



Huron-Superior Catholic

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

The implementation of the Accessibility Standards will be as described below and in the Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Legal Framework

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11
Ontario Human Rights Code
Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
Ontario Building Code
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Purpose

This Procedural Guideline provides direction for the following standards:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Physical / Architectural

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will outline the phased-in actions over a five-year period to prevent and remove barriers and to address current and future requirements of the AODA. The plan is reviewed and reported upon annually to the Board of Trustees.

Board Accessibility Planning Committee

The Director of Education will establish a Board Accessibility Planning Committee, which will meet at least annually to review the progress and implementation of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, including current initiatives and successes in identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

The Director will designate a staff member as Chairperson and invite system representation on the Committee. The Committee will be comprised of a variety of stakeholders who are familiar with accessibility challenges (e.g., a trustee, superintendent, principal, teacher, SEAC member, community member, staff representatives from Special Education, Business, Plant, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Transportation).

Availability of Documentation

Policy 6005 Accessibility, Procedural Guidelines relating to Policy 6005, and the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan are available to the public in the following formats:

- Board website
- By request to the Manager of Human Resources:
 - Enlarged print or different coloured paper for contrast
 - PDF file or Word document
 - Email
 - Braille
 - Audio

Monitoring and Feedback

The Director of Education will ensure compliance with this policy and accompanying Procedural Guidelines, including investigating complaints based on disability.

Customer Service Standard Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

The Board will provide appropriate training to all staff, trustees, and volunteers (if appropriate), to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

When new staff is hired, accessibility training will become a component of their orientation, either in person or online training, and will be provided in a reasonable timeframe. This training is particularly important for trustees and senior team members, who collaborate on developing, reviewing, revising, approving, and communicating all board policies.

Training will address the following areas:

- Ontario Human Rights Code (as it relates to accessibility)
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- Integrated Accessibility Standards

The following areas will be included in the training:

Communication: Staff members who communicate with students, parents/guardians, employees, and the public will be trained on how to interact and communicate with individuals with various types of disabilities. This will include, but not be limited to, visual impairment, intellectual/developmental disability, and auditory impairment.

Assistive Devices: An assistive device includes any apparatus used by individuals with disabilities to help with daily living that may be brought onto Board premises (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices). Training will focus on how to interact with individuals using assistive devices, rather than on the technical use of the assistive device.

Service Animals: Any animal that is clearly identified as a service animal (e.g., wearing a harness, owner has an authorized certificate or identification card) will be welcomed on Board premises to accompany an individual with a disability, in accordance with normal security procedures. A service animal may only be excluded from access to premises where this is required by another law (e.g., Health Protection and Promotion Act, Food Safety and Quality Act).

Support Persons: A volunteer, friend, family member, and/or paid professional chosen by the individual with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods and services, will be welcomed to accompany an individual with a disability. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a student

in the system. Where a support person is assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information concerning a student, the principal, superintendent, or other staff member must first obtain the consent of the parent/guardian regarding such disclosure. **(See Appendix 1.)**

Disruption of Service: Facilities (services or systems) which are necessary to access services of the Board (e.g., elevators, accessible washrooms, automatic door openers, amplification systems) are relied on by individuals with disabilities. Schools, offices and facilities will post a disruption of service notice at the site and on the school or Board website when services that are normally provided to individuals with disabilities are temporarily unavailable. The notice of disruption will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services (if any). Disruptions that occur during a major storm or power outage do not require special notice.

The supervisor of the building will be responsible for ensuring a disruption of service notice is both posted on site and on the Board website (via the Communications Officer). There is an onus on all staff to report to the supervisor forthwith any disruption of services (e.g., elevators, accessible washrooms, automatic door openers, amplification systems). Once the service is restored, the supervisor will be responsible for removing the sign(s) and notifying the Communications Officer to remove the notice from the Board website. **(See Appendix 2.)**

Information and Communication Standard Providing Accessible Information and Communication Services

Provision of Information and Communications in Accessible Formats:

Upon request, schools, offices and facilities will provide accessible formats and communication support to individuals with disabilities when requested to do so, for documents or other communications that are made available to the public or to which the requester is entitled to receive.

Accessibility formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner that takes into account the individual's accessibility needs and at a cost no greater than the regular cost charged to other persons.

The Board will notify the public, through all written communications, websites, general publications and other relevant means, about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports.

Websites:

The Board will ensure that all its websites and web content on these sites conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

All board websites, blogs, or web applications that provide communication or opportunities for interaction with parents, students, employees or the community are subject to this requirement. This requirement, however, does not include third party sites, services, software or hosts where it is not practical to implement WCAG 2.0.

It is the responsibility of all staff members who participate in the creation of a website or web content to be aware of WCAG and to implement those standards as required.

Libraries in Schools:

All libraries in schools will provide, procure or acquire an accessible or conversion ready format of print resources upon request by an individual with a disability, upon request.

All libraries in schools will provide, procure or acquire by other means an accessible format of digital or multimedia resources or materials for an individual with a disability, upon request. **(See Appendix 3.)**

Employment Standard Ensuring All Employment Opportunities Are Accessible

The Board is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunity of access to employment opportunities and services as do all employees and prospective employees.

The Board is committed to meeting the accessibility needs, in a timely manner, in the provision of services related to employment.

Supervisory Officers, Managers, Principals and other staff who have responsibility for hiring, selecting, and supervising employees of the Board will ensure that the provisions of this procedure are implemented. Staff of the Board's Human Resources Department will ensure that the provisions of this procedure are incorporated into their practices.

Recruitment:

The Board will ensure that in its recruitment practices, the public is made aware that accommodation for applicants with disabilities is available.

When selecting job applicants for a job selection process, applicants will be made aware that, upon request, they have access to accommodations in relation to materials and processes and that they will be consulted about the necessary accommodations that take into account their accessibility needs.

When making an offer of employment, the successful applicant will be informed of the Board policy of accommodating employees with disabilities.

Supports for Employees:

Board employees will be informed of the Board policy of supporting employees with disabilities including, but not limited to, job accommodations. This information will be made available as soon as practical to new employees. Updated information will be provided to employees when there are changes to existing policies and/or procedures.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports:

Where an employee with a disability requests it, the Human Resources Department will consult with employees and provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for information needed to perform the employee's job, and for information generally available to employees in the workplace.

Performance Appraisal and Career Development:

All supervisors will take into account accessibility needs when using performance appraisal tools.

Individual Accommodation Plans:

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board is committed to providing accommodations for people with disabilities. When an employee with a disability requests an accommodation, the following process will be followed.

Step 1 – Recognize the Need for Accommodation

The need for accommodation can be:

- requested by the employee through her supervisor or through the Human Resources Department; or
- identified by the employee's supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

Step 2 – Gather Relevant Information and Assess Needs

The employee is an active participant in this step:

- The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board does not require details on the nature of the employee's disability to provide an accommodation; it needs to know only about the employee's functional abilities.
- The Board may ask for a functional ability form (at the Board's expense).
- The employee, the Manager of Human Resources and the employee's supervisor/designate evaluate potential options to find the most appropriate measure.
- An external expert may be involved, at the Board's expense.
- The employee can request the participation of a representative of his/her bargaining unit or if there is no bargaining unit, from a different representative from the workplace.

Step 3 – Write a Formal, Individual Accommodation Plan

Once the most appropriate accommodation has been identified, the accommodation details are written down in a formal plan, including:

- accessible formats and communication supports, if requested;
- workplace emergency response information, if required;
- any other accommodation that is to be provided.

The accommodation plan is provided to the employee in a format that takes into account his/her accessibility needs due to his/her disability;

- The employee's personal information is protected at all times.
- If an individual accommodation is denied, the Manager of Human Resources provides the employee with the reason for the denial, in an accessible format.

Step 4 – Implement, Monitor, and Review the Accommodation Plan

The employee, the Manager of Human Resources and the employee's supervisor/designate monitor the accommodation to ensure that it has effectively resolved the challenge:

- Formal reviews are conducted at a predetermined frequency.
- The accommodation plan is reviewed if the employee's work location or position changes.
- The accommodation is reviewed if the nature of the employee's disability changes.

If the accommodation is no longer appropriate, the employee and the Manager of Human Resources work together to gather relevant information and reassess the employee's needs in order to find the best accommodation measure (Step 2).

(See Appendix 4.)

Return to Work (RTW):

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board is committed to supporting employees who have been absent from work due to a non-work-related disability and who require an accommodation in order to return to work. Therefore, the Board has put in place the following RTW process to facilitate an employee's safe and timely return to work. This RTW does not replace or override any other RTW process created as a result of any other statute (e.g., WSIB).

Step 1 – Initiate the Return to Work Process

- The employee reports his/her need for a disability leave to his/her principal/supervisor or to human resources.
- Information is sent to the Manager of Human Resources

Step 2 – Make and Maintain Contact with the Employee on Leave

Manager of Human Resources:

- Maintains regular contact with the employee, with the employee's consent.
- Provides the employee with RTW information.
- Helps resolve any problems with treatment, if asked to by the employee.
- Monitors the employee's progress until he/she is fit for work.

Employee:

- Gets and follows the appropriate medical treatment.
- Updates the Manager of Human Resources about his/her progress.
- Gives the health care provided the RTW information.

Health Care Professional:

- Provides appropriate and effective treatment to the employee.
- Provides required information on the employee's functional abilities, if requested.

Step 3 – Develop a Return to Work Plan

- The employee, the Manager of Human Resources, and the health care professional (if needed) collaborate to develop a formal RTW plan, which is included in the employee's individual accommodation plan, if applicable:
 - If the employee has no *residual functional limitations*, he/she returns to his/her regular position with no accommodation required;
 - If the employee has *temporary functional limitations*, he/she returns to a temporary modified work environment with accommodation, or to an alternative transitional position;
 - If the employee has *lasting functional limitations*, he/she returns to work with permanent accommodations or is permanently reassigned to another position, where possible.

Step 4 – Monitor and Evaluate the Return to Work Process

- The employee, principal/supervisor, and Manager of Human Resources monitor and review the RTW process regularly until it has been completed.
- If the employee encounters challenges, the RTW plan is modified to overcome these challenges.

(See Appendix 5).

Emergency Response Plans

An emergency response plan is a series of steps that will be taken during critical events to ensure employee safety is preserved. The board's Emergency Procedures Handbook is available to all employees, and training on this handbook occurs every year, normally at the beginning of the new school year. This handbook provides detailed information and protocols to be followed during emergency situations, such as:

- Fire alarms
- Lockdowns
- Hold and secure situations
- Evacuations
- Shelters in place
- Bomb threats

See the Emergency Procedures procedural guideline, which is part of Policy 4024 – Safe Schools and Workplaces for additional details. All board facilities must host a prescribed number of drills each year with their employees in order to ensure safety procedures are well known. In addition, all board facilities are equipped with fire extinguishers, first aid kits, alarm systems, and communication systems that help to minimize safety concerns.

In addition, all supervisors of board facilities (e.g., principals, director) are required to develop, provide, communicate, and review on an annual basis a Fire Emergency Plan and Evacuation Plan with their employees and their local emergency services units. Such plans outline the names of employees working in the building, the various evacuation routes, the building's floor plan, and the duties of area fire supervisors.

It is acknowledged that additional planning may be required for emergency situations involving individuals who have accessibility challenges (e.g., those who are deaf, are blind, and/or have mobility issues). For this reason, a workplace emergency response plan will be designed for employees with disabilities.

Employees with accessibility issues should annually communicate their needs both to the Manager of Human Resources and their immediate supervisors so that individual plans may be created and/or updated. Such plans may require that additional equipment is installed (e.g., flashing lights in the workspace of a deaf employee) and/or that specific staff members within the work environment be assigned to assist the employee with evacuating the building. For safety reasons, wherever possible, employees with mobility issues will be placed in locations that do not require them to access an elevator to exit the building. In addition, emergency evacuation chairs are available in the stairwells of relevant buildings (e.g., those equipped with interior staircases and elevators).

Transportation Standard Providing Accessible Student Transportation Services

The Superintendent of Business and the Supervisor of the Transportation Consortium will ensure that the transportation procedures are implemented.

The school Principal, in consultation with the Special Education Department and parents/guardians, will annually identify students with disabilities that require specific transportation services. This will occur prior to the start of each school year, wherever possible.

An Individual Transportation Plan will be developed for each student with a disability who requires specific transportation services. **(See Appendix 6.)**

This plan will include:

- Details of the student's assistance needs with respect to transportation to and from school.
- Provisions for boarding, securement, and debording of the student, as applicable.

The Transportation Department, in collaboration with the Coordinator of Special Education, will communicate responsibilities to:

- the transportation provider
- the driver of the vehicle

The Principal, in collaboration with the Coordinator of Special Education, will communicate responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the individual transportation plan to:

- the parents/guardians of the student with a disability
- the student with the disability

Physical / Architectural Standards

Providing Barrier-Free Access to Board Facilities and Public Spaces

The Board has conducted an audit of all of its physical facilities and has developed a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to address any shortcomings in access. This plan is available on the Board website.

The Board works with all contractors and architects closely to ensure that any new facilities conform to appropriate accessibility guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, the design of public spaces, such as outdoor play spaces, parking areas, outdoor public eating areas, and outdoor paths.