

Sherwood Heights School Accessible Customer Service Plan & Policy

Sherwood Heights School is committed to excellence in serving all its students, parents, teachers, and staff, including people with disabilities and providing the service in a manner which respects an individual's dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity. The school, through this policy, establishes and implements practices and procedures consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and specifically Regulation 429/07, as well as its commitment to excellent customer service for all.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the practices and procedures which meet the obligations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and specifically Regulation 429/07. The School, through this policy, establishes and implements practices and procedures consistent with its goal of compliance, as well as its commitment to excellence in serving all customers, including people with disabilities.

Definitions

Assistive Device

Assistive device is any device used by people with disabilities to help increase, maintain, or improve how a person with a disability can function. Such devices may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices, elevators, stair lifts, etc.

Customer

A customer includes any person who uses the goods and services of the School, including students, parents and other members of the school community.

Disability

Disability, as defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, section 2, 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

Dignity refers to service which is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of others.

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity refers to service which is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability access to goods and service at the same level given to others.

Independence

Independence allows the person with a disability to do things on their own without unnecessary interference from others.

Integration

Integration refers to service which is 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

A service animal is an animal that is used by the person with a disability for reasons relating to help with his or her disability; or if the person with a disability 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 support person is 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.

(a) Use of Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their own personal assistive devices while obtaining any services provided by the school. A person with a disability may enter any area of the school, accessible by other customers, with that assistive device unless not allowed by law. If the device is not allowed by law, the person will be so advised and alternate options will be explored. If barriers to the use of an assistive device exist at any premises, these barriers, where reasonably possible, will be removed.

(b) Service Animals

Service animals are allowed to enter the school 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 to provide the service to the person with a disability. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration will be given to options available prior to the exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animals.

(c) Support Persons

Support persons are allowed to go with any person with a disability in any area in the School normally accessible by customers. This will include attendance at any 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. Permission will 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.

(d) 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 will 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 the required notices.

Notice may be given by posting information, on the School website, voice messaging, or any other reasonable alternative. 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.

(e) Customer Service Training

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

- those who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the School, whether as an employee, volunteer or agent; and
- those who participate in developing the School's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of Regulation 429/07 and address the following matters:

- 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 require the assistance of 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 particular disability is having difficulty accessing school services.

Training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after assignment of applicable duties. Ongoing training must also be provided in connection with any changes to the policies, practices and procedures relating to 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.

This training will be provided to staff within the first three months of employment through elearning or a booklet review. Training will include:

1. An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
2. Sherwood Heights School Private School's Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Plan.
3. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
4. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
5. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our facility.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to the Sherwood Heights School Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Plan.

(f) Feedback Process and Requirements

Any person wishing to provide feedback to the School about the manner in which it provides service to people with disabilities may do so in a variety of ways, including, in person, by telephone, in writing, or by email.

Upon receipt of a complaint the matter will be reviewed by the Director or designate, and a response will be provided to the person making the complaint either verbally or in writing, as appropriate, concerning their complaint and any action which may have been taken as a result.

4. Questions about this Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to persons with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of this policy is not understood, please contact:

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