



ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Effective Date: October 11, 2011

St. Michael's College School is committed to providing services in a manner that, as much as reasonably possible, respects an individual's dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity, including, for those with disabilities. In its ongoing efforts to strive for accessibility, the School endorses the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the regulations supporting this Act.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the practices and procedures approved by the School in order to meet the obligations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and specifically Regulation 429/07. The School, through this policy, establishes and implements practices and procedures consistent with its goal of compliance, as well as its commitment to excellent customer service for all.

Definitions

Assistive Device: Any device used by people with disabilities to help increase, maintain or improve how a person with a disability can function. Such devices may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices, elevators, stair lift etc.

Customer: Any person who uses the goods and services of the School, including students, parents and other members of the school community.

Disability: As defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, section 2, means (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness; (b) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability; (c) a learning disability or a dysfunction on one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language; (d) a mental disorder, or; (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Dignity: Refers to service which is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of others.

Equal Opportunity: Refers to service which is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability access to goods and service at the same level given to others.

Independence: Allows the person with a disability to do things on their own without unnecessary interference from others.

Integration: Refers to service which is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar manner as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the person with the disability to access the goods or services.

Service Animal: An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is obvious that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to help with his or her disability; or if the person provides a letter from a doctor or nurse confirming that the person needs the animal to help with his or her disability.

Support Person: A person who assists a person with a disability with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs as they access the services of the School. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a student in the system.

Objectives

1. This policy aims to ensure that people with disabilities are given the same opportunity as others to obtain and benefit from services offered by the School. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that services offered by the School are provided in such a way that the key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are respected.
2. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that people with disabilities have 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, unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable the person to access the service.
3. When communicating with a person with a disability, the person's specific disability will be taken into account.

(a) Use of Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their own personal assistive devices, or those that may be provided by the School, while obtaining any services provided in any premise of the School.

A person with a disability may enter any premise of the School with that assistive device unless not allowed by law. If the device is not allowed by law, the person will be so advised and alternate options will be explored. If barriers to the use of

an assistive device exist at any premises, these barriers, where reasonably possible, will be removed.

(b) Service Animals

Service animals are allowed to enter premises with any person with a disability, except where animals are not allowed by law. Where an animal is not allowed by law, alternate options will be explored to provide the service to the person with a disability.

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 the exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animals. It is the School's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, for example, creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules.

(c) Support Persons

Support persons are allowed to go with any person with a disability in any area, on any School premise. This will include attendance at any meetings or interviews. Depending on the circumstance, it may be appropriate for permission to be obtained from the person with the disability for their support person to attend a meeting or interview which could be considered private or confidential. This permission can take many forms, depending on the specific needs of the person with the disability, and may include, written or verbal permission, a nod of the head, or otherwise. Permission should be documented by School staff.

In some instances, the School may require that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person when on School premises, but only in such instances where a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability, or others on the premises.

If there is an admission fee payable as a result of the person's attendance at the premise, notice shall be given in advance about the amount, if any, payable by the support person.

(d) Notice of Temporary Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption of facilities or services typically used by people with disabilities, notice of the disruption will be provided. Notice must include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration of the disruption and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available. This policy enables School staff, as appropriate, to prepare and implement required notices.

Notice may be given by posting information at the premise, on the School website, voice messaging or any other reasonable alternative in the particular circumstances. It is expected that consideration will be given to which people with disabilities will be most affected by the disruption and steps will be taken to ensure that the information about the disruption will be communicated in a way that best matches these needs.

(e) Customer Service Training

The School will ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its services to persons with disabilities:

- those who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the School, whether as an employee, volunteer or agent; and
- those who participate in developing the School's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of Regulation 429/07 and address the following matters:

- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or support person;
- how to use equipment or devices available on School premises, if any, that may assist with the provision of services; and
- what to do if a person with a particular disability is having difficulty accessing School services.

Training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after assignment of applicable duties. Ongoing training must also be provided in connection with any changes to the policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of services to people with disabilities. Records of the training will be kept including, the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

(f) Feedback Process and Requirements

Any person wishing to provide feedback to the School about the manner in which it provides service to people with disabilities may do so in a variety of ways,

including, in person, by telephone, in writing by email, hard copy, diskette or fax, or by some other communication technology.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the complaint is to be forwarded to the School's Human Resources Department, to the attention of Manager of Human Resources. Upon receipt of a complaint the matter will be reviewed by the Manager or designate, and a response will be provided to the person making the complaint either verbally or in writing, as appropriate, concerning their complaint and any action which may have been taken as a result.

Responsibilities

- (a) Board of Directors
 - (i) to consider legislative requirements as well as the School goals of accessibility and customer service for people with disabilities while developing and reviewing School policies.
- (b) Head of School
 - (i) to oversee, monitor and support teachers, managers and other employees in implementing this policy;
 - (ii) to strive to ensure that practices are consistent with the key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity; and
 - (iii) to strive to ensure that the School facilitate excellent customer service for those with disabilities through a variety of appropriate means including, the use of assistive devices, service animals and/or support persons.
- (c) Human Resources Department
 - (i) to provide appropriate training/training guidelines for new and current staff, and volunteers, within appropriate timelines;
 - (ii) to report, as required, on this policy to the Ontario government; and
 - (iii) to receive, and deal with, any complaint received as a result of customer service provision to persons with disabilities.
- (d) Managers
 - (i) to comply with and implement the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy;
 - (ii) to receive requests and feedback from customers with disabilities;
 - (iii) to determine, in consultation with the others where necessary, the most appropriate accommodation(s) to provide customer service;

- (iv) to ensure that front-line staff and volunteers interfacing with customers are trained to know the policy and procedures; and
 - (v) to ensure that agents or others who are dealing with the public are aware of the policy and procedures.
- (e) Staff
- (i) to comply with and support the implementation of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy and procedures in the School;
 - (ii) to participate in required training related to this policy; and
 - (iii) to direct feedback from customers regarding the policy to their immediate supervisor.
- (f) Customer
- (i) to self-identify as having a disability for which they require assistance in accessing School services and communicating such to the appropriate School personnel; and
 - (ii) to collaborate with School staff to determine suitable mode(s) of accommodation/assistance.

APPENDIX “A”

TIPS FOR SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The School is committed to offering its services in ways that respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, and strives to allow people with disabilities to obtain the same services, in the same places and in similar ways as other customers. The following tips may assist in providing excellent customer service, while taking into account a person’s disability.

There are a wide variety of disabilities and responding in the most appropriate manner to each person with a disability always requires common sense, patience, respect and a genuine willingness to find the best way to help when serving a person with a disability.

1. Match Communication to the Particular Type of Disability

Communicate with a person with a disability in manner that takes their specific disability into account. Where possible, ask the person directly how to best communicate with them – this may include using alternate formats such as notes, large print, CD or use of Braille.

Always attract a customer’s attention before speaking to them. One way to achieve this may be a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand. Speak directly to the person with the disability, not their support person. Excellent communication may also require that you step around a counter or desk to provide service to someone with a physical disability. Some instances may require that you speak very slowly, use very clear language and attempt to restrict your questions to yes or no answers, where possible.

In all instances take your cues from the person with the disability – do not assume what they can or cannot do, be patient, give the person your full attention and always respect any specific directions that they provide with regard to how best to meet their own specific needs.

2. Service Animals

Service animals are allowed to go with any person with a disability while they are obtaining services from the School. Where the animal is not allowed by law, other options should be explored. For example, if a guide dog is not allowed in a particular area, someone with low vision or no vision might need someone to guide them while the dog waits in another location. Another option would be to provide the service in another part of the premises. At all times, solutions and options should be discussed with the customer.

Never touch a person who has a disability such as a vision or hearing disability without obtaining permission first, unless it is an emergency. You can however offer to guide a person, if appropriate, by offering your arm. Again, take your cues from the person with the disability – they are best able to advise you of the most appropriate way to provide them assistance.

Do not address or touch a service animal. It is working and has to pay attention at all times.

3. Support Persons

Support persons are allowed to go with any person with a disability while they are obtaining services from the School. Some services, such as meetings with regard to students, should be considered private and confidential. If a person with a disability uses a support person and is attending a confidential meeting or interview, the person with the disability may need to provide permission for the support person to attend. This permission should be documented in writing or as appropriate.

Always direct your attention to the person with the disability, rather than the support person. As always, take your cues from the person with the disability to understand how to best meet their needs.