



Niagara Catholic District School Board
ACCESSIBILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY
ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

800.8.1 – Schools and Community Councils

Policy No. 800.8.1

Adopted Date: December 15, 2009

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: June 25, 2026

EXPECTATIONS

The board will:

- make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all governance policies, practices and administrative operational procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for all, with particular attention to individuals with disabilities.
- welcome all members of the school and broader community to board facilities by committing members of the organization to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of individuals with disabilities and such services to incorporate measures that include the use of support persons, assistive devices, and service animals.
- train staff on accessible customer service using an online training module including the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Certificate of Training](#) and the [Ontario Human Rights Commission Certificate of Completion](#). Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Certificate of Training and the Certificate version of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's online accessibility training. Successful completion of these modules by staff will be verified through a certificate of completion and will be tracked by Human Resources Services.
- ensure that the governance policies and administrative operational procedures related to the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) are publicly accessible in a format that considers the individual's needs.
- encourages community members accessing any board facility or site, to provide advance notice to the board to allow staff to address the individual's needs.
- consider the impact on individuals with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems, or planning a new initiative.
- invite feedback from Catholic School Councils, the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC), the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC), unions, staff, volunteers and community groups to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard Governance Policy and Administrative Operational Procedures.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

The Niagara Catholic District School Board welcomes members of the school and broader community to board facilities by ensuring that staff provide services that respect the independence and dignity of individuals with disabilities, including the use of assistive devices.

An assistive device is any device used by an individual with a disability to help with daily living, including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks, and electronic communication devices.

Administrators will ensure that staff are trained to support parents and the public using assistive devices when accessing board services. Training will focus on engaging with individuals using assistive devices rather than the technical use of the assistive devices.

SERVICE ANIMALS

The Niagara Catholic District School Board also welcomes members of the school and broader community who use service animals to board facilities.

Service animals

Under AODA, an animal qualifies as a service animal if it is readily identifiable as assisting with a disability or if the person presents documentation from a regulated health professional confirming their need for the service animal.

The AODA defines a service animal as:

- An animal wearing a vest, harness or tags that indicates its role
- Can be readily identified as a guide dog supporting an individual with vision loss

Individuals must provide documentation from a regulated health professional. This documentation must confirm that the person requires the animal for disability-related reasons. Regulated health professionals include:

- Physicians
- Nurse practitioners
- Psychologists
- Occupational therapists
- Audiologists
- Social workers

1. Responsibility

Superintendents of education, principals and administrators will ensure that staff have received training on how to interact with individuals accompanied by a service animal.

2. Access to board premises

1. Individuals accompanied by a service animal will be welcome on board and/or school premises with the service animal and accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will comply with the Access to Board Premises Administrative Operational Procedures (302.6.3).
2. Access will be to areas where the public or third parties customarily have access.

3. Exclusion of service animal

1. A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law.

Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another individual due to the presence of a service animal, such as a severe allergy to the animal, consideration must be given to options available before excluding a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is expected that all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, such as creating distance between the individuals, or making reasonable alterations to schedules. Please refer to the Student Use of Service Animals in Schools AOP for details.

2. A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited under the Dog Owners' Liability Act.

4. Alternative measures if a service animal must be excluded

In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the board must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the individual who requires the animal.

5. **When it is necessary to confirm an animal is a service animal**

Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the staff member may request a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the service animal is required. The letter does not need to identify why the animal is needed or how it is used. This letter may be kept on file for regular visitors, or the individual may be advised that they must bring the letter with them each time they visit the school or site. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), if a letter is provided to be kept on file, it must be in a secure location to ensure the privacy of the individual. The contents of the letter must not be disclosed except for reasons provided in the Act.

SUPPORT PERSONS

A support person is an individual who assists or interprets for an individual with a disability while accessing the services of the board. A support person is distinct from an employee who provides support services to a staff member or student, as separate and specific procedures apply.

Additional information

A support person is an individual chosen by a person to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. Medical needs include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure.

Human Resources Services will ensure that staff members have received training to engage with individuals accompanied by a support person while accessing board services.

Access to board premises

1. Any individual with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcome on board and/or school premises with the support person. Access will be in accordance with the Access to Board Premises Administrative Operational Procedures (302.6.3).
2. Access will be to areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or board offices where the public does not have access.

Confidentiality

1. Consent to the disclosure of a student's confidential information in the presence of the support person must be given in writing by the parent/guardian in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Act.
2. The support person must also provide assurance in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of information disclosed.
3. If the parent/guardian uses a different support person for meetings, a new signed consent will be required.
4. A copy of the signed consent will be retained in the school/board office.

Support persons accompanying an individual with a disability at school events with an admission fee

Where an individual is accompanied by a support person wishes to attend a school, family of schools or board-organized event for which a fee is charged, the support person will not be charged a fee.

Where the board (person) may require the presence of a support person

The board may require an individual to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, where it is believed that a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the individual with a disability and/or the health or safety of others on the premises.

DISRUPTION OF SERVICES

Individuals with disabilities may rely on certain facilities, services or systems to access the services of the school or the board. Escalators and elevators are important to individuals with mobility disabilities. Other systems and services designed to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities include accessible washrooms, amplification systems, and note-taking. When those facilities or services are temporarily unavailable or if they are expected to be unavailable, a notice of disruption of service is required.

When services that are normally provided to an individual with a disability are unavailable, a disruption of service notice will be posted at the site and on the board and/or school website.

1. Responsibility

Superintendents of education, principals, administrators, the board's communications and community engagement officer and/or Facilities Services staff will ensure that the users of board and school services are notified when there is a disruption that may affect services for people with disabilities.

2. Notice of Disruption of Services

Notice may be given by posting the information at the school or board facilities. Other options that may be used include posting on the board and/or school websites and through direct communication with users of the services in accordance with school practices.

Consideration will be given to providing notice in multiple formats.

If the disruption is planned, notice must be provided in advance of the disruption. If the notice is unplanned, notice should be provided as soon as possible after the disruption has been identified.

The notice of disruption of service must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK ON ACCESSIBILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Niagara Catholic will monitor the policy and administrative operational procedures and welcomes feedback regarding services available to individuals with disabilities.

Niagara Catholic will review and respond to customer concerns/complaints regarding access to services for individuals with disabilities at the school and board levels.

Questions or concerns about accessibility and compliance, including requests to receive information in accessible formats, may be addressed through the Student and Family Support Office on the board website.

Response to feedback and/or requests will be provided by direct communication to the individual via phone, email, or by mail and kept on file as part of recording and tracking process.

Adopted Date:	December 15, 2009
Revision History:	February 24, 2015 December 20, 2016 February 23, 2021 June 25, 2026



CONSENT OF DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN THE PRESENCE OF A SUPPORT PERSON

I, _____ consent to the sharing of confidential information by
(Print First and Last Name of Parent/Guardian)

_____ related to my child _____
(Name of Principal/teacher/other staff member) (Print First and Last Name of Student)

in the presence of my support person _____.
(Print First and Last Name of Support Person)

My support person _____ consents to safeguarding the
(Print First and Last Name of Support Person)

confidentiality of the information shared.

Parent/Guardian Affirmation of Consent:

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Support Person Affirmation of Confidentiality:

I undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of information shared between (school staff) and
(parent/guardian) for whom I am a support person.

Support Person Signature _____ Date _____

(Printed Name of Support Person) _____

Signature of Witness-Principal/Staff Member _____

(Printed Name of Staff Person) _____ Date _____

Personal information is collected under the Authority of The Education Act and pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act. The information collected is used for the purpose of personal information disclosure of Niagara Catholic students to their support person(s) by Niagara Catholic staff. Any questions about this form are to be directed to the Superintendent of Education, Equity and Inclusive Education, Niagara Catholic District School Board, 427 Rice Road, Welland, Ontario L3C 7C1, 905-735-0240.