



ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

AG 10.1

<i>Policy Section</i> Administration - General	<i>Original Approval Date</i> 2013 01 29	<i>Revision Date(s)</i> 2022 07 29	<i>Review Date(s)</i>
--	--	--	-----------------------

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board (NPSC) is committed to creating stimulating and nurturing learning and working environments for all students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff. Our Catholic school community respects, builds upon, and indeed celebrates the uniqueness of the individual, who is created in God's image. In accordance with our Gospel values and the Church's teachings, it is the policy of the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to provide an environment in all its facilities that fosters independence, dignity, and respect.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

This administrative guideline provides direction for the following standards:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation

1.0 DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device: any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, oxygen tanks, or electronic communication devices.

Barrier: 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, or a policy or a practice.

Customer: any person who uses the services of the Board.

Disability:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog, or on a wheelchair, or another remedial appliance or device;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved 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; (“handicap”).

Service animal: means an animal that is being used because of a person’s disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a physician or nurse.

Support person: means a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability who accesses the services of the Board. A support person is distinct from an employee who provides support services to a student in the system.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisory Officers, Principals, and Departmental Managers will ensure that staff are trained to support parents/guardians and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing board services.

3.0 TRAINING

NPSC is committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, employment standards, information and communication standards, and other accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

3.1 We will train:

- a) All persons who participate in developing the board’s policies; and
- b) All other persons who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the board.

3.2 Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

3.2.1 Training includes:

- Purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (AODA) the requirements of the Ontario Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Our obligations as a service provider regarding accessibility and eliminating barriers.
- Our obligations as an employer regarding accessibility and eliminating barriers.

- Our obligations to provide information and communications in an accessible format, and enforcement of the AODA and potential penalties.
- Legislation and policies related to the Ontario Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities.
 - Examples of such devices may include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, oxygen tanks, or electronic communication devices.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our organization's goods, services, or facilities.

3.3 We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. In addition, staff are trained on a 2-year cycle.

3.4 We maintain digital records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

4.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to providing services to our students, parents/guardians, the general public, and our staff that are free of barriers and biases. Our Board strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. Our conduct will demonstrate our belief in the strength diversity brings to our communities.

[NPSC Policy AG 10.1.a – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)

4.1 Assistive Devices

- a) People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services, or facilities.
- b) In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services, or facilities. For example, consultation will occur with the individual on an alternative suitable assistive device that is available.
- c) We ensure staff, volunteers, and others dealing with the public are trained to support parents/guardians and members of the general public who use assistive devices on site to access Board services. We train staff on professional activity days and during new on-boarding orientation sessions.

- d) We ensure that the school welcomes the use of assistive devices and encourages users to seek support from staff as required.
- e) We will provide assistance to visitors who indicate that they need support.

4.2 Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

- Communication via email and electronic means
- Use of voice to text features and tools
- Use of text to speech software
- Use of Braille tools

We will work with the individual with a disability to determine what method of communication works best for them.

4.3 Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (ie. a letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services, or facilities:

- Explain why the animal is excluded
- Make every effort to work with the person with a disability to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services that are required

[NPSC Policy S 21.0 – Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals](#) outlines the process to be followed if an application is made to have a guide dog, service dog or service animal support the disability-related learning needs of a student while they are attending school or a school-related event.

4.4 Support Persons

- a) A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcome to have that person accompany them on our premises to ensure that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person.
- b) Determine that a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability.
- c) Ensure that staff, volunteers, and others dealing with the public receive training in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- d) Ensure a Parent/Legal Guardian [Consent for Support Person form](#) is completed and retained for meetings where confidential information is being disclosed at the school level.
- e) Ensure that notice is given in advance for any cost associated with the support person's admission to any Board-related events.
- f) In certain cases, this organization might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for health or safety reasons of:
 - The person with a disability
 - Others on the premises
- g) Before making a decision, this organization name will:
 - Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
 - Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
 - Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises
- h) If this organization determines that a support person is required, we will waive the admission fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person.

4.5 Notice of Temporary Disruption of Service

- a) In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board will notify customers promptly.
- b) Best efforts to ensure that the notice is provided before the disruption if it is planned or as soon as possible if the disruption is unplanned.

- c) 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, that are available and will be made available in the main reception area of our Board Office/School and posted on our website.

Examples of Services/Facilities include: the use of elevators, accessible entrances, areas of the facilities and website.

The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways: on the Board's website and messages posted in main reception areas of Board's physical facilities.

4.6 Feedback Process

- a) The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is committed to ensuring that its services meet optimum standards of accessibility for people with disabilities using the facilities and services of the Board. We welcome feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Feedback may be provided in the following ways:
- Via email: accessibility@npsc.ca
 - In writing addressed to NPSC Accessibility Committee: 1000 High Street, North Bay, Ontario, P1B 6S6
 - Verbally by phone call at 705-472-1201 ext. 31242
- b) All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in the following manner:
- Response to feedback will be provided by direct response by our Accessibility Standards representative and/or applicable school site Principal.
- c) Customers can expect to hear back in 48 hours.
- d) The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

4.7 Notice of Availability of Documents

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in the following location(s)/way(s):

- Include a note on our website
- Include a note on our various promotional or informational materials

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Types of accessible formats include:

- HTML and Microsoft Word
- Braille
- Accessible audio formats
- Large print
- Text transcripts of visual and audio information

4.8 Self-Service Kiosks

We will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks.

4.9 Procurement

We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

5.0 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1** We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.
- 5.2** We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:
- a) In a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
 - b) At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- 5.3** We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:
- a) An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
 - b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communications.
- 5.4** We identify, develop, and promote educational or training resources or materials in an accessible or conversion-ready format that takes into account the accessibility needs of the person with a disability upon request.
- 5.5** We provide school-based staff with accessibility awareness training to ensure that course and lesson planning, delivery and assessment reflect universal design and differentiated instruction.
- 5.6** In the capacity of its libraries, provide, procure, or acquire an accessible or conversion ready format of print, digital, or multimedia resources or materials for a person with a disability, upon request.

-
- 5.7 We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by communicating on our website under Accessibility.
 - 5.8 We will also meet internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT

- 6.1 We notify employees, job applicants, and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.
- 6.2 We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request.
- 6.3 We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.
- 6.4 We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.
- 6.5 We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.
- 6.6 We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.
- 6.7 We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:
 - a) Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
 - b) Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace
- 6.8 Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.
 - 6.8.1 We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:
 - a) When the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
 - b) When the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and
 - c) When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.
- 6.9 We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We have a written process available to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

7.0 TRANSPORTATION

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic DSB provides student transportation through a contract of services with the Nipissing-Parry Sound Student Transportation Services (NPSSTS) (www.npssts.ca).

In accordance with our Gospel values and the Church's teachings, it is the policy ([Policy S 19.1](#)) of the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board to ensure that accessible school transportation services are provided for students with disabilities in a manner that meets their unique needs and ensures their safety. Where appropriate and practicable, integrated accessible school transportation services will be provided.

The provision of accessible student transportation services will include the development of an individual student transportation accessibility plan (ISTAP) for each student who has a disability that affects their transportation to and from school. The plan will be developed by the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board Special Education Services in collaboration with the Transportation Provider and in consultation with the student's parents or guardians.

We meet accessibility laws when making our transportation services accessible. The NPSC Special Education Department manages all transportation for students with disabilities based on the responsibilities outlined in [NPSC Policy S 19.1](#)

After developing the student's transportation plan and requirements in consultation with parents/guardians, the NPSC shares all required [transportation forms](#) and information with the transportation provider, the NPSSTS Consortium.

8.0 CHANGES TO EXISTING POLICIES

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.

9.0 POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

The Board will review this policy every two years.

Legal Framework and References

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#)
[NPSC Board Accessibility Plan 2017-2022](#)
[NPSC Policy AG 10.1 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)
[NPSC Policy AG 22.0 – Employment Equity and Equal Opportunity](#)
[NPSC Policy AG 22.1 – Equity and Inclusive Education](#)
[NPSC Policy C 13.0 – Catholic Atmosphere and Philosophy of our School Environment](#)
[NPSC Policy E1 – ENDS](#)
[NPSC Policy EL2 – Treatment of Students and Parents](#)
[NPSC Policy EL3 – Treatment of Staff, Candidates for Employment, and Volunteers](#)
[NPSC Policy EL7 – Asset Protection](#)
[NPSC Special Education Plan 2021](#)
[Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 32](#)
[Ontario Building Code](#)
[Ontario Education Services Corporation Resources \(OESC\)](#)
[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
[Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standard for Customer Service](#)
[Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)
[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#)