



KENORA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

100 General Administration Procedures

AP 113: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

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

Rationale

The Kenora Catholic District School Board is committed to providing services to the students, parents/guardians, the public and the staff that are free of barriers and biases. The Kenora Catholic District School Board strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, inclusion and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. Our conduct will demonstrate our belief in the strength diversity brings to our communities.

1. Definitions:

- 1.1 Customer:** A person who uses the services of the Board.
- 1.2 Assistive Device:** Device(s) 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, and electronic communication devices.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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 an employee
- 1.5 Third Party Contractor(s):** A person(s) or organization(s) acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Board (e.g. bus operators, psychologists).

- 1.6 **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, or a technological barrier.
- 1.7 **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.

2. Board Responsibilities:

- 2.1 The Board will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures from the date of this procedure forward are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities.
- 2.2 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 and service animals.
- 2.3 The Board will ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities; the Board will provide appropriate training for all staff who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Board.
- 2.4 The Board will provide training, as identified in #3, to all staff and, when appropriate, to volunteers. As new staff are hired, the training will become a component of their orientation training and will be provided within a reasonable timeframe.
- 2.5 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 capacity to provide communication about these policies and procedures in a format that takes into account a person's disability.

- 2.6 The Board will ensure 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.
- 2.7 In order to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard, the Board will develop a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people to provide feedback using a number of methods.
- 2.8 The Board will ensure that adherence to this procedure 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.
- 2.9 The Board will create a feedback process that will review the implementation of this procedure with the Board’s various constituency groups. Examples include Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Federations, unions , citizens’ groups, school councils. Methods could include the use of electronic means such as websites.
- 2.10 The Board will establish a process for consulting with frontline staff and volunteers who have a role in implementing the expectations and procedures established under this policy to review its effectiveness.

3. Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public

3.1 Definition/Explanation of assistive devices:

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.

3.2 Responsibility

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

- 3.2.1 Training is focused on how to interact with people using assistive devices rather on the technical use of the assistive devices.
- 3.2.2 Students and staff have separate and specific procedures related to their personal use of assistive devices.

3.3 Communication: Use of assistive devices carried by persons with disabilities

- 3.3.1 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.
- 3.3.2 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 required.

3.4 Assistive devices/services made available by the Board

- 3.4.1 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.
- 3.4.2 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.
- 3.4.3 * Note – these could include:
 - Assistive devices:** TTY service, telephones with large numbers, amplifiers, lifts.
 - Services:** Sign language interpretation, oral interpretation, real-time captioning.
 - Alternate service methods:** Assistance of a staff person to complete a transaction, e.g., school registration.

4. Use of service animals by the general public

4.1 Definition/explanation of service animal:

- 4.1.1 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.
- 4.1.2 **Additional information:** Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who have 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 and lead them to safety. The customer service standard's provisions also apply to animals that provide other services to people with disabilities.
- 4.1.3 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 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.
- 4.1.4 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.

4.2 Responsibility:

- 4.2.1 Supervisory Officers, principals and departmental managers 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.

4.3 Access to Board premises:

- 4.3.1 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 be in accordance with normal security procedures.

- 4.3.2 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.
- 4.3.3 Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff is covered under separate specific procedures.

4.4 Exclusion of a service animal

- 4.4.1 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 a school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g. school cafeteria or lunchroom).
- 4.4.2 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, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.
- 4.4.3 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.

4.5 Alternative measures if a service animal must be excluded

- 4.5.1 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.
- 4.5.2 This could involve leaving the animal in a secure place 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. Monitoring and feedback on accessible customer service

5.1 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 will be readily available to the public and will allow people with disabilities to provide feedback using a number of methods.

5.2 The Board will create a feedback process that will review the implementation of the Board’s various constituency groups. Examples include Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Federations*, unions*(*Note: consultation relates to membership of these groups as providers of accessible customer service)

5.3 Responsibility:

The Director of Education and/or designates will implement a process for feedback on accessible customer service that has the following components:

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 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. Consideration should be given to providing information in alternate formats.

5.3.3 Information on how the Board will respond to feedback.

5.4 Consultation:

5.4.1 The Director of Education and/or designates will create a process for reviewing implementation of the policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service that includes consultation with various constituency groups including Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Federations, unions, citizens’ groups.

- 5.4.2 Consultation methods could include electronic feedback and focus groups.

5.5 Methods for feedback

- 5.5.1 A range of methods for soliciting feedback will be employed to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities.
- 5.5.2 Methods could include e-mail, verbal input, and a suggestion box or feedback card.
- 5.5.3 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.

5.6 Proactive measures for accessible customer service

To ensure ongoing efficient and effective adherence to the Board's policy on Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the Board, its managers and its school-based administrators will take into account the impact on people with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.

6. Notification of disruption of service

6.1 Responsibility

- 6.1.1 Supervisory Officers, principals, and departmental managers will ensure that the users of board and school services are notified when there is a disruption in services that may have an impact on access to services by people with disabilities.
- 6.1.2 Notice may 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 board and/or school website; through direct communication with users of the services in accordance with school practices
- 6.1.3 Consideration should be given to providing notice in multiple formats.

- 6.1.4 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.

7. Use of a Support Person

7.1 Definition/Explanation of support person

- 7.1.1 A support person is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability who accesses the services of the Board.
- 7.1.2 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.

7.2 Additional Information

- 7.2.1 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.
- 7.2.2 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.
- 7.2.3 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.

7.3 Responsibility

Supervisory officers, principals and department managers will ensure that staffs receive training in interacting with people with disabilities who are accessing board services accompanied by a support person.

7.4 Access to board premises

- 7.4.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on board and/or school premises with his/her support person. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.
- 7.4.2 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.

7.5 Confidentiality

- 7.5.1 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.
- 7.5.2 Consent to the disclosure of confidential information in the presence of the support person must be given in writing by the parent or guardian.
- 7.5.3 The support person must also provide assurance in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of information disclosed in the discussion.
- 7.5.4 A copy of the signed consent document will be retained in the school/board office.
- 7.5.5 If the parent/guardian uses a different support person for subsequent meetings, a new signed consent will be required.

7.6 Support persons accompanying a person with a disability at school events for which there is an admission fee

- 7.6.1 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 notice of the event will include information as to whether support persons will be charged a fee and specify the amount of the fee.

- 7.6.2 This would be a 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 a disability or of others on the premises.
- 7.6.3 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 a different tolerance for risk.
- 7.6.4 Risk should be weighed against any benefit for the person with a disability.
- 7.6.5 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.
- 7.6.6 Any considerations on protecting health or safety should be based on specific factors and not on assumptions.
- 7.6.7 Just because someone has a disability doesn’t mean they’re not capable of meeting health or safety requirements.

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