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INTRODUCTION

School District No. 23's goal is that every student will reach their highest possible level of personal independence. Certified Education Assistants (CEAs) play an important role in providing special education services to students enrolled in our District. School District No. 23 subscribes to the philosophy that students are educated best in their neighbourhood schools and within regular classes.

Whenever possible this occurs. The key educator in such a system is the classroom teacher. To support that teacher a range of support services are available. These include resource teachers, speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, teachers of the visually impaired, learning disabilities support teachers, behaviour intervention specialists, and psychologists. Along with these professionals is a group of people who work closely and daily with many students – CEAs. The range of skills CEAs exhibit is as varied as the students with whom they work; from blind to deaf, from physically challenged and medically fragile, to behaviourally disabled. CEAs are a vital part of the team that seeks to meet the needs of exceptional students in our District. Everyone is an important player. . . everyone is needed.

The manual you are holding is the result of a tremendous amount of work and thought. The committee that wrote it has consulted the work of other districts, used their own experience, and examined available literature. Their work has been thoroughly reviewed by many partners in special education – administrators, teachers, CEAs*, COTA, CUPE, Administrative Council, and the Superintendent.

It is the committee's hope that the manual will be useful in many ways. It is intended to support and assist the CEAs as they go about their duties providing the very best in student support.

Committee members are:

Carla Norheim, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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*CEAs participated in a series of draft reviews of this document. The CEA Handbook Committee included Vickie Boudreau, Kathy Calvert, Jane Darby, Sue Dionne, Heather Freeman, Kathy Robertson, and Susan Priest (Shop Steward).

Ethical Considerations

FOR CERTIFIED EDUCATION ASSISTANTS (CEAs)

- τ Engage in instructional activities and strategies that are consistent with philosophy and standards established by the student's support team.
 - τ Respect the confidential nature of information concerning students. Discuss a student's progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with another member of the student's support team.
 - τ Discuss school problems, confidential matters, or administrative issues privately only with school staff involved. Refer to Appendix C.
 - τ Express differences of opinion privately with the classroom teacher and/or the other members of the student's support team, recognizing that the supervising principal's authority is paramount.
 - τ Respect the dignity and self worth of all students and be always mindful of their rights and sensibilities.
 - τ Encourage the independence of the student.
 - τ Respect the student's special needs, race, sex, cultural background, and religion.
 - τ Serve as a positive role model.
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JOB DESCRIPTION

CERTIFIED EDUCATION ASSISTANT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 23 (CENTRAL OKANAGAN)

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- τ Assist classroom teacher in the education and/or training of students with special needs including learning, emotional, and/or physical challenges on a one-to-one basis, in small groups, or with the whole class.
- τ Assist in the preparation and delivery of individual educational program goals and strategies.
- τ Coach students, mark students' work and assist students with corrections, as required, and maintain records.
- τ Assist in the development of behavioural objectives and safely deal with aggressive and self-abusive behaviour from students towards self and others.
- τ Supervise students during classroom periods, playground sessions, lunch breaks, physical education/gym sessions, field trips, job shadowing or work experience, etc., as required.
- τ Instruct/assist students with personal hygiene, dressing, and eating routines, as required.
- τ Modify and prepare specialized teaching aids and materials for students under the direction of the teacher.
- τ Dispense first aid and handle emergency situations, such as seizures, as required. May consult on-site designated first aid staff member as appropriate.
- τ Provide catheterization or other related services for students as required and following specific training.
- τ Maintain data analysis records on students and liaise with the students' professional team.
- τ Operate audio-visual machine, tape recorder, CD player, computer, photocopier, and other specialized equipment in the course of performing duties.

Note: Some specific responsibilities inherent in job descriptions attract a higher rate of pay (for details see Appendix G)

Do's and Don'ts

FOR THE CERTIFIED EDUCATION ASSISTANT

CERTIFIED EDUCATION ASSISTANT MAY

1. Be temporarily left alone to supervise in the classroom.
2. Work under indirect teacher/resource teacher supervision with individuals or groups of students.
3. Have specific instructional and behaviour management responsibility for students, **as outlined in the IEP(s)**.
4. Be involved in team meetings regarding a specific student and communicate with team members on an ongoing basis.
5. Facilitate the appropriate inclusion of students with special needs in regular classes **as outlined in the IEP(s)**.
6. Be assigned record keeping tasks relevant to student IEP(s).
7. Aid the teacher in supervising students during assemblies and group field trips.
8. Transport and accompany students for community based instruction as described in the IEP(s) and as covered by school district Field Trip Policy. You may agree to transport a child but can't be required to do so.
9. Communicate appropriately with parent(s) as specifically directed by Case Manager/A.O./Teacher, or as outlined in the IEP(s) (i.e. daily communication book).

CERTIFIED EDUCATION ASSISTANT MAY NOT

1. Operate without teacher direction.
2. Substitute for teachers or have responsibility for a class.
3. Decide which concepts and skills are to be taught.
4. Be given responsibility for designing student programs/curriculum.
5. Be given sole responsibility for the inclusion of student.
6. Be responsible for student diagnosis, evaluation, or reporting.
7. Take responsibility for arranging and supervising class field trips.
8. Take student out of the class or school without permission or knowledge of the supervising teacher.
9. Communicate on their own accord with parent(s) about behavioural/ educational issues.

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NATURE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The nature of the CEAs work will vary according to the needs of the students. It includes individual student support and program assistance under the direction of the classroom teacher and other members of the student's team, as outlined in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). An ability to deal with changing situations and take direction from numerous professionals is essential.

The CEA is a member of the multidisciplinary team working with the student. Other members of the student's team are the classroom teacher, administrative officer, and parents and may include the school-based learning assistance teacher, and personnel from Student Support Services. Support Services includes teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, teachers of the visually impaired, resource teachers, teachers for students with severe learning disabilities, speech language pathologists, physical therapists and occupational therapists, counsellors, school psychologists, and behaviour intervention teachers.

Duties include assisting the classroom teacher in educating the student by:

- 1. PARTICIPATING IN TEAM MEETINGS AS REQUESTED.**
- 2. PROVIDING INPUT TO THE TEAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.**
- 3. PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE CASE MANAGER FOR INCLUSION IN THE STUDENT INFORMATION PACKAGE.**
- 4. CARRYING OUT PROGRAMS FOR ASSIGNED STUDENT OR STUDENTS AS DIRECTED:**
 - τ apply strategies for dealing with student's behavioural needs
 - τ utilize computer - use of special technology or standard system
 - τ adapt or modify specialized teaching materials including braille, tactile diagrams, etc.
 - τ facilitate use of augmentative communication systems e.g. PCS and sign language
 - τ keep a daily journal, home-school communication book, and document other data as required – be aware that the contents are confidential between the child's school based team and parents
 - τ provide one-to-one or small group work
 - τ liaise with team members
 - τ bring problems and concerns to the attention of the teacher/case manager, as soon as they become evident
 - τ work with other students in the classroom as assigned by the teacher
 - τ develop positive rapport with student
 - τ model appropriate ways of interacting with the student
 - τ facilitate opportunities for interactions with peers
 - τ supervise students as required e.g. in classroom, during lunch or recess, to and from school bus, playground, field trips
 - τ provide backup for other CEAs and students as required.
 - τ implement a child specific therapy program developed by a physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech language pathologist, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

5. PROVIDING PHYSICAL CARE FOR A STUDENT.

NOTE: TRAINING WILL BE PROVIDED SPECIFIC TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S NEEDS.

- τ dispense medications as directed by the principal and/or nurse
- τ administer basic first aid as required
- τ for procedures such as seizure management, catheterization and gastrostomy feeding, training will be provided by Nursing Support Services and the assistant will be certified, by the nurse, to perform these specialized procedures

Care activities may include the following:

- τ positioning in equipment or different areas of classroom environment
- τ transferring and assisting students to and from wheelchairs, desks, and other special equipment
- τ toileting - use of universal precautions and sensitivity to dignity and privacy are essential
- τ catheterization; supervision of personal hygiene
- τ use of mobility aids e.g. walkers
- τ feeding - encouraging independence, spoon feeding, or gastrostomy feeding
- τ grooming and personal hygiene - mouth care, hand washing, personal cleansing
- τ awareness of student's safety in the school and community
- τ supervising the student during class, on the playground, field trips, to and from the school bus

6. CARE OF EQUIPMENT - INCLUDING SPECIALIZED POSITIONING DEVICES, WHEELCHAIRS, AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICES, COMPUTER EQUIPMENT, FM EQUIPMENT, HEARING AIDS, BRAILLE PRODUCTION DEVICES AND OPTICAL AIDS.

- τ cleanliness and good working order e.g. tighten bolts to ensure integrity
- τ report any need for repairs and adjustments to appropriate personnel

7. PROVIDING BACK UP SUPPORT FOR OTHER SCHOOL-BASED PERSONNEL.

Breaks:

- τ CEAs often relieve each other for breaks and lunch if their student cannot be left unsupervised. This may mean that one CEA is responsible for two or more children. (This may occur in a classroom, on the playground, in the library or lunchroom, etc.)

Student Supervisors:

- τ are sometimes hired to look after a specific child or children at lunch. They need to be aware of the student's needs and any changes in their status. Day to day communication is essential.

Specialized Procedures:

- τ additional CEAs in a school other than the assigned CEA, may need to be trained in specialized procedures in order to provide coverage in case of the regular CEAs absence.

Assistance:

- τ some children require assistance from more than one person for transfers. If a two-person lift is necessary, training will be provided to a suitable second CEA on site and a system determined to fit both schedules.

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

8. PARTICIPATING IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- τ seek out relevant specialized training and inservice

9. PROCEDURES – DANGEROUS/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS

- τ on occasion, CEAs may encounter a student who exhibits dangerous/aggressive behaviour. Often such behaviour occurs as an outworking of a specific disability. Where such behaviours are predictable, procedures for responding to the behaviour should be contained in the child's IEP. Less often, a child may act aggressively and the behaviour is not predictable. Adults working with such a child are responsible for protecting themselves while at the same time respecting the safety and rights of the child. Physical force should only be used where it is absolutely necessary to protect the child, themselves, or others from physical danger. The best is to respond in the same way that a "kind and judicious parent" would respond.

It is essential to report any aggressive behaviour to the classroom teacher right away and to ask for assistance in knowing how and when to respond. A CEA has the right to be safe. Consult with your classroom teacher!

10. VISUAL LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

INTERPRETER ROLE:

- τ The role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication between the deaf or hard of hearing student, the hearing peers, the classroom teacher, and others in all facets of the educational environment. The communication mode used must support the communication philosophy and goals of the student's educational program and, as a member of the educational team, the interpreter may comment on the interpreting process.

INTERPRETER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- τ It is the responsibility of the interpreter to provide the full range of interpreting services including:
 - ☐ instructional,
 - ☐ non-instructional, and
 - ☐ extra-curricular activitiesduring the hours stipulated in a union agreement. It is also incumbent upon the interpreter to clarify information when a student appears not to understand. Interpreters should not be interrupted from interpreting to perform other duties. An interpreter is responsible for implementing the student's program as defined in the IEP and under the direction of the teacher.

CEA responsibilities, on the other hand, often include working with a student on a one-to-one basis. This may be part of an interpreter's particular job description. Working with a student on a one-to-one basis should be only with the direction of a teacher, whose responsibility it is to determine the student's educational program and the specific teaching strategies and steps.

A major goal is for the student to become a wise consumer of interpreting services. A person acting as an interpreter/CEA can create confusion for the student if the two roles are not clearly delineated. As a result the student may not learn to address the classroom teacher directly and may also develop inappropriate expectations of and dependence on an interpreter.

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUED

INTERPRETER SCHEDULES:

Time for Previewing Materials:

- τ In order to interpret classroom information accurately, the interpreter is expected to be very familiar with the subject matter. To this end time should be scheduled into the interpreter's timetable to preview materials, meet with classroom teachers to pick up materials, and to get last minute lesson or content changes.

Break Time:

- τ Some academic subjects and teaching styles require intensive continuous oral or manual interpreting. Because this can result in mental stress and physical damage, time for the interpreter to take a break must be considered when determining the interpreter's schedule.
- τ The interpreter's break time should not interfere with the student's class time requirements.

Guidelines for "down time":

- τ When the student is away from a class or from school, the interpreter should inform the principal and they may be reassigned.
- τ How "down time" will be used should be clearly understood by the hearing resource teacher, interpreter, and administrator and reviewed regularly.
- τ when the interpreter is not reassigned, time may be used to assist the classroom teacher or prepare and preview materials.
- τ It is incumbent upon the interpreter to be flexible and to prepare as necessary.

GENERAL CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE:

Students on a modified or adapted program:

- τ The student's IEP may determine an expectation to work independently. Whenever the student is able to work independently the CEA could be preparing or may be available for other duties within the classroom.

11. BRAILLIST

Braillist Responsibility:

- τ The Braillist is responsible to prepare alternate format material (Braille, tactile diagrams, etc.) and transcribe student's work back to print for the classroom teacher. Under the direction of the vision resource teacher, the CEA/Braillist will reinforce techniques and special skills unique to students who are blind or visually impaired (e.g. sighted guide).
- τ The CEA/Braillist is primarily responsible for the needs of the student who is blind or visually impaired. In all cases, the student should be seen by his or her peers as independent and capable and; therefore, left to work without the assistance of the CEA as much as possible.

GENERAL CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE:

Students on an adapted program:

- τ A student who is blind and working at grade level should be expected to work independently in the classroom. The primary role of a CEA in this case is to work in a separate setting to produce alternate format materials (Braille, tactile diagrams, etc.) as provided by the classroom teacher and the vision resource teacher.

Students on a modified program:

- τ For the student who is blind with additional handicaps, the CEA will be required to work directly with the student for part of the school day as recommended by the educational team. Whenever the student is able to work independently or is absent, the CEA could be preparing alternate format materials or may be available for other duties.