



Individual Educational Plan Policy (IEPs)

St. Ultan's Special School

Roll Number:19216E

What is an Individual Education Plan?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written document prepared for a named student. It specifies the learning goals that are to be achieved by the student over a set period of time and the teaching strategies, resources and supports necessary to achieve those goals. An IEP may usefully be thought of as a product. However, there is also a process involved in developing the plan and it is the quality of this process that determines the quality and effectiveness of the Plan. The Individual Education Plan is developed through a collaborative process involving the school, parents, the student (where appropriate) and other relevant personnel or agencies. It refers to the adapted or modified aspects of the educational programme and focuses on priority learning needs, although the student may also have other learning needs that will not require the same intensive degree of planning and monitoring. Not every aspect of the curriculum and school life needs to be modified for every student with special educational needs – only those areas of identified need arising from assessment should be covered. The amount of adaptation and support will vary according to the individual learning needs of each student. Some students with more complex needs may require significant educational modifications.

Why have an IEP?

Planning for individual learning needs has been a feature of special educational provision for some time. However, this approach was often fragmented and, to date was not standard practice in all schools. The requirement to develop formalised IEPs is an essential component of the EPSEN Act, 2004.

An IEP:

- Allows the student to progress at a level commensurate with ability
- Involves collaboration between all partners
- Focuses teaching strategies
- Ensures records are kept

IEP Principles

The IEP is a working document and should be useful, available and comprehensible to all those dealing directly with the student. It needs to be considered in the context of home, school and classroom organisation.

Effective individual education plans have key characteristics.

These are:

- Individualised and child-centred
- Inclusive
- Holistic
- Collaborative
- Accessible

Sources of information

Home, school and community are important sources of information about the child with special educational needs. The child concerned is likely also to have contact with a number of professionals who will have assessed her/his strengths formally and/or informally.

IEP process.

Parents:

Provide a perspective on their children that is different from that of the professionals involved with the child. In the case of the pre-school child, parents are the source of vital information about the child's developmental history. Parents can often provide valuable information about the child's medical history/requirements, educational history, strengths and gifts and emotional and social needs.

Student:

Students themselves, particularly if older, can be an important source of information about, for example, their learning style, interests, what they like to learn about, what interferes with learning for them and what helps them learn.

School:

The child's class teacher and former teachers are a central source of information about the child's strengths/needs, interests, specific difficulties across curricular areas as well as the programmes and strategies that have been successfully implemented with the child.

Teachers can provide details about educational interventions, and information from school records and school personnel may also provide a profile of a child's social and emotional development.

Other Professionals:

The range of professionals consulted in relation to a child's educational programme may vary as appropriate. The information provided by such professionals may include: information about the child's medical needs, physical or sensory development, cognitive functioning, emotional and/or behavioural development, speech and language, communication, hearing and/or vision. Information gathered from these professionals can help determine the child's strengths and needs across a range of functioning.

Your child's IEP will be a document which spans a year from November – June . The process of drafting this document is outlined as follows.

Step 1: Assessment: Your child's IEP coordinator which will be the Class Teacher will compile information on your child's current level of performance. This information will be taken from your child's educational profile from enrolment, any transition documents received if your child transferred from another school, their previous IEP and any psychological assessments or clinical assessments which are currently available for your child. The teacher will also conduct his/her own assessment of your child's present level of performance which will include standardised assessments, teacher designed tasks and assessments and a review of any data or your child's day to day performance in school.

Your child's teacher will also complete a **pupil profile** for your child including the child's main strengths, interests and hobbies and strategies that currently work well for them in school.

Step 2: Formal IEP Planning Meeting: You will be invited to a formal IEP Planning meeting with the class teacher usually in October. This meeting will generally be between the Class Teacher and Parents/Guardians. However other members of your child's multi-disciplinary team (such as an tutor who has worked closely with the child, the Behaviour Analyst or another clinical staff which has had input on planning for your child) may be invited to attend for all or part of this meeting in some circumstances. The meeting will be broken into several stages.

1. A breakdown of the current information gathered for your child including results of any assessments which have been carried out. The teacher will then go through your child's pupil profile and you will be invited to add any additional details to this if you wish.
2. Discussion between those present at the meeting to agree a minimum of 3 priority learning needs which the child has which will be the focus of your child's learning over the following year.
3. Agreement of how these learning goals can be broken down into short manageable targets.
4. Confirmation and clarification of what has been spoken about in the meeting. The teacher will then advise that she will draft an IEP based on these targets which will be worked on intensely for the following 4 months.

Step 3: Draft IEP: Following your formal meeting the IEP coordinator will draft IEP goals and targets which your child will work on for the initial 4 months of the IEP. This document will be sent home for you to review and sign and will come into effect after the Halloween break. The IEP itself must stay in school once signed by all parties involved in its process, however a copy of the goals can be copied and sent home.

Step 4 & 5: Assessment: At the end of the 4 months the teacher will review your child's progress. Goals which have been mastered will be moved on or replaced, goals which have not been met may be changed or re-evaluated and new targets may be identified.

Step 6 : Informal IEP Review: The review will generally be held in March, new goals to be sent home for review. As before, goals for the following 3 months will be set and you will be invited to sign these and send these back to school where they will be held on file. Any questions arising from the draft goals can be brought to the attention of the teacher at this time and if further discussion is required a local arrangement between class teacher and parent/guardian will be made to follow up on such queries, usually via phone call or e-mail.

Please be aware that your child's IEP is a working document, this document is constantly being reviewed, changed and updated throughout the year.

Opportunities for Communication and updates relating to the child's progress across the school year will be as follows:

- 1 Formal IEP planning meeting will be scheduled in October
- 2 informal IEP updates will be sent home in the months of October and March
- A school report is sent home at the beginning of June each year.
- Any additional queries concerns can be addressed directly via the class teacher by sending an e-mail to the class teacher.

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