

Prescribed Assistive Technology

Administrative Procedure

Status:	Active
Effective:	November 2020
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Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education Special Education

Purpose

This administrative procedure details the process for the allocation and use of assistive technology for students with special education needs, funded through the Ministry of Education's Specialized Equipment Allocation (SEA).

It is not feasible to provide every student who might benefit from Assistive Technology (AT) with a personally- assigned device. For that reason, where licensing allows, AT applications are included on all student computers. All HDSB students have access to the G-Suite of apps through Google Chrome, as well as other software that can support learning needs (e.g., Read & Write for Google, Boardmaker Online). In keeping with the spirit of the Ministry of Education guidelines for the use of AT purchased through the SEA, shared use of equipment is encouraged. Students for whom the equipment is prescribed have primary access to use the AT, but if not needed, it may be used at school by other students.

Definition

Assistive Technology refers to any technology, electronic or otherwise, that assists an individual in maximizing their physical and/or cognitive abilities by assisting an area of disability. AT does not remediate, but provides an alternative means of access or expression. For the purposes of this document, AT will be used to refer to computer-based technology (hardware and software), including but not limited to computers, tablets, and handheld devices, as well as interactive whiteboards, robotics, and a range of Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) devices , and associated computer software.

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Procedure

1. Referral Criteria

- a. An School Resource Team (SRT) recommendation for AT is for students with special education needs, with or without a formal diagnosis or identification as an exceptional student, if the technology is required for the student to access the curriculum or to express their understanding of the curriculum.
- b. Not all students with a special education needs benefit from AT, and not all students who may benefit from AT are developmentally or psychologically ready to access it when it is first considered as a tool for learning. Schools are to trial AT for 12 week with the student, with the assistance of the appropriate support staff, prior to a referral.
- c. There are two pathways for a review of referral criteria for a SEA AT Claim:
 - i. SRT AT Checklist for SEA Technology; or
 - ii. Prescription through a prescribing professional.
- d. In determining whether an individual SEA claim application is appropriate and meets criteria, and prior to submitting a claim, the school must:
 - i. Review of the IEP
 - ii. Discuss at SRT
 - iii. Review any other application documentation.

2. Referral Process

- a. SRT Checklist for SEA AT
 - i. A formal prescription is not required to submit a standard equipment and software AT claim (see 2b for other claims);
 - ii. iPad or Chromebook, with earbuds or headphones, is considered standard equipment, except when for augmented communication (see 2b);
 - iii. The SRT Checklist for SEA AT must be completed and discussed by the SRT members;
 - iv. An HDSB Professional Services staff member (Psychologist or SLP) must be in agreement at the SRT
 - v. Decisions regarding AT allocation are made by the SRT based on:
 - Observed student need
 - Documented benefit from existing school technology supports (trial of a minimum of 12 weeks), as indicated by notes in the SEE

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- Engine
 - Review of the student IEP
 - Evidence that school-provided/shared technology is insufficient
 - Evidence that the AT is essential to access learning
 - Assessments and/or recommendations from a prescribing professional.
- b. Prescription for SEA AT
 - i. A prescription from an appropriate Professional Services staff member or practitioner (i.e., Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, or Psychologist) is required when:
 - Student requires an iPad for communication purposes (e.g., AAC)
 - Student has physical, cognitive, or sensory needs that cannot be addressed by standard equipment and software (see 2a)
 - ii. The prescribing documentation must include a written rationale for the specialized equipment aligned with the student's demonstrated needs and why it is essential to access learning.
- c. SRT Discussion and Documentation
 - i. A current Individual Education Plan (IEP) must demonstrate how AT tools are supporting the student;
 - ii. SRT meetings should include educators, school administrator(s), and relevant Professional Services staff;
 - iii. The supporting documentation must be reviewed:
 - SRT Checklist for SEA Technology (without prescription)
 - Report / document from appropriate prescribing professional (with prescription)
 - iv. Ensure the trial of AT is in the SRT notes in the electronic notes system.
- d. Consent and Submission
 - i. Parent/guardian/adult student consent is required, using the Consent-Technology Based SEA Claims form
 - ii. The following are submitted into the Special Education Services SEAIT platform:
 - Completed SRT Checklist for SEA Technology or prescription documentation (as applicable)
 - Current IEP, signed by the school Principal, with AT use described in accommodations and applicable program areas

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demonstrating how the AT tools support the student's program;
Individualized Equipment section must indicate SEA claim in process

- Signed Consent - Technology Based SEA claims form
- Signed consent forms for any Apps or Software that are not part of the Core suite of tools (if applicable)

3. School Responsibilities

The school shall:

- a. Ensure that AT is trialed prior to request (minimum of 12 weeks);
- b. Provide initial and ongoing staff and student support on effective use of AT;
- c. Maintain updated IEP and SEA documentation;
- d. Develop a sign-out and storage process for assigned AT;
- e. Report damage and/or loss to the SEA Specialist/Technician via Topdesk Ticket Manager.

4. Home Use

The school shall:

- a. Permit only the student assigned to the SEA-funded device to take the device home;
- b. Ensure the parent/guardian/adult student signs *Assistive Technology Home Use Consent Form* prior to home use;
- c. Inform the parent/guardian and student that:
 - Home use is subject to the Responsible Use Procedures for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to Acceptable Use Procedures for ICT
 - HDSB remains responsible for standard repairs and that misuse may result in rescinded home use privileges
 - HDSB devices are required to stay within Ontario and are not to be taken out of province or country due to privacy and security requirements

5. Returns, Repairs and Change of Device

- a. Devices follow the student throughout their time at HDSB;
- b. Return of the device is required if the student graduates or leaves the HDSB (see exception 5c);
- c. Equipment will be sent to another publicly-funded school board in Ontario upon request from that school board;

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- d. Change of Device is permitted at end-of-life or when the current device no longer meets the identified need. An SRT discussion and supporting data is required (see Section 2);
 - e. Repairs and software upgrades will be processed through the SEA Team through a Topdesk request platform.
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Cross-Reference:

Legislation

Human Rights Code

Ministry Policy & Program Memoranda

Specialized Equipment Allocation Directives (annual publication)

Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols

Special Education Plan

Acceptable Use Procedure for Information and Communication Technology

Statement of Personal Information Practices

Revision History

- November 2025
- December 2020