



Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy

Holy Name of Mary College School (HNMCS) is committed to providing services in a manner that, as much as 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. 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 someone with a disability to help increase, maintain or improve how he/she 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 Holy Name of Mary College School, including students, parents and other members of the school community.

Disability: The definition in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, section 2, states that disability 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: In this policy, dignity refers to service provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of others.

Equal Opportunity: In this policy, equal opportunity refers to service provided in a way that allows the person with a disability access to goods and service at the same level given to others.

Independence: In this policy, independence refers to allowing the person with a disability to do things on his/her own without unnecessary assistance from others.

Integration: Refers to service 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.

Specific Situations

1 Use of Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their own assistive devices, or those provided by the school, while obtaining any services provided in the school.

A person with a disability may enter any premise of the school with the assistive device unless it is not allowed by law. If the device is not allowed by law, the person will be advised and other options will be considered. If barriers to the use of an assistive device exist, these barriers, where reasonably possible, will be removed.

2 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.

Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person (for example, in the case of a severe allergy) 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. It is the school's expectation that the situation be fully studied and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered.



3 Support Persons

Support persons are allowed to go with any person with a disability in any area, on any school premise. This includes attendance at 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.

4 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.

Customer Service Training

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

- Employees and volunteers
- Those who participate in developing the school's policies
- Those who provide services on behalf of the school

The training will include a review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and will include the following:

- 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 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 disability is having difficulty accessing school services.

The training will be given as soon as possible after the person is assigned applicable duties. Ongoing training will also be given regarding any changes to the policies, practices and procedures for 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.



Feedback Process and Requirements

Any person wishing to provide feedback to the school its service to people with disabilities may do so in a variety of ways, including in person, by telephone, in writing by email, hard copy, or fax, or by some other communication technology.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the complaint is to be forwarded to the Head of School or his/her designate. Upon receipt of a complaint the matter will be reviewed, and a response will be provided to the person making the complaint either verbally or in writing, as appropriate, concerning the complaint and any action which may have been taken as a result.

Responsibilities

Board of Directors

- considers legislative requirements as well as the school goals of accessibility and customer service for people with disabilities while developing and reviewing school policies.

Head of School

- oversees, monitors and supports faculty, staff and other employees in implementing this policy;
- strives to ensure that practices are consistent with the key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity; and
- strives to ensure that the school provide excellent customer service for those with disabilities
- ensures that appropriate training/training guidelines are provided for new and current staff, volunteers, and others who provide services in the school within appropriate timelines;
- reports, as required, on this policy to the Ontario government; and
- receives and addresses any complaint received as a result of customer service provision to persons with disabilities.
- determines, in consultation with the others where necessary, the most appropriate accommodation(s) to provide customer service;

Faculty and Staff

- comply with and support the implementation of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy and procedures;
- participate in required training related to this policy; and
- direct feedback from customers regarding the policy to their immediate supervisor.

Customer

- self-identify as having a disability for which they require assistance in accessing school services and communicating such to the appropriate school personnel; and
- collaborate with school staff to determine suitable mode(s) of accommodation/assistance.

APPENDIX - TIPS FOR SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Holy Name of Mary College 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 people who access the school's services.



The following tips may assist in providing excellent customer service, while taking into account a person's disability.

- The four key principles in serving people with disabilities are dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
- There is 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.
- The person with the disability is the best source of information about his/her needs. 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 specific needs.
- 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.
- Do not touch or move any assistive device without permission.

1. Match Communication to the Particular Type of Disability: communicate with a person with a disability in manner that takes his/her specific disability into account.

Persons who have vision loss:

- May have some sight
- Identify yourself, speak directly, be precise and descriptive

Persons who have hearing loss:

- Attract a customer's attention before speaking to him/her. One way to achieve this may be a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Use a well-lit area where the person can see faces and read lips
- Speak clearly and keep hands away from the face.
- Reduce background noise or move to a quieter location

Persons who are deaf/blind:

- Speak directly to the person with the disability, not the support person

Persons who have physical disabilities:

- Sit to speak with a person in a wheelchair or on a scooter to make eye contact
- You may need to step around a counter or desk to provide service to someone with a physical disability.
- Respect physical space
- Request permission before touching objects such as wheelchairs or canes

Persons who have learning disabilities:

- You may need to speak very slowly, use very clear language and attempt to restrict your questions to yes or no answers, where possible
- Be patient
- Be prepared to explain information

Persons with speech or language impairments:

- Try not to assume that the person has another disability and does not understand
- When possible, ask questions that can be answered with yes or no.
- Don't interrupt or finish the person's sentences.



Persons with mental health disabilities:

- Be calm, confident and reassuring
- Treat the person with the same respect you give to others

Persons who have intellectual/developmental disabilities:

- Use simple language and provide one piece of information at a time
- Do not make assumptions about what the person can do.

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.
- 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 in any area, on any school premise. This includes attendance at 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.
- Always direct your attention to the person with the disability, rather than the support person.
- Take your cue from the person to know how best to meet his or her needs.

Sources

Metroland Media, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Information for Independent Operators

St. Michael's College School Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy

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