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## ***ACCESSIBILITY AND BARRIER FREE MULTI YEAR PLAN***

(Revised December 2023)

### **Statement of Organizational Commitment:**

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNCCDSB) is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws. PVNCCDSB is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

PVNCCDSB understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

PVNCCDSB is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services, or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

**1. Aim**

This Accessibility and Barrier Free Plan is developed in accordance with the Integration Accessibility Standards Regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. This Act lays the framework for the development of province-wide mandatory standards on accessibility in all areas of daily life. Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025 by identifying, breaking down, and preventing barriers to accessibility.

**2. Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

This plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with the Board's Accessibility for All Committee, including persons with disabilities, and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board is committed to:

- 2.1** Maintaining an Accessibility for All Committee.
- 2.2** Continuing the process of consulting with the Special Education Advisory Committee and with persons with disabilities.
- 2.3** Ensuring, wherever practicable, that Board policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the principles of accessibility and inclusive/universal design.
- 2.4** Improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and members of the community.

**3. Members of Accessibility for All Committee**

The mandate of this committee is to:

- a) Review current initiatives and successes in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers
- b) Set priorities and develop accessibility strategies
- c) Review and ensure audits are completed to ensure accessibility
- d) Provide updates and reports specific to progress in order to ensure accessibility and the removal of barriers.

<b>Accessibility Committee Membership</b>	
<i>Committee Member</i>	<i>Department</i>
Chairperson	Vice-Principal of Special Education Services Representing Principal's/Vice-Principal's Association
Trustee (Ex-officio)	Board of Trustees

Trustee	Board of Trustees
Manager of Communications	Communications/ Community Relations
Special Education Consultant	Special Education Services
Elementary Teacher Rep	Elementary Teacher
Secondary Teacher Rep	Secondary Teacher
OECTA-Elementary or Secondary Teacher	OECTA Representative
Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Special Education Services
Teacher of the Blind/Low Vision	Special Education Services
STSCO	Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario
CUPE President	CUPE 1453
Manager of Facilities Services	Facilities Services
Manager of Human Resource Services	Human Resource Services
Computer Technician	Computer Services
Health and Safety Officer	Human Resource Services
Wellness Coordinator	Human Resource Services
Superintendent of Schools	Special Education Services Representing Senior Administration
Recording Secretary	Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Special Education Services

#### **4. Definitions:**

**4.1** Accessibility Standard –An accessibility standard made by regulation under the AODA Act, 2005

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

**4.3** Barrier – is anything that prevents a person with a disability from participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a

policy, or practice.

**4.4 Customer** – A customer is any person who uses the services of the School Board.

**4.5 Disability** – As Defined by the Human Rights Code – Section 10 (1):

4.5.1 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

4.5.2 any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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

4.5.3 a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability

4.5.4 a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language

4.5.5 a mental disorder

4.5.6 an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997: ("handicap")

**4.6 Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Plan** - A plan that identifies individual workplace emergency response information for those employees who have a disability.

**4.7 Service Animal** – A service animal is an animal that is being used because of a person's disability, and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from an appropriate professional. The animal must be certified and trained by a licensed and registered trainer to support the person's needs.

**4.8 Support Person** – A support person is a person who assists or interprets for a person with a disability as they access the services of the Board. A support person is distinct from an employee who supports a student in the system.

## **5. Barrier Removal Initiatives:**

Accessibility standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. During the last several years, there have been a number of formal and informal initiatives at Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities as noted in the Annual Status Report Below.

### **5.1 Accessibility of School Buildings:**

Accessibility includes the structure of the school, the playground and the grounds surrounding the school building. This may include an accessible exit to the playground, accessibility to playground equipment and/or accessible playground equipment. To make

the grounds accessible, it may involve actual structural modifications or only a few minor adaptations to the existing structures. The ultimate objective is to provide students with opportunities for maximum independence by providing a barrier-free environment.

### **5.2 Specialized Equipment for Students:**

School boards apply for funding for specialized student equipment through SEA claim funding on behalf of individual students. The funding covers the costs of individualized equipment that exceeds \$800 per pupil in a single school year. Claims must be for special, individualized equipment for use at school.

### **5.3 Transportation:**

Students identified with an exceptionality are transported with other students whenever possible. In the event that the needs of the individual student are such that the student's welfare and/or the welfare of others is at risk, students may be transported individually or in small groups. All transportation providers used by the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board must comply with the Ministry of Transportation and Safety regulations and drivers must have a criminal record check.

### **5.4 Staff Needs:**

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board employs many qualified staff and accommodates those with disabilities in a variety of ways. Staff are sensitive to the needs of others and recognize their abilities not disabilities. Employees with disabilities must be their own advocates and share their concerns, issues and needs with their supervisors and Human Resources Services. A variety of accommodations have been made to assist staff in becoming more independent.

### **5.5 Parent and Community Needs:**

Parents with disabilities are supported in a variety of ways. Sign-Language interpreters are provided for parent meetings, materials are presented verbally as required and all attempts made to assist parents in supporting their child's education. Requests for these and other types of support need to be made at least two weeks in advance to allow time to make arrangements. Schools have accessible entrances which accommodate for physical challenges.

## **6. About the Accessibility Standards:**

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board intends, through this Accessibility and Barrier Free Plan and its enclosed Annual Status Report, to take action to address barriers to accessibility related to the standard areas of current regulations.

## **7. Barriers Addressed:**

The accessibility standards will remove barriers in five areas:

- Employment

- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Public Spaces
- Customer Service

**7.1 Employment** – The Accessibility Standard for Employment (Administrative Procedure 818) will help organizations support and keep more skilled employees. It will make accessibility a normal part of finding, hiring and communicating with employees who have disabilities.

- PVNCCDSB will review Human Resources procedures and practices
- PVNCCDSB will notify employees and identify through postings the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities
- PVNCCDSB will include appropriate language into internal and external job postings
- PVNCCDSB will review the status of accessibility awareness training to ensure new staff and supply staff have been trained.

**7.2 Information and Communication** – The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication (Administrative Procedure 819) will help people with disabilities access sources of information that many of us rely on every day.

- PVNCCDSB will review practices to ensure readiness to provide educational resources, materials, student records and information on program requirements in accessible formats upon request
- PVNCCDSB will review accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites
- PVNCCDSB will review process for receiving and responding to feedback
- PVNCCDSB will provide training to all staff, on accessibility requirements, and on Human Rights Code provisions regarding disabilities and ensure third-party providers have similar training
- PVNCCDSB will review status of capacity of Learning Commons to provide accessible or conversion
- PVNCCDSB will review status of capacity of Learning Commons to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of all resources upon request

**7.3 Transportation** – The Accessibility Standard for Transportation (Administrative Procedure 820) will make public transportation services more accessible by making it easier for people with disabilities to get where they need to go.

- PVNCCDSB will adhere to Transportation Policy AP 820
- PVNCCDSB will work with STSCO to provide and support training to staff and transportation providers through the special needs manual

**7.4 Public Spaces** – The Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces (AP 821) will help remove barriers in building and outdoor spaces for people with disabilities. The Standard will apply to new construction and extensive renovation.

- PVNCCDSB will maintain an annual facilities renewal program to maintain board

facilities. Annually, the renewal funds are prioritized and when possible consideration is given to support access to all sites and buildings.

- PVNCCDSB will continue to maintain existing equipment such as doors, ramps, rails, curb cuts, handicap parking, evacuation chairs and signage.
- PVNCCDSB will apply best practices in the emergency maintenance and repair of the accessible elements of public spaces. These practices focus on an active response upon notification and repair as soon as practicable.
- PVNCCDSB will notify the community when there is a disruption to accessible elements of public spaces.

**7.5 Customer Service** - The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (Administrative Procedure 822) will:

- ensure that when goods and services are being procured, schools and departments are considering the accessibility needs of those on the receiving end of the procured goods and services, or that new barriers are not being created;
- ensure that feedback regarding accessibility originating with a user/customer is directed to the initiating principal or person responsible for input on resolving concerns. The Purchasing Department will work in collaboration with schools and suppliers to resolve issues related to accessibility;
- ensure that accessibility challenges that may be experienced by user groups with regards to Community Use of Board facilities are appropriately identified through our Community Use Permit system, and a reasonable effort made to accommodate those challenges;
- ensure that the Outreach Coordinator addresses feedback or inquiries regarding accessibility originating from Community Use groups on a timely basis.

**8. Review, Monitoring Process - Annual Status Report:**

The Accessibility for All Committee meets regularly during the year to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier-removal and prevention strategies and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Board. The Accessibility and Barrier Free plan will be reviewed each year to monitor progress on the implementation of the plan.

**Annual Status Report 2022-2023 (Bolded Updates Planned for the current year)**

	Action	Effective Date	Responsibility
General	Newly Develop Administrative Procedures on Directional Policy 800: Healthy Schools and Workplaces: 818: Accessibility and Barrier-Free Learning and Work Environments: Employment 819: Accessibility and Barrier-Free Learning and Work Environments: Information and Technology 820: Accessibility and Barrier-Free Learning and Work Environments: Transportation 821: Accessibility and Barrier-Free Learning and Work Environments: Design of Public Spaces 822: Accessibility and Barrier-Free Learning and Work	Completed April 2021	AFA Operations Sub-Committee

	Environments: Customer Service		
	<b>Update communications via PVNC website: link to new Administrative Procedures, Multi-year Accessibility Plan and Minutes</b>	<b>Completed June 2021 and ongoing thereafter</b>	<b>Special Education Services</b>
	Update Special Education Advisory Committee: National Accessibility Awareness Week and Administrative Procedures	Completed May 27, 2021	Special Education Services
	Provide Professional Development to Special Education Resource Teachers and Classroom Teachers in Universal Design and IEP Accommodations in the Virtual Environment	Completed by June 2021	Special Education Services
	Prioritize Universal Design for Learning in the Board's Improvement Plan and Special Education Plan in order to consider and develop ongoing professional development to administrators, teachers, and support staff in Universal Design for Learning and accessibility.	June 2022	
	<b>Professional Development with Administrators, Teachers, and Special Education Support Staff in Universal Design for Learning</b>	<b>Ongoing in 2022-2023</b>	<b>Special Education Services with Equity Advisor</b>
	<b>Communication and training with Principals on new Administrative Procedures: APs 818 Employment, 819 Information and Communication, 820 Transportation, 821 Public Spaces, and 822 Customer Service</b>	<b>Completed by June 2023</b>	<b>Special Education Services</b>
<b>Attitudinal</b>	<b>Challenging attitudinal barriers during National Accessibility Awareness Week (NAAW): social, environmental, communication, and academic accessibility - soliciting and celebrating student voice</b>	<b>May 29 - June 2, 2023</b>	<b>AFA NAAW Sub-Committee</b>
	<b>Challenging attitudinal barriers via equity training with Administrators, Special Education Resource Teachers, and all educators (teachers and support staff).</b>	<b>Ongoing in 2022-2023</b>	<b>Equity Advisor with Equity Team</b>
Information and Communication	Newly developed Administrative Procedure particular to Information and Communication and associated IASR standards	Completed by April 2021	Manager of Information and Technology
	Update website to notify staff and public of the possibility and process for seeking accessible forms and for offering accessible feedback as per IASR standard.	Completed by April 2021	Manager of Information and Technology
	Accessibility Training for Administrative Assistants	Completed March 2021	Information and Technology
	Accessibility Training Secondary School Secretaries	Completed May 2021	Information and Technology
Employment	Newly developed Administrative Procedure particular to Employment and the associated IASR standards	Completed April 2021	Manager of Human Resources
	Accessibility Training updated in Vector including how to interact with those who live with a disability - customer service standards  Updated language in job posting regarding accommodation  Updated language in job offers regarding accommodation	Completed by June 2022	Human Resources
	Accessibility Training including how to interact with those who live with a disability - customer service standards and in the Ontario Human Rights Code particularly in related to the AODA	Ongoing as part of all onboarding; Notifications to all members of PVNC in	Human Resources



		May 2023	
Transportation	Newly developed Administrative Procedure particular to Transportation and associated IASR standards	Completed April 2021	Business, Transportation and Facilities
Design of Public Spaces	Newly developed Administrative Procedure particular to Public Spaces and associated IASR standards	Completed April 2021	Business, Transportation and Facilities
	<b>Good Shepherd - Universal washroom St. Mary (Lindsay) - installing new elevator St. Mary (Grafton) - Universal Washroom</b>	<b>Completed by June 2023</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Customer Service Standards	Newly developed Administrative Procedure particular to Customer Services Standards and associated IASR standards	Completed April 2021	Manager of Purchasing, Planning, and Administration
Compliance	Accessibility Compliance Report completed and submitted by June 30, 2021	Completed June 2021	Special Education Services

### **9. Communication of the Plan:**

The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board's Accessibility and Barrier Free plan will be posted on the board web site at [www.pvnccdsb.on.ca](http://www.pvnccdsb.on.ca) and hard copies will be available. The plan can also be made available in accessible formats.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility and Barrier Free plan may be directed to: Chair of the Accessibility for All Committee  
The Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington  
Catholic District School Board  
1-800-461-8009 or 705-748-4861

### **10. Additional Information:**

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)  
[Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)  
[Universal Design for Learning: CAST.org](#)