



**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ONTARIO NORTH EAST**

Policy No. 1.2.26

Section: System Policies and Procedures

Related References:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Ontario Human Rights Code

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11)

Appendices:

Approved: March 23, 2010

Revised: June 6, 2017

Review Date:

TITLE: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

1.0 Rationale:

In compliance with The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, created under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, District School Board Ontario North East is committed to providing goods and services in a way that is accessible to all customers.

The Board believes that excellence in education is founded on respect for the dignity and humanity of all individuals and the development of human potential, enabling individuals and groups to participate and contribute fully within a diverse society. Equity, valuing diversity and inclusion are related yet distinct concepts which form the foundation of social justice and reflect values such as fairness, empathy, and respect for the dignity of all humans.

Practising equity involves proactively eradicating attitudes, actions, structures and systems that result in discrimination and exclusion. To this end, District School Board Ontario North East is committed to the continual improvement of accessibility and the on-going removal of barriers in order to provide greater equity for all.

2.0 Definitions:

<i>Customer</i>	any person who uses the goods and services of the school board.
<i>Assistive Device</i>	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.
<i>Service Dog</i>	a dog that is being used because of a person's disability. The dog's certification complies with District School Board Ontario North East's Policy for the 'Use of Service Dogs in Schools.

- Support Person* a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability as he/she access the services of the Board. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a student in the system.
- Third Party Contractors* is any person or organization 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 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.
- Accommodation* a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of the Board.

3.0 Policy:

It is the policy of District School Board Ontario North East 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.

PROCEDURES:

It is the objective of this policy to require that all reasonable steps be taken to ensure that:

1. The Board will review all policies, practices and procedures on an on-going basis to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities.
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 services are to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices and service dogs.
3. The Board will provide appropriate training for all staff who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the board to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of individuals with disabilities.
4. Training as identified in No. 3 will be provided to all staff and 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.
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.
6. 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, if applicable.
7. 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.
8. 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 variety of methods.
9. The Board will create a feedback process that will review the ongoing adherence of this policy with the Board's various constituency groups; for example, Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Federations, unions and citizens' groups.
10. The Board's Accessibility Working Group will regularly review the effectiveness of the practices and procedures established under this policy.