



Topic	Number of Pages	Date Approved
3.16 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service	1 of 2	June 2011

Policy Statement

In compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, created under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, STS is committed to providing goods and services in a way that is accessible to all customers.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services ("STS") believes that excellence in customer service is founded on mutual respect for the dignity and humanity of all individuals and enabling individuals and groups to participate and contribute fully within a diverse society.

Equity, valuing diversity and inclusion are related yet distinct concepts which form the foundation of social justice and reflect values such as fairness, empathy, and respect for the dignity of all humans, and practising equity involves proactively eradicating attitudes, actions, structures and systems that result in discrimination and exclusion. To this end, STS is committed to the continual improvement of accessibility and the on-going removal of barriers in order to provide greater equity for all.

Procedure

STS will:

Review all policies, practices and procedures on an on-going basis to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to all with particular attention for persons with disabilities;

Welcome all members of the school and broader community to STS' facility by committing our staff to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities. Such services are to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices and service animals;

Provide appropriate training for all staff (including school bus operators and their staff under contract to STS) who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of STS to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of individuals with disabilities. As new staff are hired, the training will become a component of their orientation training and will be provided within a reasonable timeframe;

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 that there is capacity to provide communication about these policies and procedures in a format that takes into account a person's disability;

Post a disruption of service notice on STS website when services that are normally provided to a person with a disability are temporarily unavailable;

Ensure that STS managers and staff take into account the impact on persons with disabilities when purchasing new equipment, designing new systems or planning a new initiative so that adherence to this policy can be achieved efficiently and effectively; and

Procedure, Continued

Develop a process for receiving and responding to feedback in order to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of the Accessible Customer Service Standard. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and will allow people to provide feedback using a variety of methods.

Definitions

Note: In this policy the language and terminology of the AODA and of the Accessibility Directorate's Compliance Manual: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service O. Reg. 429/07 has been used.

Customer

A customer is any person who uses the goods and services of STS.

Assistive Device

An 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, and electronic communication devices.

Service Animal

A service animal is any animal that is being used because of a person's disability. This is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a medical practitioner.

For students, the Policy and Procedure/Accessible Transportation Services/ 7.2 Service Animals will apply.

Support Person

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

For students, the Policy and Procedure/Accessible Transportation Services/ 7.3 Support Persons will apply.

Third Party Contractor(s)

A third party contractor is any person or organization acting on behalf of, or as an agent of STS' (e.g. bus operators, contractors, psychologists).

Barriers to Accessibility

Barriers to accessibility are anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of the service of STS. 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

Accommodation means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of the Board and/or STS.