



Administrative Procedure: Accessibility Standards

Table of Contents

[Administrative Procedure: Accessibility Standards](#)

[Accessibility and Barrier Free](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Rationale](#)

[Administrative Procedure](#)

[Committee](#)

[Mandate of Committee](#)

[Health and Safety](#)

[Responsibilities of Staff](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Board Responsibilities](#)

[Reasonable Efforts](#)

[Service Provision](#)

[Staff Training](#)

[Board Policy and Procedure Availability](#)

[Temporarily Unavailable Services](#)

[Receiving and Responding to Feedback](#)

[Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public](#)

[Definition](#)

[Responsibility](#)

[Training](#)

[Communication: Use of Assistive Devices Carried by Persons With Disabilities](#)

[Assistive Devices Made Available Through the Board or School](#)

[Use of Service Animals by The General Public](#)

[Definition](#)

[Responsibility](#)

[Access to Board Premises](#)

[Exclusion of a Service Animal](#)

[Alternative Measures if a Service Animal Must Be Excluded](#)

[Monitoring & Feedback: Accessible Customer Service](#)

[Consultation and Feedback](#)

[Consultation Methods](#)

[Feedback Methods](#)

[Proactive Measures for Accessible Customer Service](#)

[Notification of Disruption to Customer Service](#)

[Responsibility](#)

[Notice](#)

[Planned Disruptions](#)

[Requirements](#)

[Support Person \(Access, Confidentiality, Consent\)](#)

[Definition/Explanation](#)

[Additional Information](#)

[Responsibility \(Staff Training\)](#)

[Access to Board and School Property](#)

[Confidentiality and Parent/Guardian Consent](#)

[Support Person \(Board and School Events and Celebrations\)](#)

[Events with Fees](#)

[Events with a Risk Component](#)

[Appendix A - Accessibility Committee Protocol](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Accessibility Committee: Mandate](#)

[Accessibility Committee: Objectives](#)

[Accessibility Committee: Members](#)

[Accessibility Committee: Resource Material](#)

Accessibility and Barrier Free

Introduction

Consistent with the mission and vision of the Superior North Catholic District School Board it is our goal to provide an environment in all of our facilities that builds

independence, dignity and respect for students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff.

Further, the Superior North Catholic District School Board is committed to providing people with disabilities the same opportunity of access to services, in the same location and in a similar manner as the services available to all others we serve. Accordingly, and consistent with our stated purpose, every effort will be made to ensure these services are free of barriers and biases.

Rationale

The Superior North Catholic District School Board strives to ensure the key principles of independence, dignity, inclusion and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. Our practices will demonstrate the belief that our organizational strength is rooted in diversity.

Administrative Procedure

Committee

1. The Director of Education will designate an employee as chairperson and invite system representation to be members of the Accessibility Committee.
2. The Committee will be comprised of a Trustee, Superintendent, a representative from Finance, Communications, Human Resources, Plant, Student Transportation Services Consortium, Information Technology, A Principal, Resources Staff, Special Education Advisory Committee member, and Community Agency Representative(s). Yearly updates will be requested from departments of the Board.

Mandate of Committee

1. The Accessibility Committee will review current will review current initiatives and successes in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers.
2. Review and ensure audits are completed every FIVE years to ensure accessibility and removal of barriers.
3. The Committee will set priorities and develop accessibility strategies.
4. Progress will be monitored through reports from Committee members and updates from Board departments at meetings each term (at least three times a year).

Health and Safety

1. The Annual Accessibility Plan will be reviewed, revised, published, and posted on our website on a yearly basis.
2. The resource binder Accessibility Awareness Activities that include prayers, classroom and yard activities, simulations, and resources, and the Accessibility Brochure, will be produced and distributed to each school. These materials will also be posted on the Board's website.
3. The Committee will examine methods and equipment to assist in more accessible hearing in meeting rooms, the Boardroom, gymnasiums, and classrooms, etc.

Responsibilities of Staff

The Director of Education will ensure:

- the compliance of this Policy including investigating complaints based on disability;
- greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities by providing appropriate training for all staff and volunteers;
- when services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable, such as access to an elevator, a disruption of service notice will be posted at a conspicuous place at the site and on the Board's website.

Supervisory Officers and Department Managers

All supervisory officers and department managers will ensure that Board policies comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005.

The Superintendent:

- ensure that, as new staff are hired, accessibility training will become a component of their orientation training;
- develop a procedure that assists staff with any barriers or special needs they have, and provide strategies that would support them;
- ensure that specific procedures and guidelines regarding reasonable accommodation in employment will be included in the Human Resources procedures;
- allow individuals to use their own assistive devices, service animals, or support persons to access services;
- ensure that assistive devices, services, and accommodations are provided when appropriate medical documentation is provided.

The Director (or designate) will:

- ensure that all architectural barriers are eliminated, and that capital projects comply with accessibility requirements as budget allows;
- ensure that all purchases do not create physical barriers;
- ensure that there are adequate financial resources to implement the Board's Plan.

The Director (or designate) will:

ensure that the physical requirements for accessibility for the Catholic Education Centre, and one designated school for each community as defined by the Ontario Building Code are met.

The Communications Officer will:

- provide communication or text to translate services, non-print, and alternative formats for School Board information brochures, forms, and web information upon request; publish and post on the Board's web site the Board's Accessibility Plan and obligations with respect to the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005;
- produce and communicate information or link outlining accessibility information.

The Supervising Manager of Facilities and Education Technology will:

- ensure that there is proper exterior and interior signage (including accessible parking and signage), using the international symbol for accessibility, at the Catholic Education Centre;
- furnish appropriate aids and services at the Catholic Education Centre.

The Principal will:

- complete the Accessibility Audit every FIVE, or as required, years and review as needed;
- take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others;
- request appropriate aids and services from Special Education Services or agencies as needed;
- identify barriers and requisition special furniture and equipment for installations and/or modifications when required;

- arrange specialized transportation using the appropriate Board form; ensure that there is proper exterior and interior signage (including accessible parking and signage), using the international symbol for accessibility;
- ensure that school staff understand how to accommodate students with disabilities;
- outline procedures for staff accommodations or concerns.

Definitions

Customer: A person who uses the services of the Board.

Assistive Device(s): Device(s) used by people with disabilities to help daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks and electronic communication devices.

Service Animal: An animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a medical practitioner.

Support Person: A person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability as they access the services of the Board. A support person is distinct from a Board employee.

Third Party Contractor: An individual(s) or organizations acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Board (e.g. bus operators, psychologists).

Barriers to Accessibility: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the services provided by the Board. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communication barriers, attitudinal barriers or a technological barrier.

Accommodation: A means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services offered by the Board.

Board Responsibilities

Reasonable Efforts

The Board will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all its policies, practices and procedures from the date of this protocol are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for all with particular attention for persons with disabilities.

Service Provision

The Board will welcome all members of the school and broader community to its facilities by committing staff and volunteers to the provision of service that respects the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities. For greater clarity, such service may include, but not be limited to, the use of assistive devices and service animals.

Staff Training

The Board will ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities through the provision of appropriate training for all staff who serve the public or other third parties on behalf of the Board.

The Board will provide training, as identified in 2.3, to all staff and, where appropriate, to volunteers. As new staff is hired, the training will become a component of their orientation program and will be provided within a reasonable timeframe.

Board Policy and Procedure Availability

The Board will ensure that its policies and procedures related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 are made available to the public and also ensure there is an increasing capacity to provide communication regarding the aforementioned in a format that takes into account a person's disability.

Temporarily Unavailable Services

The Board will ensure that when services normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable (such as access to an elevator), a disruption of service notice will be posted at the site and on the Board's website.

Receiving and Responding to Feedback

1. In order to monitor the effectiveness of the Accessible Customer Service Standards, the Board will develop a process to receive and respond to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people to provide feedback through a variety of methods.
2. The Board will ensure that adherence to the procedure outlined in 2.6 can be achieved efficiently and effectively and that system and school-level administrators will take into account the impact on persons with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning new initiatives.
3. The Board will create a feedback process that will review the implementation of this procedural policy with various constituent board groups such as the Special Education Advisory Council, teacher federation, employee union and school councils, using a variety of methods including the Board website.
4. The Board will establish a process for consulting with frontline staff and volunteers who have a role in implementing the procedures and expectations established under this policy.

Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public

Definition

An assistive device is any device used by people with disabilities to help them with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks and electronic communication devices

Responsibility

Supervisory officers, principals and central office managers will ensure that staff are trained to support parents and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing board services.

Training

Staff training will focus on appropriate ways to interact with and support people using assistive devices.

Communication: Use of Assistive Devices Carried by Persons With Disabilities

The Board website will indicate that all its facilities provide services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities and offer services that include the use of assistive devices.

Each Board facility that is open to the public will post information in the front office/reception area that it welcomes the use of assistive devices and encourages users to seek staff and volunteer support as required.

Assistive Devices Made Available Through the Board or School

Board facility that is open to the public will, as applicable, post information in the front office/reception area that indicates the availability of assistive devices and encourage potential users to seek support from staff and volunteers as they require it. These devices may include telephones with large numbers, amplifiers, lifts, sign language and oral interpretation, real-time captioning, or staff assistance to complete a transaction such as school registration.

Use of Service Animals by The General Public

Definition

1. A service animal is an animal that is being used because a person's disability is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a physician or nurse.
2. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people with vision loss, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure. The customer service standard's provision also applies to animals that provide other services to people with disabilities.
3. It is "readily apparent" that an animal is a service animal when it is obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign that identifies it as such or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario.

4. It may also be readily apparent if a person is using the animal to assist him or her in doing things such as opening doors or retrieving items.

Responsibility

Supervisory officers, vice principal, principals and central office managers will ensure that staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Access to Board Premises

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with his or her service animal and must be in accordance with normal school or Board security procedures.

This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or board office where the public does not have access.

Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff are covered under separate procedures.

Exclusion of a Service Animal

1. A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the Health and Promotion Act and Food Safety and Quality Act. The former act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed or handled (e.g. kitchen of a school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g. lunchroom).
2. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is the Board's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered (e.g. creating distance between the two individuals concerned and making reasonable alterations to schedules).
3. A service animal can be excluded if it is a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the Ontario Dog Owner's Liability Act which places restrictions on Pit Bull Terriers.

Alternative Measures if a Service Animal Must Be Excluded

In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure location where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve their needs. For example, a person with a vision disability might need someone (staff member or volunteer) to guide them until they are reunited with the service animal.

Monitoring & Feedback: Accessible Customer Service

1. The Board will monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard through a process designed for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback will be readily available to the public and will allow people with disabilities to provide feedback in a variety of methods.
2. The Board feedback process will include such groups as the Special Education Advisory Committee, Teacher Federation and members of Employee Union who provide support for people with disabilities.
3. The Director of Education and/or designate will implement a process for feedback on accessible customer service that has the following components:
 - a. information on Board and school websites inviting users of Board services to provide feedback on their experience with or concerns about access issues;
 - b. printed information available through school offices and public offices of the Board to invite people with disabilities to provide feedback on their experience with or concerns about accessibility of services;
 - c. consideration should be given to providing information in alternative formats; and
 - d. information on how the Board will respond to feedback.

Consultation and Feedback

The Director of Education and/or designate will create a process for reviewing the implementation of this policy that includes consultation and feedback methods with

various constituency groups including but not exclusive to Special Education Advisory Committee, Teacher Federations, and Board Unions.

Consultation Methods

Consultation methods may include electronic feedback and focus groups.

Feedback Methods

A range of methods for soliciting and securing feedback will be employed to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities including such methods as e-mail, verbal input, and suggestion boxes to name but a few.

The feedback process should include the name(s) and title(s) of the person responsible for receiving feedback and how the Board's response to the feedback will be made known.

Proactive Measures for Accessible Customer Service

To ensure ongoing efficient and effective adherence to this policy the Board, through its central office and school level administration, will take into account the impact on people with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning any new initiative.

Notification of Disruption to Customer Service

Responsibility

Supervisory officers, principals and designated office staff will ensure that the users of Board and school services are notified when there is a disruption in service that may have an impact on access to services by people with disabilities.

Notice

Notice of service disruption should be given by posting information at a conspicuous place at or in the school or at or in Board facilities. Other posting options include: Board and/or school websites, direct communication, or the use of other Board or school level emergency protocols. Consideration should be given to providing notices in multiple formats.

Planned Disruptions

If the disruption is planned, notice should be provided in advance of the disruption. If the notice is unplanned, notice should be provided as soon as possible after the disruption has been identified.

Requirements

The Director of Education shall issue administrative procedures to support this policy and amend them thereafter as the need may arise.

The Director of Education or Designate shall:

- establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee;
- consult with people with disabilities in the development and review of its multi-year accessibility plan;
- ensure that Board policies and procedures are consistent and maintained up-to-date with the principles of accessibility; and
- plan continual improvement of access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents, guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

Support Person (Access, Confidentiality, Consent)

Definition/Explanation

A support person is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability who accesses the services of the Board.

A support person is distinct from an employee who provides support services to a student or staff member in the school system.

Separate and specific procedures apply for Board employees.

Additional Information

A support person is an individual chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Personal care needs may include, but not limited to physically transferring an individual from one location to another or assisting an individual with eating or the use of washroom facilities.

Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure.

Responsibility (Staff Training)

Supervisory officers, principals and designated office staff will ensure that staff receive training in interacting with people with disabilities who are accessing Board services accompanied by a support person.

Access to Board and School Property

Any person with a disability accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on Board and school property with his/her support person in accordance with this policy and the normal security practices and procedures of the Board.

This requirement applies only to those areas of the property where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of Board or school offices where the public does not have access.

Confidentiality and Parent/Guardian Consent

Where a support person accompanying a student with a disability for the purpose of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information concerning the student, the appropriate Board supervisory officer, principal or designated staff member must first secure the consent of the student's parent/guardian regarding such disclosure.

Consent to the disclosure of confidential information in the presence of the support person must be given in writing by the parent or guardian.

The support person privy to the disclosure of confidential information must provide written assurance that he/she will safeguard the information so disclosed.

A copy of the signed consent document will be retained in the Board/school office consistent with the record-keeping protocols of the Board.

If a different support person is present at subsequent meetings, a new signed consent will be required.

Support Person (Board and School Events and Celebrations)

Events with Fees

Where an individual with a disability is accompanied by a support person who wishes to attend a school, family of schools or Board organized event for which a fee is charged, a notice of the event will include information as to whether support persons will be charged a fee and specify the amount of the fee.

Events with a Risk Component

1. In the situation where the sponsored event contains an element of risk, there should be consultation with the person with the disability to determine if there are health and safety barriers that may prevent participation of both the support person and his or her charge. The Board or school will make every reasonable effort to accommodate both individuals and, at the same time, fulfill its health and safety obligations.
2. It should be further noted that people with disabilities are free to accept a reasonable risk of injury to themselves just as other people do. Different

individuals will have different tolerance for risk. Risk should be weighed against any benefit for the person with the disability.

3. It is important to remember that one of the requirements for the appointment of support persons is for the protection of the health and safety of the person with a disability. Accordingly, the Board or school cannot reduce or eliminate the risk of harm by any other means. The presence of a support person is, therefore, essential at all Board and school sponsored programs and events.
4. Any considerations on protecting the health of individuals shall be based on specific identifiable factors and not on mere assumptions. Just because someone has a disability, doesn't mean they're incapable of meeting health and safety requirements. They will do so through the application of a unique and time tested set of support mechanisms.

Appendix A - Accessibility Committee Protocol

January 2017

Definitions

Accessibility Committee - A formally established (through Board resolution) and representative group with a mandate to develop, implement and evaluate a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for people with disabilities that provides for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the programs and service offered by the Superior North Catholic District School Board.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - A five-year plan developed, implemented and evaluated by the Accessibility Committee, and reviewed and updated at least once within the five-year period in order to meet the stated objectives of the Superior North Catholic District School Board.

Introduction

The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation. To this end,

ODA 2001 requires each school board to meet the requirements of a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that includes the following:

- prepare an annual accessibility plan;
- consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan; and
- to make the plan public.

In order to effectively develop, implement and evaluate the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Board of Trustees, by formal resolution and through its administration, has established a system level Accessibility Committee.

The Accessibility Task Force shall fulfill its mandate in a manner consistent with Gospel values, and the Superior North Catholic District School Board's commitment to promote the dignity and value of the whole person. Moreover, the Accessibility Task Force shall commit its full attention and resources to ensuring compliance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), all associated regulations, Board policies and procedures.

In addition, the Accessibility Committee, through the active engagement of its mandate, shall make all reasonable efforts to assist the Board in realizing its distinct mission and vision:

Board Mission - To provide authentic Catholic education with a commitment to gospel values in a culture of leading and learning through Destination Renewal.

Accessibility Committee: Mandate

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, through the Director of Education, the Accessibility Task Force shall develop, implement and evaluate the Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

This process shall be conducted in a planned, systematic and sustained manner, that ensures continual improvement of access to Board facilities, policies, programs, practices and services, along with the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for students, staff, parents and guardians, and community members with disabilities.

Accessibility Committee: Objectives

The mandate of the Accessibility Task Force shall be realized through strict adherence to the following objectives:

- The development, implementation and evaluation of the Board Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall include a:
- Description of the process by which the Superior North Catholic District School Board will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities over a five-year period.
- Review of efforts made by the Superior North Catholic District School Board to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during past years.
- List of the policies, procedures, programs, practices and services that the Superior North Catholic District School Board will review in the coming year to identify barriers for people with disabilities.
- Description of the measures the Superior North Catholic District School Board will take in the coming five years to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- Description of how the Superior North Catholic District School Board will make the plan available to the public.
- Plan for staff and volunteer related in-service or training over a five-year period.
- Commitment to provide an annual status report on the Board's implementation of the plan to the Director of Education.
- Commitment to review and update the plan at least once every five years.
- Provide input to the Board of Trustees and senior administrative staff when required, or appropriate, and wherever practical on any or all accessibility related issues.

Accessibility Committee: Members

The formally constituted Accessibility Committee comprises the following members:
Director of Education (or designate)

- Superintendent of Education (Chair)
- Special Education Advisory Committee Representative
- Employee Groups (OECTA Representative, SEIU Representative)
- School Council Representative
- Community Members Representatives (2)
- Manager of Operations
- Manager of Finance
- Trustee

Accessibility Committee: Resource Material

The following resource material is provided in order to assist the Accessibility Committee in fulfilling its most important mandate.

Superior North Catholic District School Board

- Board Approved Accessibility Policy
- Board Approved Accessibility Administrative Procedures

Ontario Regulation 429/07

- Made Under the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005

Ontario Education Services Corporation

- Accessibility Standards
- Requirements for School Boards

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