

HURON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Policy: Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities

Policy adopted: December 2012

PART I: GENERAL STATEMENTS

OUR COMMITMENT

At HCS, we are committed to a doing things in Christian manner which includes providing excellent customer service to everyone who visits our office or attends our organizational events, including people with disabilities.

This commitment means that we do our best to provide our goods and services to people with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence, while at the same time gives them the same opportunity to access our goods and services, and allows them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way, as all other customers.

DEFINITIONS

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 other animal or on a wheelchair or other 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 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.

The foregoing definition includes disabilities of differing severity, whether visible or non-visible and whether temporary or permanent in nature.

Support Person: any person (whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend) who accompanies a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods and services.

Assistive Devices: any device that people bring with them or that is already on the premises and is used to assist people with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing HCS goods and services. Such devices include communication, cognitive, personal mobility or medical aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes use by people who are blind or have low vision, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive learning devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Service Animal: any animal that is specifically trained to assist a person with a disability, where it is either readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability (e.g. a hearing dog wearing a harness), or the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. For greater certainty, a service animal includes a dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons Rights' Act* to act as a guide dog for people who are blind.

Temporary Disruption: any planned or unplanned disruption in the facilities or services of HCS that are usually used by people with disabilities to access its goods and services.

SUMMARY OF POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

As part of this commitment, we have established various policies, practices and procedures to define how our goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. These include the following areas:

1. Assistive Devices

At HCS, we are committed to serving people with disabilities who use, or who may benefit from the use of, assistive devices; whether to access our goods or services, or for other reasons because of their disability. Our employees have been trained and are familiar with various types of assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods and services.

Our employees have also been trained on how to use the following assistive devices available for customers:

- (Training scheduled for January 15, 2013)

2. Communication

We recognize that people with disabilities may communicate differently because of their disability. Here at HCS, we are committed to communicating with customers with disabilities in ways that take the nature of their disability into account.

3. Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities who use service animals. Service animals are allowed on HCS premises that are open to the public. Most of the time, our

employees will be able to easily identify whether an animal is being used as a service animal or not. In the rare situation, when it is not readily apparent, our employees may ask for clarification confirming that the service animal is required for reasons relating to disability.

4. Support Persons

We also welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons. HCS recognizes that some people with disabilities may have support people - e.g. paid professionals, volunteers, family members or friends - to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with accessing to our goods and services.

Support persons are allowed on any part of HCS's premises that are open to the public. At no time will a person with a disability be prevented from having access to his/her support person while on such premises.

HCS does not charge additional fees to support workers who are attending with a disabled person at one of our workshops or other events.

Temporary Disruptions

We recognize that people with disabilities often rely on certain facilities or services being available at HCS such as our accessible washroom, accessible entrance, etc.

As part of our commitment to providing accessible customer service, we will promptly notify customers whenever there is a temporary disruption - whether it is planned or unplanned - in such facilities or services. This notice will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and any alternative facilities or services available.

More details about HCS's notice of temporary disruption process are posted on our accessibility webpage at www.huronchristianschool.ca

Employee Training

We are also committed to providing training to our employees who will be expected to from time to time act on behalf of HCS. This same training is also provided to others at HCS who are involved in establishing the policies, practices and procedures for how our goods and services are provided to people with disabilities.

This training includes:

- An overview of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of its Customer Service Standard;
- 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 any equipment or devices available at HCS or otherwise that may help provide our goods and services to people with disabilities; and
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our goods and services.

We strive to have this accessible customer service training provided to all employees within seven working days of being hired. After that, we provide updated training on an ongoing basis whenever changes are made to how our goods and services are provided to people with disabilities.

Feedback Process

When it comes to providing accessible customer service, we will always try our best and will certainly learn from any mistakes. This is why we encourage and appreciate hearing about how we are doing - both good and bad. Feedback may be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or online, on disk or otherwise.

Feedback may be provided:

By Mail to: HCS Principal
PO Box 658 87 Percival Street, Clinton, ON NOM 1L0
Telephone: 519-482-7851
Fax: 519-482-7448
Email: principal@huronchristianschool.ca

In Person to: HCS Principal
More details about HCS feedback process are posted on our accessibility webpage at <http://www.huronchristianschool.ca>

Availability of Accessible Customer Service Documents

When it comes to accessible customer service for those with disabilities, we have no secrets. All of our Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents are available to the public upon request and we are happy to share them with you.

More details about the availability of our Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents are posted on our accessibility webpage at <http://www.huronchristianschool.ca>

PART II: ASSISTIVE DEVICES, SERVICES AND ALTERNATE SERVICE METHODS

PURPOSE

Huron Christian School is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from HCS goods and services. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines regarding the use and availability of assistive devices, services and alternative service methods when accessing our goods and services.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to every person with a disability who uses an assistive device, or would benefit from assistive services or alternative service methods, to access HCS goods and services. This procedure also applies to everyone interacting with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of HCS, whether an employee, a board member or a third party contracted by HCS.

PROCEDURE

Use of Personal Assistive Devices

HCS allows people with disabilities to use their personal assistive devices to access its goods and services. HCS representatives will consult with their manager when they are uncertain about the use of assistive devices.

There may be circumstances, however, where the use of a personal assistive device may be prohibited by law or may be determined by HCS to pose a significant safety risk to the person with a disability or others. In those circumstances, HCS will offer assistive services and/or alternate service methods in consultation with the person with a disability.

Inventory of Assistive Devices, Assistive Services & Alternate Service Methods

At present, HCS does not have any assistive devices available. As it becomes clear which assistive devices are required either at HCS, they will be provided by the HCS staff in consultation with the person with a disability, wherever possible.

Providing Access to Assistive Devices, Assistive Services & Alternate Service Methods

All HCS employees will be trained on the use of equipment or assistive devices as they are purchased by HCS for use on the school premises.

General Tips for Providing Accessible Service

Keep this overall service P A C T T:

Pay calm, individual attention to the other person.

- Avoid making assumptions about a person's capabilities.
- Adjust posture or sit down as needed for face-to-face service.

Ask "How may I help?"

- Usually, a person with a disability knows what works best for him or her.
- Before ending your interaction, ask "Does this information answer your question?"

Communicate clearly and patiently to ensure shared understanding.

- Allow the person to finish what he/she is saying without interruption.
- Provide one piece of information at a time; repeat or rephrase as necessary.
- As needed, ask if another method of communicating would be easier - e.g. always have a pen and paper available.

Treat the other person with respect.

- Focus on the person as a unique individual.
- Pay attention to his or her dignity, independence, sense of integration and equality.

Try to see the world in terms of accessibility.

- Take into account the ways persons with disability experience your services.
- Know the location of nearby ramps, elevators, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.

PART III: SUPPORT PERSONS

PURPOSE

Huron Christian School (HCS) is committed to serving people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines regarding the provision of HCS goods and services to people with disabilities when they are accompanied by a support person.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to every person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person. This procedure also applies to every person interacting with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of HCS, whether an employee, a board member or a third party contracted by HCS.

PROCEDURE

Identifying Support Persons

A support person may be a personal support worker, volunteer, friend or family member. He or she may help a person with a disability with communicating, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods and services.

In some situations, it may not be clear which person is the support person. A person with a disability might not introduce his/her support person. To determine

who is the support person, HCS representatives should take the lead from the person who is requesting the goods and services, or ask. When it is determined who is the customer (as opposed to the support person), the HCS representative should speak directly to the customer, not to the support person.

Areas Open to Support Persons

A person with a disability and his/her support person are permitted to enter those areas of HCS's property that are open to the public. Unless otherwise requested by the person with a disability, the support person will be permitted to remain with the person with the disability throughout the entire duration of that he/she is accessing HCS goods and services.

Confidential Information

When an HCS representative must discuss confidential information with a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person, the HCS representative will ask the person with a disability whether the support person may remain present. If the person with a disability chooses not to have the support person present, the HCS representative will offer a close, comfortable location where the support person can wait.

Lack of Adequate Space

If there is not adequate space for both the person with a disability and his/her support person to be present while accessing HCS's goods and services, the HCS representative will arrange for an alternate location with adequate space. If an alternate location is not available, the HCS representative will:

- Make a reasonable effort to accommodate both the person with a disability and the support person within the available space.
- If reasonable, offer a close, comfortable location where the support person can wait, preferably where the person with a disability and his/her support person can remain within sight of each other.

Appropriate Behaviour

Support persons are required to adhere to the same rules, and demonstrate appropriate behavior, as are all other persons accessing HCS goods and services.

Admission Fees for Support Persons

HCS will not charge any fees for support people to access events in which a registration fee has been set.

When a Support Person is Required

HCS may require a support person to accompany a person with a disability on its property, if the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability, or the health or safety of others, on such property.

PART IV: AVAILABILITY OF ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES DOCUMENTS

PURPOSE

Huron Christian School is committed to making all documents required under the AODA Customer Service Standards available to the public upon request. The purpose of this procedure is to set out how HCS will notify persons to whom it provides goods and services about the existence of such documents, as well as the manner and format by which such documents will be made available to them.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to every person interacting with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of HCS, whether an employee, a board member or a third party contracted by HCS

PROCEDURE

Documents Available in Accessible Formats

HCS will ensure that the policies, procedures, and appendices in this document are available in accessible formats, upon request:

Accessible Formats

When providing any of the Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents to a person with a disability, HCS will provide the document, or the information contained therein, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Providing Notice of Availability of Accessibility Documents

HCS will notify the public and other third parties about the availability of the Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents by posting this information on its accessibility webpage <http://www.huronchristianschool.ca>

Such notice will:

- Indicate that these documents are available in accessible formats;
- Provide a link to an electronic, plain-text version of these documents; and
- Explain how to request alternate accessible formats of these documents.

HCS will also place a general notice in a conspicuous location(s) in its premises regarding the availability of the Accessible Customer Service Documents.

Requests for Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities Documents

Requests for copies of the Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents may be made in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or online, or by facsimile, directed to the attention of the HCS Chief Operating Officer. When such request is received, HCS will:

- Ask the person making the request if he/she requires the requested document in an alternate format because of his/her disability and, if so, ask the person's preferred format;
- If the requested document:
 - Can be readily produced in the requested alternate format, provide the person with the document as soon as practical, confirming that the alternate format is acceptable; or
 - Cannot be readily produced in the requested alternate format, the HCS Chief Operating Officer will consult with the person making the request to determine a different alternate format that is acceptable. When the person receives the document, the principal will confirm that the alternate format is acceptable to that person.

The principal will make every reasonable effort to ensure requests for alternate accessible formats of Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents do not take significantly longer than requests for the same documents in standard print.

PART V: SERVICE ANIMALS

PURPOSE

Huron Christian School (HCS) is committed to serving people with disabilities who use service animals. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines regarding the use of service animals by people with disabilities when accessing HCS goods and services.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to every person with a disability who uses a service animal. This procedure also applies to every person interacting with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of HCS, whether an employee, a board member, contractor or a third party contracted by HCS.

PROCEDURE

Identifying Service Animals

Service animals are typically recognized by a harness or a sign. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons related to his/her disability, an HCS representative may request that the person with the disability provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Examples of service animals include, but are not limited to:

- A guide dog;
- Hearing alert animals;
- Animals trained to alert persons to oncoming seizures; and
- Animals trained to assist people with autism, mental health disabilities, physical disabilities and other disabilities.

Service Animals are Not Pets

Service animals are working animals. They are not considered pets. For this reason, they are not to be treated like a pet. When a person with a service animal is attempting to access HCS goods and services, an HCS representative should not:

- Touch the service animal;
- Make eye contact with the service animal;
- Talk to the service animal;
- Attempt to feed the service animal; or
- Give the service animal any form of attention.

The person with the service animal will be responsible for maintaining the care and control of the animal at all times while accessing HCS goods and services. This includes keeping control of the animal while present on the property, and cleaning any messes created by the service animal on HCS property.

Areas Open to Service Animals

Service animals may enter those areas of HCS property that are open to the public.

Areas Closed to Service Animals

Service animals may not enter any areas of HCS premises that are designated as private work spaces.

Allergies & Service Animals

It is the duty of HCS to provide the greatest amount of accommodation for the person with the service animal; however, this should not be at the expense of another person. In all situations where a person announces that he/she is allergic to a service animal, HCS representatives should discuss the situation with the affected person(s) and make every effort to meet the needs of all parties.

If an HCS representative is allergic to a service animal, the representative will:

- Seek an alternate qualified HCS representative to provide the goods

or services to the person with the service animal;

- Seek a reasonable alternate location to provide the goods or services to the person with the service animal; or
- If an alternate qualified HCS representative is not reasonably available and if the person is willing to be separated from the animal, offer a safe location where the animal can wait and offer assistance to the person while separated from the service animal. For example, a person with vision loss might need someone to guide him/her.

If a member of the public or a third party is allergic to a service animal, the HCS representative will seek an alternate location to provide the goods or services to the person with the service animal, or invite the person with the allergy to wait in a different location until the person with the service animal has vacated the area of service. If being relocated to an alternate location would provide greater accommodation for the person with the service animal, the HCS representative will invite the person with the service animal to relocate. If a person has to remove him/herself from a waiting area due to an allergic reaction, the HCS representative will make reasonable efforts to ensure that he/she does not lose his/her place in the sequence.

PART VI: TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS

PURPOSE

Huron Christian School recognizes that people with disabilities may use particular facilities or services of HCS in order to access its goods and services and, as such, HCS is committed to providing notice of temporary disruptions in those facilities and services. The purpose of this procedure is to provide steps to be taken in connection with providing notice of such temporary disruption.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to every person interacting with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of HCS, whether an employee, a board member or third party contracted by hCS.

PROCEDURE

1. HCS will provide notice of any actual or anticipated future temporary disruption in its facilities and services. Such notice will include the following information:
 - a. Reason for the temporary disruption;

- b. Anticipated duration of the temporary disruption;
 - c. Description of alternate facilities or services, if available; and
 - d. Contact information.
2. In the case of an unplanned temporary disruption, the notice (See Appendix II) will be posted at no less than one conspicuous place at the physical location of the temporary disruption as soon as practicable. Depending on the duration of the temporary disruption, HCS may also post the notice to its accessibility webpage <http://www.huronchristianschool.ca>
3. In the case of a planned temporary disruption, HCS will post the notice (See Appendix II) prior to the temporary disruption at no less than one conspicuous place at the physical location of the temporary disruption, on its accessibility webpage ([huronchristianschool.ca](http://www.huronchristianschool.ca)) and, if appropriate, advertise the temporary disruption with local media outlets. The notice will be posted with sufficient time to inform customers of the temporary disruption.
4. Depending upon the type and duration of temporary disruption, HCS may elect to also provide information about the temporary disruption on its voicemail system, and/or contact any persons with disabilities known to HCS who are likely to be detrimentally affected by that specific temporary disruption.

PART VII: FEEDBACK PROCESS

PURPOSE

Huron Christian School is committed to meeting and surpassing expectations while serving persons with disabilities and, as such, comments on the manner in which HCS provides its goods and services to people with disabilities are encouraged and appreciated. The purpose of this procedure is to set out the process established by HCS to obtain such feedback.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to every person interacting with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of HCS, whether an employee, a board member or a third party contracted by HCS.

PROCEDURE

The following process has been established for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which HCS provides goods and services to people with disabilities, and how HCS makes information about that process readily available to the public.

1. People may provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or online, on disk or otherwise. See below.
2. People providing such feedback are strongly encouraged to provide as much information as possible to HCS about the event / concern, so that it can be readily identified by the principal for where the event / concern took place. Such information may include dates, times, names, contact information, a description of the event / concern, etc.
3. Feedback may be provided:

By Mail to: HCS Principal
PO Box 658 87 Percival Street, Clinton, ON NOM 1L0
Telephone: 519-482-7851
Fax: 519-482-7448
Email: principal@huronchristianschool.ca

In Person to: HCS Principal
More details about HCS feedback process are posted on our accessibility webpage at www.huronchristianschool.ca or in person to any staff member at HCS. All feedback received will be promptly forwarded to the principal for review and reporting purposes.

4. Where possible, feedback will be addressed immediately. Some feedback may, however, require more time to address and may need to be reviewed before an action is taken. Specifically, where the feedback is considered to be a complaint about how HCS provides goods and services to people with disabilities, such complaints will be addressed in a proper and timely manner, subject to, and in accordance with the HCS feedback process then in effect.
5. An answer to the feedback is not always practical or possible. However, depending on the situation, the principal may deem it appropriate to respond to the person providing the feedback. Should a response be deemed appropriate and should the person providing the feedback have chosen to supply his/her contact information, that person may expect a response within a reasonable timeframe (e.g. generally no more than 21 days).
6. HCS will respond in the same format in which the feedback was received whenever reasonably possible, unless the feedback requests otherwise.
7. HCS will make this feedback process readily available to the public by, among other things, posting information about this feedback process on the HCS accessibility webpage at www.huronchristianschool.ca and providing a copy of this document to any person who requests such information.

APPENDIX I - NOTICE OF ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

HURON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

At Huron Christian School, we are committed to doing things the right way - and that includes providing excellent customer to everyone, including people with disabilities.

To learn more about our commitment to accessible customer service:

- Ask any of our employees;
- Visit our accessibility webpage at www.huronchristianschool.ca; or
- Request a copy of any of our Accessible Customer Service for those with Disabilities documents (i.e. training policy; training records; notification of temporary disruption process; feedback process; policies, practices and procedures for providing our goods / services to people with disabilities, including those relating to assistive devices, communication, service animals and support persons).

To help us improve accessible customer service, we appreciate your feedback. Speak to any of our staff or visit our accessibility webpage at www.huronchristianschool.ca for details of our feedback process.

APPENDIX II - NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

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HURON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

Facility / Service: _____

Reason for the Disruption: _____

Anticipated Duration: _____

Alternatives Available: _____

We appreciate your understanding, and regret any inconvenience that this temporary disruption may cause.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call 519-482-7851