

## ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Simcoe County District School Board's Special Education Department is made up of a variety of professionals who provide a range of services to students to help them achieve to their potential.

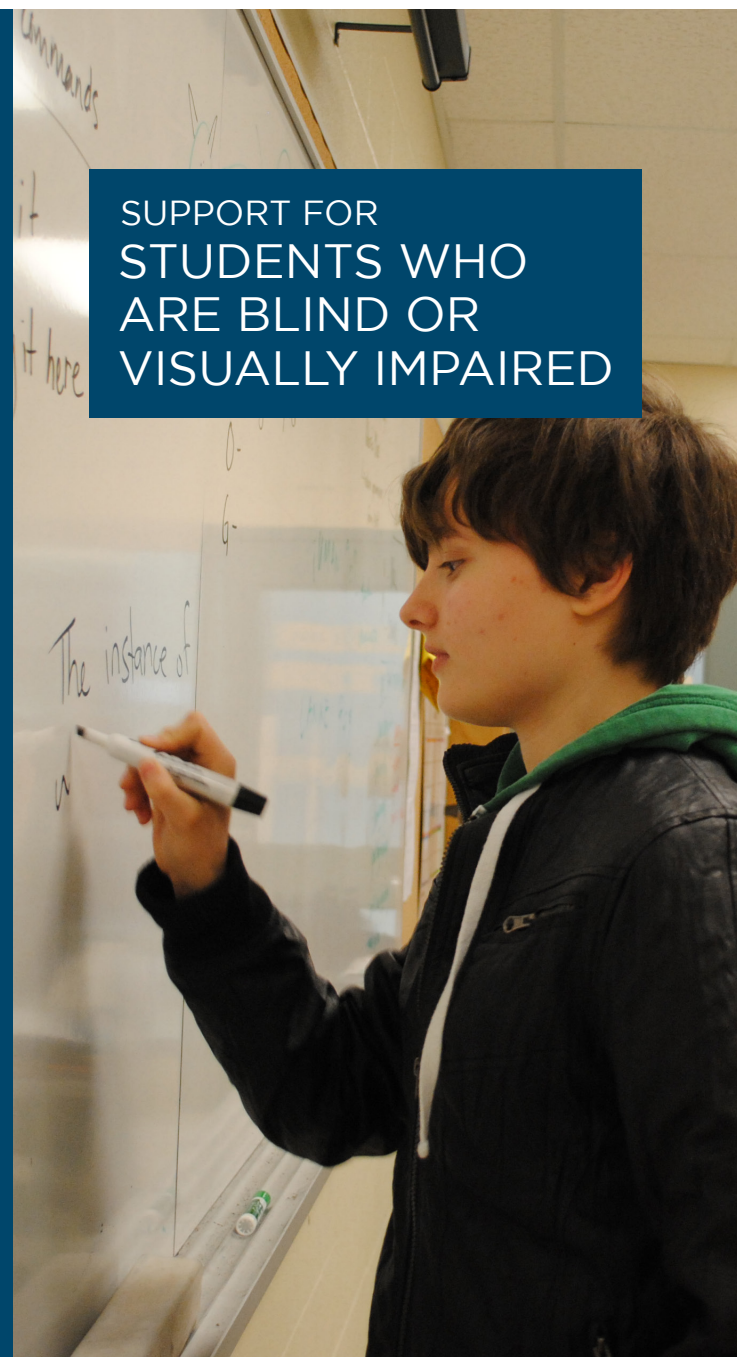
**We're committed to working together with families to support our students.**



More information about Special Education is available at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca) in the 'Programs' section. Parents can also speak to their classroom teacher, special education resource teacher, vice-principal or principal about the services available. Supports are accessed through a school staff referral system.



## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED



*Your Future... Our Priority*

To speak to someone in the Special Education Department, please call

**705-734-6363**

[www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)

Twitter: @SCDSB\_Schools

Facebook: /SCDSB

For an accessible version of this information, contact [webadmin@scdsb.on.ca](mailto:webadmin@scdsb.on.ca).



Special Education

## WHAT IS A VISION LOSS?

Visual impairment can be classified in two different ways, partially sighted or blind.

### Those who are partially sighted:

- ✓ Have reduced visual acuity (usually less than 20/70 after correction, or a reduced visual field)
- ✓ Includes those with functional visual problems (i.e.: students who do not fully utilize their visual capabilities).

### Those who are blind:

- ✓ Have visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction
- ✓ Includes people who are totally blind, have light perception only, or those within the legal definition.

### Most students with visual impairments will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- ✓ Corrected visual acuity in the better eye of 20/70 (6/19 metric) or less, or a restricted visual field
- ✓ History of academic or social/emotional difficulties related to the visual impairment

### The Vision Resource Team

The Vision Resource Team is a group of centrally-based special education staff that provides assistance to schools and students with vision loss throughout the Simcoe County District School Board.

### How we work with students

- ✓ Students who are blind or visually impaired receive services based on individual needs. These needs determine the amount and type of support provided. The support is outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan, which is developed in consultation with the family.
- ✓ Support can be provided for accessing the curriculum as well as the following areas: orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, visual efficiency skills, self-determination (self-advocacy) skills and compensatory/functional academic skills, including communication modes.
- ✓ The Vision Resource Team supports the learning of students who are blind or have low vision. Suggestions are provided as needed to the school team on teaching strategies, and the effective management and use of technology. Supports are designed to help each student achieve to their potential.
- ✓ The Vision Resource Team is available for consultation with students, parents, and staff. The team keeps parents informed

of available learning opportunities either through the school board or in the community.

### How we support

The Vision Resource Team is available to work with parents, students and staff to assist with and arrange for support, including:

- ✓ Advising parents on the professional diagnosis process
- ✓ Supporting parents and staff in obtaining and monitoring equipment
- ✓ Supporting school teams as they make programming decisions and implement teaching strategies that will benefit individual students
- ✓ Coordinating with community partners to arrange for county-wide events
- ✓ Communicating with external agencies such as W. Ross MacDonald School and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

The Vision Resource Team also provides training throughout the year to help build awareness of the needs of blind and low vision students including:

- ✓ Workshops for individual teachers of students who have vision loss
- ✓ Educating the classmates of students who have vision loss
- ✓ Awareness sessions to educate teachers about blind and low vision learners, assistive technology and learning strategies to address the issues related to students who are blind and low vision.