

SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Section SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS 719

Policy Name ACCESSIBILITY POLICY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE
 Management Guideline Applies

Board Approved: April 20, 2010

Review by: December 2021
 December 2015

POLICY

Superior-Greenstone District School Board (“SGDSB”) is committed to promoting learning and working environments that support human rights and accessibility for persons with disabilities. SGDSB will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting accessibility requirements under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the corresponding Ontario Regulation 191/11, Integrated Accessibility Standards.

It is the policy of Superior-Greenstone District School Board to provide an environment in all of its facilities that builds independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for our students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff. Further, we are committed to giving people with disabilities 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.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees and Trustees at SGDSB. The Policy also covers students, parents/guardians, volunteers, contractors, customers of SGDSB and other members of organizations not related to SGDSB but who nevertheless work on or are invited on to SGDSB premises or utilize SGDSB services.

DEFINITIONS

“**customer**” is any person who uses the goods and services of SGDSB the school bBoard.

“**accessible formats**” may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

“**assistive device**” is any device used by people with disabilities to help with daily living. Assistive devices include a range of products such as wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, electronic communication devices.

“**communication supports**” are supports that persons with disabilities need to access information and may include, but are not limited to, plain language, sign language, reading aloud, written notes and captioning.

“**disability**” as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“**service animal dog**” is an animal that is being used to provide accommodation support to a person with a disability, either readily apparent or supported by a letter from a regulated health professional. Service animals are working animals. The dog’s certification complies with the Superior-Greenstone District School Board’s policy for the ‘Use of Service Dogs in Schools.’

“support person” is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability as he/she accesses the services of SGDSB. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a student in the system.

“third party contractors” is any person or organization acting on behalf of or as an agent of the Board (e.g. bus operators, psychologists).

“barrier to accessibility” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the services of SGDSB. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, or a technological barrier.

“accommodation” is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of SGDSB and employment at the SGDSB workplace.

RATIONALE

~~In compliance with The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, created under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Superior-Greenstone District School Board is committed to providing services in a way that is accessible to all customers.~~

SGDSB believes that excellence in education is founded on respect for the dignity and humanity worth of all individuals and the development of human potential, enabling individuals and groups to participate and contribute fully within a diverse society. Equity, valuing diversity and inclusion are related yet distinct concepts which that form the foundation of social justice and reflect values such as fairness, empathy, and respect for the dignity of all human beings.

Practicing equity involves proactively eradicating attitudes, actions, structures and systems that result in discrimination and exclusion. To this end, the **SGDSB Superior-Greenstone District School Board** is committed to the continual improvement of accessibility and the on-going removal of barriers in order to provide greater equity for all.

OBJECTIVES

~~It is the objective of this policy to require that all reasonable steps be taken by January 1, 2010 to take all reasonable steps:~~

1. **SGDSB is committed to meeting accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner. SGDSB also recognizes it has a duty to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.**
2. SGDSB **will** on an on-going basis **endeavor** to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures ~~they~~ are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention **to** ~~for~~ persons with disabilities.
3. SGDSB will provide appropriate training **on the AODA, the requirements and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities,** for all staff **and volunteers** who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of SGDSB. ~~to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of individuals with disabilities.~~ Training as identified in No. 3 **will be appropriate to their duties and will provided as soon as**

~~practicable. be provided to all staff and to volunteers. As new staff are hired, the training will become a component of their orientation training and will be provided within a reasonable timeframe.~~

4. SGDSB will ensure that its policies and procedures related to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are made available to the public and also ensure there is capacity to provide communication about these policies and procedures in a format that takes into account a person's disability.
5. SGDSB will welcome all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities including ~~Such services are to incorporate measures that include~~ but are not limited to the use of assistive devices and service animals ~~dogs~~.
6. When services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable such as access to an elevator, a disruption of service notice will be posted at the site.
7. When asked, SGDSB will provide information and communication including about SGDSB, its services and public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports for persons with disabilities. SGDSB will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports. If information or communications are unconvertible, it will provide an explanation why and provide a summary of the unconvertible information or communication.
8. SGDSB will make its website and web content conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 in accordance with the requirements, unless it is not practicable to do so.
9. SGDSB will provide upon request, education or training related information such as program information, educational and training resources and student records in an accessible format or provide a comparable resource in accessible or conversion ready format.
10. SGDSB's school libraries if available, upon request, will provide accessible or conversion ready versions of print resources and materials to students with disabilities.
11. SGDSB, upon request, will make accessible or conversion-ready versions of any educational or training textbooks and print-based educational or training supplementary learning resources that it produces.
12. SGDSB will notify employees, potential hires and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment and selections processes.
13. SGDSB, upon request, will provide suitable accessible formats and communications supports for job and employee-related information to employees with disabilities.
14. SGDSB will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if necessary and if SGDSB is aware of the need for accommodation.
15. SGDSB will develop and maintain individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities based on needs due to disability. SGDSB will develop and maintain a return to work plan for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability.

16. SGDSB will take into account the needs of employees with disabilities as well as their individual accommodation plan when using the performance management process, providing career development (professional development) or redeployment.
17. SGDSB and all its managers and school-based administrators will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except if it is not possible and practical to do so. If it is not possible or practical to do so, it will provide an explanation upon request. ~~take into account the impact on persons with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative.~~
18. SGDSB will make new and redeveloped public spaces that it constructs, accessible. SGDSB will provide notice of temporary disruptions when accessible elements such as accessible parking and ramps in the spaces it constructs or redevelops are not in working order.
19. In order to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard, SGDSB will develop a process for receiving and responding to feedback. Information about the feedback process will be available to the public on SGDSB's website and will allow people to provide feedback using a variety of methods.
20. SGDSB will create a feedback process that will review the implementation of this policy with SGDSB's various constituency groups; for example, Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Federations, unions and citizens' groups.
21. SGDSB will review the effectiveness of the practices and procedures established under this policy as per SGDSB's policy review process.
22. SGDSB will maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan which outlines its strategy to identify, prevent and remove barriers to persons with disabilities in relation to customer service, information, communication and customer service, employment and design of public spaces. SGDSB will review and update its plan at least once every five years.

The Director of Education will ensure that this Policy will be reviewed every two years.