



Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

Section: ADMINISTRATION

**ADMINISTRATIVE  
PROCEDURE PR A:31  
Accessibility Standards for  
Customer Service**

POLICY:	PR A:31
EFFECTIVE:	Jan. 12/10
AMENDED:	
RELATED POLICIES:	A:14, ST:24, PR ST:24
REPEALS:	
REVIEW DATE:	2014-2015

## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

1.1 It is the policy of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board to provide an environment in all of its facilities that builds independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for our students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff. Further, we are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity of access to our services in the same location and in a similar way as these services are available to all others we serve.

## 2.0 NOTIFICATION OF DISRUPTION OF SERVICE

2.1 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 the site and on the Board's website. Generally, disruptions to all of the Board's services, such as during a major storm or power outage, do not require this special notice. However, if the disruption has a significant impact on people with disabilities, a notice of the disruption will be provided.

2.2 Supervisory Officers, Principals, Vice-Principals, Managers/Supervisors and /or Communications Co-ordinator will ensure that the users of board and school services are notified when there is a disruption of services that may have an impact on access to services by people with disabilities.

2.3 Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place at or in the school or at or in board facilities; posting on the board and/or school website; or through direct communication with users of the services in accordance with school practices.

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

2.4 The notice of disruption of service will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternate facilities or services, if any, that are available. (Appendix A: Sample Notices of Disruption).

### **3.0 USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

- 3.1 The Board will welcome all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities. Such services incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices.
- 3.2 An assistive device is any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices.
- 3.3 Supervisory Officers, Principals and Manager/Supervisors will ensure that staff is trained to support parents and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing board services.
- 3.4 Training is focused on how to interact with people using assistive devices rather than on the technical use of the assistive devices.
- 3.5 Students and staff have separate and specific procedures related to their personal use of assistive devices.
- 3.6 Communication regarding Use of Assistive Devices:
- a) *Assistive Devices Carried by Persons with Disabilities*
- The board website and each school website will indicate that all board 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 welcomes the use of assistive devices and encourages users to seek support from staff and volunteers as they require it.
- b) *Assistive Devices/Services – Made available by the Board\**
- The board website and school websites, as applicable, will indicate the availability of assistive devices provided by the board or school to assist in provision of services to people with disabilities.
  - Each 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.
- \*Note – these could include:
- Assistive devices:** TTY service, telephone with large numbers, amplifiers, lifts.
- Services:** Sign language interpretation, oral interpretation, real-time captioning.
- Alternate service methods:** Assistance of staff person to complete a transaction e.g., school registration).

#### **4.0 USE OF SUPPORT PERSON BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

- 4.1 The Board will welcome all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of support persons.
- 4.2 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 are not limited to, physically transferring an individual from one location to another or assisting an individual with eating or using the washroom. 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.
- 4.3 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 person in the system – separate and specific procedures apply.
- 4.4 The support person could be a paid professional, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not necessarily need to have special training or qualifications.
- 4.5 Supervisory Officers, Principals and Departmental Managers will ensure that staff receives training in interacting with people with disabilities who are accessing board services accompanied by a support person.
- 4.6 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with his or her support person. Access will be accordance with normal 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 offices where the public does not have access.
- 4.7 Confidentiality:
  - Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability, who is the parent/guardian of a student, for the purpose of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information concerning the student, the superintendent, principal or other staff member must first secure the consent of the 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 must also provide assurance in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of information disclosed in the discussion.
  - A copy of the signed consent document will be retained in the school/board office.
  - If the parent/guardian uses a different support person for subsequent meeting, a new signed consent will be required. (Appendix B: Sample Consent Form).

4.8 Where an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a support person wishes to attend a school, family of schools or board-organized event for which a fee is charged, the admission fee for the support person shall be waived.

4.9 The Board may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

(Note: This would be highly rare situation and would only occur where, after consultation with the person with the disability, requiring a support person is the only means available to allow the person to be on the premises and, at the same time, fulfill the Board's obligations to protect the health or safety of the person with the disability or of others on the premises.)

It is 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 a disability. It is not enough that the support person might help to protect health and safety; a support person must be necessary or essential to protect health and safety before you can require one – the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means. Any considerations on protecting health or safety should be based on specific factors and not on assumptions. Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean they're not capable of meeting health and safety requirements.)

## **5.0 USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS BY GENERAL PUBLIC**

5.1 The Board will welcome all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of service animals.

5.2 A service animal is 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 physician or nurse. 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 a service animal or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. 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.

5.3 Supervisory Officers, Principals/VP and Managers/Supervisors will ensure that all 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.

5.4 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 will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with the normal 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 offices where the public does not have access.

- 5.5 This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal. Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff is covered under separate procedures.
- 5.6 A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former *Act* prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed or handled (e.g., kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g., school cafeteria or lunchroom).
- 5.7 Where there is 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, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.
- 5.8 A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the Ontario *Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.
- 5.9 In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board will 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 areas where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve them, e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff or volunteer) to guide them.
- 5.10 Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used. Where the person using the service animal regularly attends at the school or board facility, the principal or departmental manager may request to keep a copy of the letter on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a letter with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The principal or departmental manager shall preserve the confidentiality of the letter and information contained in the letter, and shall not use or disclose the letter or information except as provided for in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S. O. 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.

## **6.0 MONITORING AND FEEDBACK ON ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE**

- 6.1 The Board will monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard through a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people with disabilities to provide feedback using a number of methods.
- 6.2 The Board will create a feedback process that will review the implementation of this policy with the Board's various constituency groups. Examples include but are not limited to Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Teacher Federations\*, Employee unions\*, citizens' groups. Methods would include electronic means such as websites.  
(\*Note: Consultation relates to membership of these groups as **providers** of Accessible Customer Service.)
- 6.3 The Director of Education and/or designates will implement a process for Feedback on Accessible Customer Service that has the following components:
- a) Information on the Board and school websites inviting users of Board services to provide feedback on their experience with or concerns about access to services for people with disabilities.
  - 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 accessibilities of services. Consideration should be given to providing information in alternate formats.
  - c) Information on how the Board will respond to feedback.
- 6.4 A range of methods for soliciting feedback will be employed to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities. Methods could include e-mail, verbal input, suggestions box or feedback card. The feedback process should include the title(s) of the person(s) responsible for receiving feedback and indicate how the Board's response to the feedback will be made known.
- 6.5 To ensure ongoing efficient and effective adherence to the Board's policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the Board, its school-based administrators and its managers including those representing the Board in multi-board consortia will take into account the impact on people with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.



**Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board**

**Section: Administration**

**Procedure: PR A:31 Accessibility of Standard Customer Services**

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**SAMPLE NOTICES FOR DISRUPTION OF SERVICES**

**(Place on School Letterhead)**

**Sample 1:**

Access to School Buildings

To: Parents, Guardians and Community Users of our School

Maintenance work will make the main door of the school and the access ramp inaccessible from    to    . A temporary ramp has been set up that gives access to the door at the east end of the school building. We regret this inconvenience. If you have questions or concerns, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at [phone number].

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**Sample 2:**

Accessible Washroom

To: Visitors to the Education Centre

Our accessible washroom is out of service due to a broken pipe. Repairs are underway and the washroom is expected to be usable again by tomorrow. In the interim, we have made arrangements for our visitors to use the accessible washroom at    Street, which is located next door to our premises. We apologize for this inconvenience.

Thank you,

Superintendent of Facilities



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**SAMPLE CONSENT FORM**

**(Place on School Letterhead)**

**Sample:**

I, (parent/guardian) consent to the sharing of confidential information by (name of principal/teacher/other staff member) related to my child/ward (name) in the presence of my support person (name).

My support person (name) consents to safeguarding the confidentiality of the information shared.

Affirmation of consent:

Parent/Guardian

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Printed Name of Parent/Guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

I undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of information shared between (school staff) and (parent/guardian) for whom I am support person.

Support Person

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Printed Name of Support Person): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness-

Principal/Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Printed Name of Staff Person): \_\_\_\_\_