Greater Essex County District School Board

Title: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Customer Service Standard

Category: Policy
Responsibility: Superintendent of Special Education
Effective Date: November 18, 2009
Review Date: October 15, 2024
Next Review Year: 2029

This Policy and Regulation is made in accordance with Part IV.2, Customer Service Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards.

The Greater Essex County District School Board is committed to providing equal access and participation for our students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff that is free of barriers and biases. The Greater Essex County District School Board strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued. Our actions will demonstrate our belief in the strength diversity brings to our communities.

It is the policy of the Greater Essex County District School Board to provide learning and working environments that build independence, dignity and respect 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 a similar way as these services are available to others.

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The Definitions and Board Expectations listed below are made in accordance with Part IV.2, Customer Service Standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards.

The needs of staff and students with respect to service animals, support persons and assistive devices are addressed under separate policies & regulations.

1. Definitions:

Accessible Formats

Include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats useable by persons with disabilities.

Accommodation

Is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of the Board.

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, etc.

Barriers to Accessibility

Means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the services of the Board. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier a policy or a practice.

Communications

Means the interactions between two or more persons or entities or any combination of them where information is provided, sent, or received.

Communication Supports

May include but are not limited to captioning, alternative, and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Conversion Ready

Means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format.

Customer

Is any person who uses the services of the Board.

General Public

Is any person who is not a student or employee of the Greater Essex County District School Board. For example, but not limited to staff member of a contractor or consultant.

Information

Includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images and that conveys meaning.

Mobility Aid

Means a device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability.

Service Animal

Is an animal that is being used for reasons related to a person's disability and this is either readily apparent as a result of visual indicators such as a vest or harness worn by the animal or is supported by documentation from a regulated health professional confirming the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability.

Support Person

Is a person who accompanies a person with a disability to help him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs, or with access to the services or facilities of the Board. A support person is different from an employee who assists a student within the system. The guidelines related to support persons do not apply to students when they are receiving educational services and programs.

Third Party Contractors

Is any person or organization acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Board.

2. Board Expectations:

A. The Board will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all policies, practices, and procedures from the date of this policy forward are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities. Existing policies will be revised where needed at the time of their review.

B. 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 persons with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices, support persons and the presence of Service Animals. Access to classrooms for Service Animals used by students and staff is covered under separate procedures (AD-31 Effective Date: 2009/10/21, AD-AP-29).

C. To ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities, the Board will provide appropriate training regarding accessibility standards and the Human Rights Code and the provision of services to persons with disabilities for all staff who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Board.

D. Training as identified in C will be provided as new staff is hired as a component of their orientation training and for all others will be provided.within a reasonable timeframe and on an ongoing basis.

E. The Board will ensure that its policies and regulations related to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are made available to the public.and also ensure there is capacity to.provide communication about these policies and procedures.in an accessible format that takes into account a person's disability. Information and policies (including public safety/emergency plan) are available in accessible formats upon request.

F. When services or facilities 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. Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place at or in the school or at or in Board facilities. Other options that may be used include posting on the school website; through direct communication with

users of the services in accordance with school practices. Consideration should be given to providing notice in multiple formats. 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.

G. In order to monitor the effectiveness of.implementation of the Regulation, the Board has a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process is readily available to the public and allow people to provide feedback using a number of methods including the use of communication supports and accessible formats.
So that adherence to this policy can be achieved efficiently and effectively, the Board and all its managers and school-based administrators will take into account the impact on persons with disabilities.when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.