



St. Clement's School

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

St. Clement's School ("St. Clement's") 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 customers. The following guidelines may assist in providing excellent customer service, while taking into account a person's disability.

There are 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.

Definitions

Assistive Device: 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, ramps, stair lift etc.

Barrier: Means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Customer: Any person who uses the goods and services of the School, including students, parents and other members of the school community.

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 insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

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

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: An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is readily apparent 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.

Communication

In all instances take your cues from the person with the disability – do not assume what they can or cannot do, be patient, give the person your full attention and always respect any specific direction that they provide with regard to how best to meet their specific needs.

Communicate with a person with a disability in manner that takes their disability into account. Where possible, ask the person directly how to best communicate with them – this may include using alternate formats such as notes, large print, CD or use of Braille. Staff should speak clearly and directly and be prepared to offer alternative modes of communication, for example pen and paper, internet and to offer to read a document should this be required. The use of appropriate language is critical for persons with disabilities.

Attract a customer's attention before speaking to them. A way to achieve this may be to gently wave your hand, or if you've received permission, gently touch the person on the shoulder. Speak directly to the person with the disability, not their support person. Excellent communication may also require that you step around a counter or desk to provide service to someone with a physical disability. Some instances may require that you speak very slowly, use clear language and attempt to restrict your questions to yes or no answers, where possible.

Do not 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. Again, take your cues from the person with the disability – they are best able to advise you of the most appropriate way to provide them assistance.

Assistive Devices

Staff should inform our customers of the assistive devices St. Clement's currently has in place, such as wheelchairs, ramps and elevators. Customers may also bring their own assistive devices on the premises. Staff should not interfere with the assistive device without permission of the customer. St. Clement's will maintain its wheelchairs, ramps and elevators.

If barriers to the use of an assistive device exist at any premises, these barriers, where reasonably possible, will be removed.

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 a person 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.

As per the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, section 59(e)(ii) of Ontario Regulation 562 does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. However, section 60 of Ontario Regulation 562 does allow a service dog serving as a guide for a blind person or for a person with another medical disability who requires the use of a service dog to go into places where food is served, sold or offered for sale. Other types of service animals are not included in this exception. Staff may offer suitable alternative arrangements if the animal is prohibited by law.

A number of animals serve as service animals. If you are in doubt as to whether an animal is in fact a service animal there are three types of acceptable supporting documentation:

- A letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or
- A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

If a conflict arises as a result of an allergy that staff or student may have to the service animal, it is up to the Director of Human Resources, Director of Student Life or the Property Manager to work out a solution.

Do not interact with a service animal without the permission of the owner/user as these are working animals not pets. Do however, assist in providing water upon request and show the user/handler an outdoor area suitable for the animal's needs. The owner/user of the service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

Support Persons

Support persons are allowed to go with any person with a disability while they are obtaining services from St. Clement's. Some services, such as meetings with regard to students, should be considered private and confidential. If a person with a disability uses a support person and is attending a confidential meeting or interview, the person with the disability may need to provide permission for the support person to attend. This permission should be documented in writing.

Always direct your attention to the person with the disability, rather than the support person. It is best practice to take your cues from the person with the disability to understand how to best meet their needs.

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