan 2023-2024

Section B - Standard 6 Specialized Equipment



Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
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Standard 6 Specialized Equipment

Introduction

The Ministry of Education provides funding to school boards to assist with the cost of equipment (including technology) essential to support students with special education needs where the need for specific equipment is recommended by a qualified professional. This equipment is provided to students as part of their accommodations which are essential to accessing the Ontario curriculum and/or a board-determined alternative program and/or a course and/or attendance at school. This funding is provided through the Special Education Grants: Specialized Equipment Amount (SEA).

School boards access SEA funding by filing documented claims according to specific requirements outlined in *Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount (SEA)*.

The Ministry of Education requires a high degree of accountability from schools and teachers of students to whom specialized equipment has been assigned. Ministry staff may request classroom visits for up to ten percent of students for whom SEA claims have been filed. During the classroom visits it is expected that:

- the equipment would be found with the student for whom the cost was claimed and/or with the student for whom the equipment was transferred under the board's asset management plan;
- the equipment be found in good repair; and
- the student and/or staff would be able to operate the equipment.

All SEA claims must be supported by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student in the current school year, signed by the principal. The student's IEP must demonstrate the use of equipment in supporting the student's program.

In order to better support schools and students, the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Specialized Equipment Guidelines have been developed. The purpose of the Guidelines is to clearly outline the processes and procedures related to the acquisition, implementation, and management of specialized equipment assigned to students with special needs. Information is provided in the following areas:

- the process for submitting claims,
- the roles and responsibilities of individuals submitting claims,
- the meeting of the claim requirements and processing the orders,
- the training, implementation, and use by students in schools,
- the management of equipment, and
- the maintenance of equipment.

The Guidelines have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount (SEA)*.

Initiation of a Specialized Equipment Claim

Claims for specialized equipment for a student may only be made if a recommendation for such equipment has been made by an appropriately qualified professional. The recommendation must be part of a professional assessment and must include a functional recommendation regarding the specific

types of equipment the student requires to address his or her strengths and needs.

A student does not need to be formally identified through the Identification, Placement, Review Committee (IPRC) to be eligible for specialized equipment. Students must have an IEP when specialized equipment is required.

In applying for a specialized equipment claim for a student, schools must demonstrate why the student's needs cannot be met by equipment or technology currently available in the school.

Claims for specialized equipment for individual students, where total costs are less than \$250.00 will be the responsibility of individual school budgets. Where claims exceed \$250.00, the entire cost will be funded through the central SEA budget.

Specialized Equipment Claim Process

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board uses recommendations from qualified, professional staff as the basis for making SEA claims for specialized equipment for students. All recommendations must comply with the requirements as described in the *Special Education Funding Guidelines: Special Equipment Amount (SEA)*.

The development and preparation of all claims for specialized equipment is the responsibility of each school, in consultation with the recommending professionals who have assessed the student and made the recommendation. It will indicate that the equipment is to provide students with accommodations that are essential to access the Ontario curriculum and/or a Board-determined alternative program and/or course and/or to attend school, and will include functional recommendations regarding the specific types of equipment the student requires to address his or her strengths and needs.

The Specialized Equipment Claim file will include:

- a completed *Special Equipment Amount (SEA) - Assignment of Specialized Equipment Application form*,
- a recommendation from the qualified professional,
- a signed and dated copy of the student's current IEP which demonstrates needs consistent with the recommendation for equipment required to support the student's access the Ontario curriculum and/or a board-determined alternative program and/or course and/or to attend school, that cannot be provided by the school, and
- a completed Specialized Equipment - Student Instructional Technology Pre-Claim Checklist, when claims are for computer-based instructional technologies.

The file will be submitted electronically.

Approval of Specialized Equipment Claim

Once a specialized equipment claim file has been developed and submitted to the SEA trainer assigned to the school, it will be reviewed to ensure all components comply with Ministry guidelines for Specialized Equipment Amount funding, and it will be processed. The school will be notified by the Specialized Equipment Support Team that the student's claim has been approved and that the claim will be processed. This information will be sent out in the format of a Service Request to the school's contact teacher which is usually the Special Education Resource Teacher.

The allocation of equipment identified in a professional's recommendation will be done in a manner that will meet the needs of the student, as identified in the recommendation, in the most efficient

means possible. Some equipment may be allocated through the ordering of new equipment. In others, existing equipment that meets the identified needs, that is no longer being used by students for whom specialized equipment claims have previously been made, may be assigned. Head Secretaries and Special Education Resource Teachers will be notified via email when orders are to be shipped to the school.

Equipment Substitutions in Specialized Equipment Allocations

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board reserves the right to make equipment and/or software substitutions when allocating specialized equipment based on the student's computer abilities, strengths, needs, and Board equipment standards.

Ownership of Specialized Equipment Assigned Through SEA Funding

All specialized equipment purchased through SEA grants from the Ministry of Education become a set of physical assets to be protected, managed, and maintained by the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board. While specialized equipment may be assigned to a specific student or students, it remains the property of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.

Specialized equipment purchased through SEA grants remains with the student to whom it was assigned if the student changes schools. If a student who has been assigned specialized equipment moves to another publicly funded Ontario school board, the equipment assigned will be transferred to the receiving board when requested by the receiving board.

Specialized equipment must be returned to the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Education Centre for transfer or reassignment when a student moves out-of-province, graduates, or retires from the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.

Student Use of SEA Equipment

Specialized equipment purchased through SEA grants provides students with accommodations deemed to be essential to access the Ontario curriculum or Board determined program by the qualified professional who made the recommendation on behalf of the student. As this equipment is seen as essential, the Ministry of Education expects the student to have direct access to the equipment at all times, to know how to use it, and to be making regular use of the equipment. While certain circumstances may require exception, the Ministry also expects that the equipment will be with the student in the classroom for all academic activities.

SEA equipment assigned to a specific student is intended for the primary use of that student. However, use of this equipment is not exclusive to the assigned student. Other students may make use of the equipment when appropriate. The use of SEA equipment by other students shall not prevent access to the equipment by the student to whom it was assigned.

Student Non-Use of SEA Equipment

In the event that a student refuses to use, or uses SEA equipment so infrequently that it is deemed to be ineffective in supporting the needs for which it was assigned, the equipment may be withdrawn and reassigned to students waiting for specialized equipment.

However, prior to the withdrawal of SEA equipment, every attempt must be made to encourage the student to make use of the equipment. Attempts will be made to determine the underlying reasons why the student is not using equipment, and where possible, put in place strategies to address them. Parental involvement and support in this process is most important. The school will also involve central

Special Education staff for additional strategies or further training.

Student Non-Use of Equipment Due To Space Concerns Or Surplus/Duplication Of Equipment

In some settings, duplication of SEA equipment such as printers and scanners may exist, and due to space concerns within the classroom, it is not desirable or practical to have all pieces of equipment set up for student use. In this type of situation, scanning and/or printing stations may be set up to be accessed by multiple students with specialized equipment. The school technician can assist with the set-up of printing/scanning equipment to be accessed by multiple students if this type of setup would be beneficial.

Any SEA equipment not required or not being used, as a result of setting up printing/scanning stations to be accessed by multiple students with SEA equipment, must be returned to the Education Centre for re-allocation. Schools must contact the Specialized Equipment Technician at the Education Centre to set up a Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board *Request for Courier Service* form to have the equipment transported. A *Specialized Equipment Return* form does not need to be signed by parent(s)/guardian(s) in this case, as alternate provisions are being made to facilitate printing and/or scanning.

SEA assigned equipment returned to the Education Centre due to being surplus/unnecessary will be re-assigned as necessary. Should the student move, change schools, or learning settings and again require a dedicated scanner and/or printer, one can be assigned. A Service Request should be placed with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board Help Desk to arrange such reassignment.

Inappropriate Student Use of SEA Equipment

Equipment assigned to a student through SEA, and its accompanying privileges, such as internet access, may be withdrawn at any time for reasons of inappropriate use, and disciplinary action may ensue. Inappropriate use may include, but is not limited to: installation of additional software of any kind; illegal downloading or exchange of picture, music, sound or video files; any attempt to bypass computer security; use of equipment to communicate inappropriate messages of any kind, including those in contravention of Safe Schools policy; placing equipment at risk through neglect or intent; or causing deliberate damage to the equipment.

Withdrawal of SEA equipment, or accompanying privileges, from a student for inappropriate use will be at the discretion of the school Principal and/or the System Principal of Special Education, as the case may be, in consultation with the appropriate Superintendent of Education. The parent/guardian will be notified in writing by the school Principal when equipment privileges are to be withdrawn, and the parameters around the withdrawal. In order to consider reinstating the privileges, a meeting must be held involving the student, parent/guardian, appropriate staff and the principal.

Student Home Use of SEA Equipment

Under certain circumstances, some SEA equipment assigned to students with special needs may be taken home for schoolwork purposes. Only equipment considered portable will be considered for home use. Home use of desktop computers, and non-portable scanners and printers is not permitted due to their more fragile nature. Arrangements can be made to have software for home printers and/or scanners installed on SEA equipment, by Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board technicians, if the software is provided to the school for that purpose.

Home use of portable SEA equipment is only permitted when an *Assumption of Responsibility for Borrowed Equipment/Specialized Equipment At Home Use Guidelines* form has been signed by the

parent(s)/guardian(s), student and the school principal. In signing this form, parents are agreeing to accept financial responsibility for any loss or damage to the equipment while outside the school building and are agreeing to supervise and monitor the use of the equipment and abide by the At Home Use guidelines. A new form should be reviewed, signed each school year, and stored in the OSR. A separate form is required for summer home use of specialized equipment.

With the exception of use of equipment for summer school/summer learning purposes, SEA equipment is not to remain or be kept in the student home unless the student is learning from home. All SEA equipment must be returned to school each day, without exception. SEA equipment is not to be used for any other non-school related purposes and no additional software is to be loaded on Board-owned equipment.

Schools should ensure that prior to going home, and on a regular basis thereafter, any SEA computer equipment that has been connected to the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board network has had the Board's anti-virus software signature updated.

Replacement of SEA Equipment

SEA equipment will be replaced as necessary but is not automatically replaced on a periodic basis. Changing needs and/or ability of the equipment to support the student will be the factors considered for equipment replacement. SEA equipment will be replaced when:

- it can no longer meet the need for which it was recommended;
- the frequency of repairs negatively impact its ability to support the needs of the student;
- the cost of repairs becomes prohibitive;
- the equipment is not compatible with newer hardware or software which may be recommended to support student needs.

The Help Desk Service Request history will be consulted when looking at the nature and frequency of repairs for equipment. Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board technicians and/or those from outside agencies contracted for technical support will be consulted in determining whether equipment will support upgrades or should be repaired or replaced.

When equipment is to be replaced, in order to ensure that replacement equipment will best meet the needs of the student, an updated recommendation will be required from the original recommending professional. As in the case of new recommendations for SEA equipment, replacement equipment that meets the identified need, may be allocated through purchase of new equipment, or through reassignment of existing equipment that has been returned to inventory.

All equipment that is replaced, broken, or no longer being used should be returned to the Education Centre. The Special Education Resource Teacher should enter a Service Request indicating that SEA Equipment needs to be picked up.

Software Upgrades

Software purchased through SEA funding will not automatically be updated when new versions become available. In some cases, updates are available from software developers as part of the initial purchase price, but generally all new versions require a new version or upgrade fee to be paid. Software upgrades that require purchase will require a recommendation by the original recommending professional. The recommendation must indicate why the upgraded software is required and must also indicate the specific needs that cannot be met by the previous version of the software. The decision to purchase the

upgrade will be at the discretion of the System Principal of Special Education Services.

Upgrades to any Ministry/OSAPAC licensed software may be installed as necessary by Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department technicians. A Service Request should be submitted to the Help Desk to have this task completed.