KAMLOOPS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan
2026-2029

September 2026

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction 2
Territorial Acknowledgement
About Our School Community
A Message from the Administrator
Definitions

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work 5
Global Context – United Nations
Canadian Context and Legislation – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
B.C. Context and Legislation - Accessible B.C. Act
Our Commitment to Accessibility
Our Approach

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee 9
Purpose of the Accessibility Committee
Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee
Accessibility Committee Membership

Section 4: Consultation Conducted 10

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool 11

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers 12
Accessibility Accomplishments Identified
Accessibility Barriers Identified

Section 7: KCS Accessibility Plan (2026-2029) 14

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation 17

Section 9: How to Give us Feedback about the Plan 17

Section 10: Appendices 18
Appendix A: About Disability
Appendix B: Suggested References/Resources
Appendix C: Universal Supports

Section 1: Introduction

Territorial Acknowledgement

Kamloops Christian School is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc people. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship, and voice.

About Our School Community

Kamloops Christian School is a K-12 independent school that serves approximately 305 students from Kamloops and surrounding municipalities. Kamloops Christian School Association also operates a daycare, preschool, and before/after school program that provide services for 110 children. The K-12 school program includes an Elementary (K-5) division, a Middle School (6-8) division, and a High School (9-12) division.

The leadership team of Kamloops Christian School and the Early Learning Centre includes the Principal (Head of School), Learning Leaders, the Director of Inclusive Education, the Director of the Early Learning Centre, and the Business Manager. KCS employs over 80 staff including teachers, Educational Assistants, administrative assistants, Early Childhood Educators, and custodial/maintenance workers.

A Message from the Administrator

At Kamloops Christian School, we are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all students and staff and provides equitable opportunities to support our diverse community. A key element to supporting our community is the development, implementation, and ongoing review of a school-based Accessibility Plan. This plan identifies system needs, priorities, and action plans, and draws on feedback from our school community and the work of the Accessibility Committee to enhance equity of access to programming and our facilities.

Our Accessibility Committee is a diverse and multi-disciplinary team that meets regularly to affirm our commitment to identify priorities and develop and monitor action plans highlighted in the 2026-29 Accessibility Plan. The plan identifies measurable actions across the pillars of the Accessibility Act, supporting equal opportunity for persons with disabilities by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers of access.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for those with disabilities but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to advancing the efforts of the Accessibility Committee to improve equity and ease of access to services, as well as access to our facilities. Through the actions in this Accessibility Plan, we commit to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students, staff, and the larger school community.



Karen Currie
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Definitions

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

Accessibility Committee: An official group formed by one or more organizations in collaboration with people with disabilities, to create an accessibility plan and feedback mechanism.

Accessibility Plan: A plan developed by an accessibility committee that identifies challenges and solutions for addressing accessibility barriers.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes architectural, attitudinal, information, communications, policy or practice, and technological barriers. Types of barriers:

1. Architectural Barrier: A barrier resulting from building design, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, the size of doorways, and so on.
2. Attitudinal Barrier: A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.
3. Communication Barrier: A barrier that arises from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists or other staff, and receiving training.
4. Information Barrier: A barrier that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, and so on.
5. Policy or Practice Barrier: Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society. Policy, practice, and procedures that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.
6. Technological Barrier: Barriers resulting from computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones, and switches, including the lack of assistive technologies.
7. Temporal Barrier: Barriers that occur during a specific time, such as busy times of day or during special events.

Disability: The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and a barrier. (For more information about disability and types of disability and support, refer to Appendix A: Disabilities.)

Impairment: A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work

KCS's accessibility plan builds on global, national, provincial and school specific actions to promote and support accessibility.

Global Context – United Nations

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace and within the larger community. The United Nations has been instrumental in leading the importance of disability as a global health issue. In 2006, the United Nations led efforts to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2010, Canada ratified the CRPD and described the CPRD as follows:

> "The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human right treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Parties to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law."

Canadian Context and Legislation – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada-wide, around one in five people had some form of disability in 2017. Nationally, Canadian accessibility legislation started in 1985 where disability was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in 1986, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were included in the new federal Employment Equity Act. The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) came into force in 2019, with the overarching goal to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. This act applies to federally regulated entities. The ACA has seven focus areas, and was developed based on the following guiding principles:

1. All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities.
2. All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities.
3. All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.
4. All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities.
5. Laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons.
6. Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures.
7. The development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

B.C. Context and Legislation - Accessible B.C. Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act was enacted in June 2021, and initially, the accessibility planning requirements only applied to provincial government organizations.

The Accessible British Columbia Regulation, under the Accessible British Columbia Act, came into force on September 1, 2022. These regulations identify schools as accessible organizations; school districts and independent schools were required to have an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility by September 1, 2023. The educational sector is required to review, update, and publish accessibility plans every three years.

The goal of the act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and involve them in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

Principles in the Accessible B.C. Act

The Accessible B.C. Act includes a list of principles that must be considered as organizations develop an accessibility plan. The Definitions are adapted from the foundational document BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation.

1. Adaptability: Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

2. Collaboration: Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

3. Diversity: Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.

4. Inclusion: All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

5. Self-Determination: Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

6. Universal Design: The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.” An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who interact with the organization.

Our Commitment to Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the degree of ease with which people with disabilities can use and enjoy something such as a device, service, or place. At Kamloops Christian School, we are committed to providing an environment that is accessible and practical for all members of our diverse community. We recognize the importance of conscious planning, design, and effort in ensuring that barriers are removed, and accessibility is increased.

Our school is committed to working collaboratively with the community to provide equitable treatment to people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity. To achieve this goal, we have outlined the following commitments:

- Engage with staff, community members and people with disabilities in the development and review of its accessibility plan.
- Ensure that our school policies and procedures align with the principles of accessibility.,
- Improve access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and community members.
- Continually improve accessibility for people with disabilities in our school community.

Our Approach

At Kamloops Christian School, we believe that all members of our community have the right to be treated with dignity, given an opportunity to participate, and provided with access to learning and community. Our approach is grounded in the core provincial principles of accessibility, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design.

In April 2023, in collaboration with the Society of Christian Schools in BC, KCS began the process of establishing an accessibility committee and identifying barriers to accessibility in our school community. Kamloops Christian School's Accessibility Plan (2023-26) was published in September 2023. This process involved:

- Calling for applications for members of the Accessibility Committee
- Assessing the current physical and architectural accessibility of our school
- Conducting surveys to understand the issues, challenges, and priorities of stakeholders within our school community
- Holding key discussions to identify barriers to accessibility
- Developing a school feedback tool
- Prioritization of actions to be taken
- Establishing a monitoring and evaluation process

In June 2023, the Accessibility Committee reviewed the 2023-26 Accessibility Plan and used data from parent surveys to begin drafting the 2026-29 Accessibility Plan. The 2026-29 Accessibility Plan was shared with staff, the KCSA Board, and with the KCS community in September 2026. The 2026-29 Accessibility Plan is available on the school's website (kamcs.org) and on the KCS app.

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee

Purpose of the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, organizations must establish an Accessibility Committee to assist with identifying and preventing barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. The purpose of the accessibility committee is to work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community. The Accessibility Committee also advises the Principal & Head of School on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory and other barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of school community life. This information is reported by the Principal & Head of School to the KCSA Board.

Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, the selection of accessibility committee members must, to the extent possible, align with the following goals:

- At least half the members are persons with disabilities, or individuals who support or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities;
- At least one member is an Indigenous person; and
- Members reflect the diversity of persons in B.C.

Accessibility Committee Membership

Committee Member	Position/Representation
Karen Currie	● Principal & Head of School, Kamloops Christian School
Heather Stace-Smith	● Director of Inclusive Education, Kamloops Christian School ● Parent of children with accessibility needs
Tammy Koester	● Inclusive Education Coordinator, Kamloops Christian School ● Physically disabled and neurodivergent person ● Métis
Sarah Kambo	● Educational Assistant, Kamloops Christian School ● Parent of children with accessibility needs
Nicole Gendy	● Parent of children with accessibility needs

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

Barrier-identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Committee used the following barrier-identification methods:

Methodology	Description	Status
School Physical Accessibility Audit	An Assessment of School Physical Accessibility was developed. KCS leadership staff conducted the School Physical Accessibility Audit.	June 2023
Audit of practices	A review of current practices that promote accessibility and inclusion was conducted by key staff members.	June 2026
Survey to Staff	An accessibility survey was developed and distributed to staff.	August 2026
Survey to Parents/Guardians	An accessibility survey was developed and distributed to parents/guardians.	June 2026
Survey of Students	An accessibility survey was developed and distributed to students.	October 2026

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool

Kamloops Christian School has developed an online feedback tool that includes a series of questions about accessibility experiences that students, staff and members of the school community can complete. The tool is posted to the main page of the school website and an annual information announcement about the tool is provided to students, staff, and parents/guardians. Feedback can be anonymous, or people can add their name and contact information if they wish to be contacted.

The following are the contents of the online Accessibility Feedback Tool (available as a Google Form on the KCS website and the KCS app).

Report an Accessibility Barrier or Support Barrier

At Kamloops Christian School, we want to learn about specific barriers that people face when they are trying to:

- Access a school program, building or school information
- Receive a service or support

The Accessibility Committee will review your feedback regularly and it will be used for the revision of future accessibility planning. If you need accommodation for your student or if this is an urgent matter, please contact the school directly.

1. Which group(s) do you most identify with?
   - ☐ Individual with an accessibility need
   - ☐ Student with an accessibility need
   - ☐ Caregiver for an individual with an accessibility need
   - ☐ Service Provider/Therapist outside of school
   - ☐ Staff member
   - ☐ Other
2. Please provide the date the barrier was experienced.
3. Please select the location where the barrier was experienced.
4. What were you or someone you know trying to access?
5. Accessibility barrier details (be as specific as possible).
6. Do you have any recommendations for what would make it better?
7. What are some helpful supports you have experienced at school?
8. Do you wish to be contacted about your responses? Yes No
   If yes, please provide your name and email or phone number.

All responses submitted will be checked regularly and considered for future versions of the Accessibility Plan. Thank you for providing your valuable feedback!

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers

2023-26 Accessibility Accomplishments Identified

Learning

1. Consultation with an Occupational Therapist on appropriate flexible seating for students
2. Communication with staff about available flexible seating
3. Professional development on the effective uses of flexible seating
4. Introduction of instructional coaching checklists for physical environment considerations (i.e. flexible seating, calming corners) and for instructional learning targets
5. Reconciliation and Equity work group established (relationship building and connection)
6. "Learning readiness" PD for all staff in August 2024
7. Purchase of learning resources: Executive Function Skills in the Classroom: Overcoming Barriers, Building Strategies

Attitudinal

1. Focus on Autism awareness in April (i.e. Canucks Autism presentation to Elementary students)
2. People in Motion presentation to Elementary and Middle School students
3. Greg Stewart (Paralympian) presentation to High School students
4. ICBC presentation for High School students related to safe driving (injury/disability awareness)
5. Read & Write accessible technology updated on student computers and reviewed with classes to encourage students and teachers to access this technology
6. Information on the FM sound system provided to teachers in order to encourage FM sound system use as a Universal Design for Learning tool
7. Review of ADHD resources ("Rolling with ADHD") with staff

Physical and Architectural Environment

1. Staff and students surveyed about school/classroom lighting; survey results shared with staff
2. Light filters purchased and installed in classrooms by teacher request
3. Staff and students surveyed about mobility barriers within the school/classroom
4. Ramp replaced to the Early Learning Centre to improve accessibility to the building
5. Ramp installed to the East Wing entrance to improve accessibility to the building
6. Installation of a student communication board and sensory panels in the playground
7. Quotes procured for inclusive playground equipment and accessible playground surfaces (to remove the pea gravel and replace it with engineered wood chips)
8. Evacuation chair purchased and installed

School Policy and Practice

1. Identification of the students and staff who may require assistance with emergency procedures
2. Development and practice of emergency procedures for evacuation of students/staff with disabilities and diverse needs
3. Staff training provided for transfers/lifts during an emergency

Accessibility Barriers Identified (June 2026)

Learning Barriers:

1. Inadequate practice and teaching is being provided for Middle School and High School students in executive function skills (i.e. studying, preparing for tests, task initiation and task management)
2. There may be a lack of consistent implementation of universal supports (Universal Design for Learning strategies) throughout K-12 classrooms
3. Lack of student engagement in accessing universal support has been observed, in part due to the student perception that needing help isn't socially acceptable

Attitudinal Barriers:

1. Staff may not be aware of students' invisible disabilities and/or may not know how to support students with invisible learning needs, disabilities, and wellbeing barriers including anxiety and depression.
2. Staff and students may not be familiar with the benefits of accessibility features on school technology such as voice-to-text, text to voice, web readers and other features.

Physical and Architecture Environment Barriers:

1. Students may not be aware of alternative workspaces or there may not be sufficient quiet, alternative work space available for students.
2. It is difficult to enter the school if mobility is restricted; installing automatic door openers will enhance accessibility to the school.

School Policy and Practice Barriers

1. Practice is not documented in policy (i.e. Accessibility Committee, Accessibility Plan) to ensure continuity for future planning and compliance with BC legislation.

Section 7: 2026-2029 Accessibility Plan

Overview:

This Accessibility Plan outlines the measures Kamloops Christian School will take to remove or prevent barriers to learning and participation and to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in our school community. The Plan is based on the Accessibility Principles of Adaptability, Collaboration, Diversity, Inclusion, Self-Determination, and Universal Design, as set out in the Accessible B.C. Act and defined in Section 1.

Accessibility Priorities:

Information about accessibility was gathered from staff, parents/guardians, and students as well as from the Physical and Architectural Environment Audit. Based on this feedback the Accessibility Committee has identified the following areas as the top priority for improving accessibility in the school community.

Priority #1: Learning

Kamloops Christian School will enhance access to learning for all individuals, including those with disabilities, through the following actions:

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Implement universal supports in the classroom and normalize accessing supports	• Create and complete a UDL audit for physical environment, learning targets, and connection (UDL goals in 2023-26 Accessibility Plan) to determine consistent implementation and effective impact • Identify 2-3 new UDL goals to focus on in 2026-29 • Create “one-pagers” of the new UDL goals to include in the instructional coaching playbook to support teachers and EA’s • Grade 4 presentation about tools/supports that students have access to at school	• October 2026 completed
Develop and implement a plan for teaching executive function skills to students in Grades 6-12	• Identify and/or create time within the instructional timetable to explicitly teach executive function skills to students in Middle School and High School • Create an outline of executive function skill development for the year to share with teaching staff in Middle School and High School • Review and evaluate the effectiveness of executive function skill development through staff surveys, student surveys, and parent surveys	• June 2026 completed • September 2026 • Throughout 2026-27

	• Continue to evaluate, review, and develop executive function skills lesson plans and activities through surveying students, staff, and parents	

Priority #2: Attitudinal

Kamloops Christian School will seek to understand ableism and how it exists in society and in school. The school will reduce attitudinal barriers through the following actions:

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Improve staff understanding of students' invisible disabilities and increase capacity to provide support	• Provide professional development for all staff in the areas of learning disabilities, ADHD, anxiety, depression, etc. including strategies for supporting students with invisible disabilities/barriers to learning	
Increase the universal use of available resources within all classrooms	• Provide professional development to staff in the use of accessibility features in technology (voice-to-text, text-to-voice, web readers, etc) • Provide student presentations (to all students) in the use of accessibility features in technology (voice-to-text, text-to-voice, web readers, etc) in order to normalize use of accessibility tools	

Priority #3: Physical and Architectural Environment

Kamloops Christian School will improve the accessibility of the physical and architectural environment for all individuals, including those with disabilities. The physical and architectural environment will be improved through the following actions:

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Ensure students and staff are able to adequately hear announcements	• Replace main PA system • Ensure that inadequate speakers are updated; install speakers or a phone system to each room in the school	• The main PA system panel was replaced in June 2026
Ensure soundproofing of surfaces where possible to reduce noise for students and staff	• Install acoustic panels in the West Flex multi-purpose room	• Completed August 2026

Assess space available for students who need alternate work spaces	● Complete set up of the Middle School Resource Room ● Set up the Chill Zone as a HS study room and communicate with HS staff and students how this space can be used ● Monitor use of the spaces available for Middle School and High School students (MS Resource Room, HS Resource Room, Conference Room, Chill Zone	● September 2026 ● September 2026 ● Throughout 2026-27
Provide an accessible entrance to the school	● Increase the size of the landing at the East entrance to the school to allow for space to maneuver around an open door ● Install an automatic door opener at the East entrance ● Add signage that indicates where accessible entrances are located ● Increase the front entrance landing and install a ramp	● August 2026 ● June 2027 ● September 2027
Ensure playground equipment and surfaces provide meaningful access for inclusion	● Replace the pea gravel with engineered wood fibre. ● Install rubberized surface tiles in a portion of the playground ● Purchase and install inclusive playground equipment on the rubberized surface	● September 2027

Priority #4: School Policy and Practice

Kamloops Christian School will review and revise policies and practices to ensure they align with the principles of accessibility, and to address any identified gaps in staff training or knowledge on accessibility issues. School policy and practice will be addressed through the following actions:

Objectives	**Actions**	**Timeline**
Ensure that practices are documented in policy	● Create a policy regarding the revision and review of the Accessibility Plan every three years ● Create a policy regarding the mandate, composition, and frequency of meeting times for the Accessibility Committee	● October 2026 ● October 2026

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Planning Committee meets three times yearly to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and plan for increased accessibility throughout the school. The committee will ensure the following steps are taken regarding the Accessibility Plan:

1. Prepare an annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan. Share the report with the KCSA Board, staff, and the community.
2. Review and update the Accessibility Plan every three years in consultation with persons with disabilities and other relevant community members.

Section 9: How to Give us Feedback about the Plan

In addition to the public availability of the plan, Kamloops Christian School will post an annual status report on the progress of the 2026-29 Accessibility Plan on the school's website. Accessible formats of the plan will be made available upon request. Questions, comments, or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

Karen Currie,
Principal & Head of School
karenc@kamcs.org

Section 10: Appendices

Appendix A: About Disability

The Disability Continuum

There is no universally accepted meaning for the word "disability". However, the Ontario Human Rights Code provides definitions of disability that form our guiding principles. Definitions of disability can be placed on a continuum. At one end, disability is explained in terms of medical conditions (medical model). At the opposite end, disability is explained in terms of the social and physical contexts in which it occurs (environmental model).

The medical model focuses on deficiencies, symptoms and treatments. The World Health Organization's (WHO) 1976 definition for disability, for example, is "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." Medical model definitions promote the idea that disability is a deviation from the norm.

Many people with disabilities are troubled by definitions that regard disability as abnormal, preferring instead to portray disability as commonplace, natural, and in fact, inevitable. As people age, they experience gradual declines in visual acuity, auditory sensitivity, range of motion, bodily strength and mental powers. Significant functional limitations affect almost half of people between the ages of 55 and 79, and over 70% of people over 80 (World Health Organization (WHO) report titled "Ageing and health", 2015). Beyond middle age, disability is the norm.

The environmental model explains disability in relation to social and physical contexts. In this view, the environment, not an individual's medical condition, causes disability. For example, during an electrical blackout, a person who is completely blind can effortlessly navigate around the home, hammer nails, and, if a Braille user, read a novel.

A sighted person would be unable to perform these tasks easily, if at all. In this example, the environment disables the sighted person.

The environmental model emphasizes that people with disabilities are capable individuals, and it is the barriers in the built and human environments, not their medical conditions, that create disability. Disability occurs when the world is designed only for a certain way of living, without considering the natural variation among human beings. Barriers are created by humans, and modifying how we live, the tools we use, and our understanding of the proper way to do things can eliminate or minimize design problems that cause barriers. Systematic barriers can be eliminated by modifying policies, plans, and processes. Attitudes that cause barriers can be addressed through disability awareness, respect, and positive interactions with people with disabilities.

Types of Disability and Functional Limitations

A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively challenging to perform everyday tasks such as operating a keyboard, reading a sign, differentiating colours, distinguishing sounds, climbing stairs, grasping small items, remembering words, or doing arithmetic.

There are many kinds of disabilities, including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. Disabilities can be visible or invisible.

Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Some have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Impaired vision can restrict a person's ability to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a visual disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with visual disabilities:

- Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Unless it is an emergency, only touch the person if you have been given permission.
- If you offer assistance, wait until your receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Service animals are working and have to pay attention at all times. Refrain from engaging with the animal.
- If you're giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so.
- When entering a room, show the individual to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the person to the environment around them.
- Ensure you say good-bye prior to leaving the individual.
- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Hard of Hearing and Deafness

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. People who are hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating. While some people may use sign language, notes or hearing aids when communicating, others may also use email, pagers, TTY telephone service or Bell Canada Relay Service.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Attract the person's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where the person can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to the person. Address the person, not their interpreter.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen

and paper.

- Keep your face clearly visible when speaking.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Service animals are working and have to pay attention at all times. Refrain from engaging with the animal.
- Any personal (e.g., financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing
- Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf is different because their first language may not be English. It may be American Sign Language (ASL).
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities and not all require a wheelchair. For example, people who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions, or amputations may also have difficulty moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to the person rather than someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like “handicapped”.
- Be patient and be sure you understand their needs.
- Unless it is an emergency, refrain from touching any assistive devices, including wheelchairs.
- Provide the person with information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

Intellectual Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one’s ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or body language.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with intellectual disabilities:

- As much as possible, treat the person with an intellectual disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.
- Don’t assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like “handicapped”.
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Make sure the person understands what you’ve said.
- If you can’t understand what’s being said, ask again.
- Give one piece of information at a time.
- Be polite and patient.

- Speak directly to the person, not to someone who is with the person.

Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Learning or cognitive disabilities can result in a host of different communication difficulties for people. They can be subtle, as in having difficulty reading, or more pronounced, but they can interfere with the person's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or body language.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with learning disabilities or disabilities:

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Recognize that some people with communication difficulties use augmentative communication systems such as Signed English and Picture Exchange System.
- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best help.
- Speak normally and clearly, and directly to the person
- Take some time — people with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.
- If you're dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Be courteous and patient and the person will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

Mental Health Disabilities

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that the person has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let the person tell you how you can best help.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with mental health disabilities:

- Treat people with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident and reassuring and listen to persons with a mental health disability and their needs.

If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help.

- Take the person with a mental health disability seriously, and work with them to meet their needs.

Speech and Language Disabilities

Some people have communication challenges. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use

communication boards, sign language or other assistive devices.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with speech and language disabilities:

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a person has difficulty speaking; make no assumption they have an intellectual disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask the person to repeat the information.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Take some time. Be patient and polite and give the person whatever time they need to get their point across.
- Allow the individual to finish their sentences themselves without interruption.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

Deaf-Blind Disabilities

A person who is deafblind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating. Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people who are deaf-blind:

- Make no assumptions about what a person can or cannot do. Some deaf-blind people have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- A deaf-blind person is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Speak directly to the person, as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach the person who is deaf-blind.
- Don't touch service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Unless it's an emergency, refrain from touching a deaf-blind person without permission.

Appendix B: Suggested References/Resources

Global, Canadian, and Local Accessibility Context and Legislation

Accessible British Columbia Act

BC Accessibility Legislation Plan Language Summary

British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada Ratifies the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility Planning Resources for Schools

A Guide to Creating Accessible Play Spaces (Rick Hansen Foundation)

Accessible Resource Centre - BC

BC Accessibility Hub

BC Association for Advancing Communications

Brain Injury Canada

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Canadian Hearing Services

Comprehensive literacy for all: Teaching students with significant disabilities to read and write

Creating an Accessibility Committee

Gifted Children's Association of BC

Kelty Mental Health (BC Children's Hospital)

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Rick Hansen Accessibility Advisory Services

Rick Hansen Accessibility Resources for Building Accessibility

Specialist Association of Gifted Educators in BC

Spinal Cord Injury Canada

Tourette Canada

Undoing Ableism: Teaching about disability in K-12 Classrooms

Universal Design

BC Provincial Resource Programs:

Auditory Outreach Provincial Resource Program

Provincial Inclusion Outreach Program (Complex Needs)

Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI)

Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders

Provincial Outreach Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (POPDHH)

Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness

Special Education Technology BC (SET BC)

Potential Grant Sources

BC Gaming Grants

Disability Alliance BC Accessibility Projects

Enabling Accessibility Fund

Rick Hansen Accessibility Grant

Accessibility Products

Accessibile Places (B.C. Distributor of Evac Chairs/Slings)

Advice about Placement of Automatic Door Openers alfred@accessibleplaces.ca

Appendix C: Universal Supports

Universal Supports Supports and strategies for students with or without a designation where certain universal supports have been successful in their overall learning			
SEL, Behavioural		**Instructional**	
☐	Scheduled Movement/Water breaks/opportunity	☐	Consistent, structured classroom routines
☐	Simple, predictable directions/rules	☐	Explicitly state the purpose of each lesson
☐	Visual- step-by-step instructions	☐	Oral, written, or visual instruction, “to-do” lists, or other organizational structures.
☐	Give choices (within parameters)	☐	Front loading using outlines (chapters/tests)
☐	Acknowledge flexibility and self-control	☐	Vocabulary at the start of the lesson/unit
☐	Limit group size (group work)	☐	Teach multi-modal (i.e., visual, verbal)
☐	Positive praise & build positive rapport	☐	Provide cues / mnemonics as a memory tool
☐	Assign groups AND roles/peer support	☐	Allow for extra wait time for student response
☐	Calm space in the classroom	☐	Simplified language/directions
☐	Check-in/out with a specific adult each day.	☐	Repeat instructions to the student individually
☐	Clear specific rules consistent across settings.	☐	Allow for re-teaching of key concepts, notes provided (note taker)
☐	Front-load schedule changes	☐	Reader or Text Reader (Be specific about technology)
☐	Other:	☐	Alternatives to print (audiobooks, movies, videos, digital media.
Physical Environment		☐	Explicit instructions
☐	Ability to move around indoor and outdoor spaces easily to access materials	☐	Teach notetaking, finding information in text
☐	Classroom zones/alternate workspaces (i.e., quiet spaces/collaborative spaces)	☐	Allow for the use of a calculator
☐	Good sight lines and placement and lighting to facilitate communication for oral and visual language	☐	High contrast materials, large print
☐	Flexible/preferential seating	☐	Use closed captioning
☐	Sound field system	☐	Provide alternate materials at the student’s level
☐	Sensory Tools (fidget items, wiggle cushion, standing desk)	☐	Use cooperative learning
☐	Special lighting (dark/light spaces) or acoustics (quiet/noisy spaces)	☐	Use small group instruction/ peer tutoring

☐	Reduce visual noise	☐	Provide immediate/frequent feedback
☐	Separate setting	☐	Present lessons sequentially
☐	Vertical surfaces	☐	Alternatives to note-taking (scribe, audio recording, teachers-notes provided, photo, etc.)
☐	Other:	☐	Other:
Organizational		**Formative Assessment**	
☐	Take pictures of notes & homework board	☐	Use in-class evidence of understanding
☐	Extra time to complete assignments	☐	Adjust expectations “quality over quantity”
☐	Mini due dates to ensure task completion	☐	Reduce # of homework questions or assignment length
☐	Chunk longer projects/assignments	☐	Alternate type: oral, written, demonstration
☐	Use highlighters for important directions	☐	Vary assessment types depending on the need
☐	Provide note taker or notes of each lesson	☐	Provide samples at the beginning
☐	Supported use of an agenda, planner, calendar	☐	Adapt tests and assignments (shorten, enlarge, revise format)
☐	Graphic organizers for writing assignments	☐	Use dot procedure: work to the dot and then get feedback
☐	Use simple, concise directions	☐	Repeat instructions
☐	Pneumonic strategies; Study strategies	☐	Spelling dictionary, proofreading, word bank checklists, etc.
☐	Visual schedule/timetable (i.e., When/Then)	☐	No penalty for spelling or convention errors
☐	Visual timer	☐	Calculator/multiplication chart/number line and manipulatives
☐	Use post-it-notes	☐	Graphic organizers
☐	Home/school communication book	☐	Alternate format: short answer, point form, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, true/false, matching
☐	Checklists	☐	Provide a rubric or scoring guide
☐	Classroom Visual supports	☐	Review Criteria prior to beginning the assigned task
☐	Work organization system (color code files etc.)	☐	Framework outlines, and rubrics for longer projects
☐	Other:	☐	Reduce or eliminate oral reading in class
Summative Assessment		☐	Access to technology with dictation/word prediction and Voice-to-text abilities
☐	Allow for retests or test previews	☐	Work in groups

☐	Extra time to complete written tests/quizzes	☐	Materials available at independent reading level
☐	Allow a 1-page cheat sheet for tests	☐	Voice to text, Speech to text or Dictation
☐	Break down tests into small chunks	☐	Reduce or eliminate homework expectations
☐	Allow for test “previews” to be sent home	☐	Other:
☐	Allow oral answering of test questions	**Other**	
☐	Adapt tests (shorten, enlarge, revise format)	☐	Other:
☐	Other:	☐	Other: