

# Supporting the IEP process in secondary schools through information sharing

All students belong to the school community, but it is likely an identified teacher has the responsibility to co-ordinate the provision of the IEP process. This can vary within individual school settings.

## How can school staff be involved?

### Professional development for school staff:

- Professional development packages e.g.:
  - What makes effective teams?
  - How to use a teacher's aide in the classroom
  - Assessment and curriculum differentiation for students with special education needs
- Designated time in department meetings for students with learning needs as part of the meeting's regular timetable
- Teacher only day – have a slot for topics such as the IEP process, safety protocols, non-violent crisis intervention
- Use peer support networks as professional development for all teachers e.g. inter-school connections (clusters)
- Invite Ministry of Education staff / Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) to a staff meeting, preferably early in the year
- Teacher's aides meet for professional development on teacher only days
- Include teacher's aides in any meetings and give opportunities for them to ask questions and signal if they need support teaching the student (Ministry of Education staff and RTLB can also help here)
- Share practice through observations of other teachers who include all students well
- Involve Learning Area Leaders, Heads of Departments, Heads of Forms in the planning
- Use a teacher handbook – referral processes to outside agencies clearly defined.

### Information sharing for systems support and staff engagement

- Use student management systems such as KAMAR, or MUSAC so subject teachers can access information on the needs of students
- Explain where to find information so the subject teachers can access it easily and explain what any terms/symbols mean
- Use KAMAR for storing information, e.g. student IEPs, minutes of meetings, pastoral concerns, templates of letters and forms can all be in the shared drive
- Put out student profiles at the beginning of the year

- Use ‘red flags’ to alert teachers to special needs e.g. health conditions, students who may be at risk of harm. Use a photo if teachers need a special alert
- Watch confidentiality e.g. sharing of student profiles; include confidentiality in professional development for teacher’s aides. Obtain written permission from key people, including parents and students.

### Information sharing for individual students

- Use student profiles which include a photo, date of birth, parent contacts, team members, overview of student, strategies for learning, and information on using specialist equipment
- Include a “snapshot” of the student which is brief and frequently updated
- Using student voice encourages understanding and makes connections, establishes relationships, empowers the student and gives both ownership and shares responsibilities. It opens up feedback from peers. The student can choose with whom they wish to share the information, e.g. the class, year level, teachers, or the whole school. It can be student-led or parent-led.
- A student will choose what information they want people to know. This might include the facts about the difficulty, disability and may cover:
  - What it feels like to be me
  - Reasons why I do things
  - Strategies to help me
  - Likes and dislikes
- It can take different formats e.g. an open letter, a Power Point presentation, a story board, a learning story or book, or be information and guidance about the use of equipment. It can be on brightly coloured paper so it stands out for subject teachers
- It can be to all personnel involved with that student i.e. all subject teachers, the head of that year, form/pastoral teacher, teacher’s aide, student support such as guidance, careers, medical centre, behaviour dean, and RTLBB
- Remember to send profiles following a subject change in particular options at the beginning of each year.