

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AMOUNT (SEA) GUIDE TO PARENTS

The Lambton Kent District School Board believes students have the right to accommodations essential to access the Ontario curriculum and/or to attend school. The special equipment amount (SEA) funding provided by the Ministry of Education assists school boards to support these accommodations for students with special education needs. Any student with an assessment and recommendation from a qualified professional is eligible to receive equipment through the SEA process.

The purpose of this guide is to provide information about the SEA process. If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please contact your child's school.

When used in this guide, the word 'parent' includes legal guardian.

What is SEA?

Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding is used to assist school boards with the cost of equipment essential to support students with special education needs to access the curriculum/program.

Who qualifies for the Special Equipment Amount (SEA)?

Any student with an assessment and recommendation from a qualified professional is eligible to receive equipment through the SEA process. The recommendation determines the type of equipment the student requires to access the Ontario curriculum and /or attend school. Successful trial periods for technology and FM systems are required prior to submission of a SEA claim. Students do not have to be identified as being exceptional by the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) to be eligible for SEA funding.

Evidence of the use of the equipment must be documented in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

What is covered by SEA?

Eligible expenses include all costs associated with purchasing equipment to meet students' educational needs. Training, warranties and related costs for peripherals required to make equipment operational are also covered by SEA funding. Where appropriate, parent(s) are encouraged to attend training sessions with their child to familiarize themselves with the hardware/software purchased and its use.

What are the Board's responsibilities regarding SEA equipment?

SEA equipment is Board property and the Board has a responsibility to develop internal operating policies and procedures regarding the purchase, repair, use and disposal of SEA equipment. Efforts are made to share equipment among students when appropriate as this is a Ministry expectation. Boards are expected to make cost effective choices when acquiring appropriate equipment.

Who can recommend SEA equipment?

The following are recognized as qualified professionals able to determine a student's needs, and to recommend appropriate equipment supports based on their expertise:

- Psychologist or psychological associate
- Physician
- Social worker
- Audiologist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Augmentative communication therapist
- Optometrist/ophthalmologist

- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Provincial school recommendations are acceptable to support deaf, blind and deaf/blind students.

When is SEA equipment ordered?

- Claims may be processed at any time during the SEA cycle which runs from May 1st to April 30th of the following year.
- Claims are processed as quickly as possible.
- Wait times may be associated with supply issues.
- Computers and FM systems may be provided after a successful trial period.

How often can a claim be submitted for a student?

- One claim can be submitted per SEA cycle per student.
- Additional recommended items may be added during the claim cycle.

Who pays for SEA Equipment?

For sensory, personal care and physical need items: (Claims Based Amount)

- Boards assume \$800 for each claim submitted during the annual SEA cycle.
- Ministry of Education is responsible for costs above \$800.

For computer hardware, software, peripherals and training: (Per Pupil Amount)

- Boards receive a base amount and additional funds based on student enrollment.

What is the process to request SEA Equipment?

- The school is responsible for the documentation initiating SEA claims.
- A Parent Awareness letter is sent home to inform parents a claim is in process.
- A successful trial period for equipment/software is required prior to being assigned.
- After a successful trial period, and completion of a successful readiness survey, equipment may be provided.
- Special Education Coordinators review the documentation to determine eligibility for SEA.

Note: *A student's needs may be addressed with equipment already available. Board Staff make final decisions regarding allocations. This process ensures funding is utilized responsibly to meet the needs of all students.*

How is equipment maintained?

- Board technicians ensure SEA equipment is functioning properly.
- Only Board technicians are permitted to work on or repair computer equipment.
- Costs incurred due to misuse are not covered by the Board or by warranties.
- Equipment may be upgraded or replaced as needed. Documentation to support replacements and upgrades is required.

Can SEA equipment be taken off school property?

- A laptop, Chrome book or iPad may be taken home if the SEA Loan forms are signed by both parents and student.
- SEA equipment **must** remain at the school during the summer break unless student is enrolled in LKDSB sponsored course.
- SEA equipment **must** be available for use at school each day.

What happens when a student changes schools or boards?

- If a student moves to another school there are procedures in place to facilitate the transfer of equipment between schools or from board to board in the Province of Ontario.
- The board receiving the equipment is responsible for:
 - Requesting the equipment.
 - Any shipping costs associated with the transfer.
- Equipment is only transferable to publicly funded schools.

How should computer equipment be used?

- If technology is provided, parent(s) are reminded it is intended for curriculum based use only.
- Materials such as games, music and videos are **NOT** to be downloaded or stored on the computer. This can compromise the configuration or even introduce computer viruses.

Caring for the SEA computer.

Though the computer is designed to function reliably in normal work environments, use common sense when handling it. By following these important tips, you will get the most use and enjoyment out of the computer.

- Be careful about where and how you work.
- Do not leave the base of the computer in contact with your lap or any part of your body for an extended period when the computer is functioning or when the battery is charging. The computer dissipates some heat during normal operation. This heat is a function of the level of system activity and battery charge level. Extended contact with your body, even through clothing, could cause discomfort or eventually, a skin burn.
- Place liquids & food away from the computer to avoid spills, and keep the computer away from water (to avoid the danger of electrical shock).
- Avoid subjecting the computer to extreme temperatures (below 5°C/41°F or above 35°C/95°F).
- Do not drop, bump, scratch, twist, hit, vibrate, push or place heavy objects on the computer, display or external devices.
- The computer display is designed to be opened and used at an angle slightly greater than 90°. Do not open the display beyond 180°, as this might damage the computer hinge.
- When picking up an open computer, hold it by the bottom. Do not pick up or hold the computer by the display.
- Do not pack the computer in a tightly packed suitcase or bag.
- Do not place objects on top of the computer.
- Do not place anything (paper, stickers, etc.) between keyboard and display.
- Never spray any cleaner directly on the keyboard or display.
- Protective cases must be used at all times

What are some examples of eligible SEA expenses?

Items covered by SEA claims include:

- FM systems
- Soundfield systems
- Amplification systems
- Print enlargers (for low vision)
- Computer hardware
- Computer software to provide access to the curriculum
- Adjustable desks or computer tables
- Brailers
- Symbol or letter/ voice translators
- Insulated booths and study carrels
- Positioning devices

- Personal care items
- Lifts or harnesses for moving students
- Warranties
- Service contacts for technology
- Sensory equipment
- Training for students, parents, on how to use SEA funded computers, software or other equipment.

How long does it take to get SEA equipment ready for the student?

- There are a variety of factors which can affect the time it takes for equipment to be ready for student use including availability of items from suppliers, delivery times and coordination with other departments involved in the SEA process, etc.
- When the required documentation is received by the Special Education Coordinator, all efforts are made to make equipment available as quickly as possible.

Who do I contact for more information regarding SEA?

Initial contact should be directed to the school's Resource Teacher who work directly with the student and/or the Principal.