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1.0 SickKids Commitment to Accessibility

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) is committed to providing equitable treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of Hospital services, programs, goods and facilities. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontario hospitals must meet accessibility standards to identify, remove and prevent barriers.

SickKids is dedicated to being accessible and compliant in all accessibility standards and in creating a welcoming, barrier-free environment for patients, staff and the community. SickKids is also committed to ensuring that all persons within its community are aware of their rights and responsibilities to promote an accessible and inclusive environment with and for persons who have disabilities.

SickKids has established the Accessibility Steering Committee which is comprised of a broad representation of key stakeholders including patients/families. The Committee is responsible for ongoing enhancements to accessibility at SickKids and advises senior management about matters related to the requirements of the AODA.


Any questions or comments related to Accessibility at SickKids can be directed to accessibility.questions@sickkids.ca or (416) 813-7654 ext. 228315.

2.0 Policy

Consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and SickKids Mission and Values, SickKids will continually strive to provide an accessible environment for people with disabilities, including patients and their families, visitors, staff, trainees and volunteers. SickKids will strive to meet all applicable requirements of the AODA 2005. Its plans and policies will be updated on a regular basis to reflect work on these requirements in accordance with the schedule set out in the AODA. Multi-year accessibility plans will be reviewed annually and updated in consultation with the Accessibility Steering Committee.

3.0 Application

- 3.1. This policy applies to all employees, health-care professionals, researchers, trainees, interns, students, volunteers, patients, family members, visitors, advisory groups, suppliers, contractors and community-based partners, research partners and business partners.
- 3.2. This policy applies to all activities which take place at SickKids, as well as to hospital-related activities which occur elsewhere. Those include, but are not limited to business undertakings, teaching or training programs, research initiatives, community projects, partnership activities, social functions, fundraising events and activities involving access to the Hospital's computer or communication systems.
- 3.3. This policy applies to all contractual relationships between the Hospital and its business, research and community partners.

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4.0 Procedure

4.1 Use of Assistive Devices

SickKids staff, trainees, and volunteers and third-party contractors will accommodate the use of personal assistive devices, including, but not limited to, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters and Braille display boards. The following applies to assistive devices available throughout the hospital:

- Assistive devices will be kept in good working order, and the public will be informed of their availability.
- The Hospital will ensure that relevant staff members know how to access and use the assistive devices that are available at the Hospital and that instructions are available for these devices.
- The use of assistive devices for staff would require assessment by Occupational Health and/or HAMP.
- Patient and families requiring assistive devices can contact their healthcare team.

4.2 Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

4.2.1 Service Animals

People with disabilities who use a guide or service animal may be accompanied by the animal within the Hospital as they wish, unless the animal is excluded from an environment by another law. Service animals can accompany an individual if:


- a) It is readily apparent the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability.
- b) The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

If the animal is excluded because of another law, dialogue should occur between the employee/patient/family and the appropriate manager/staff members to ensure that the needs of the individual are met while minimizing any potential risk to others.

- If a person with a disability is prevented from accessing their support animal, the Hospital will attempt to arrange an alternative service where appropriate and available.
- Individuals accompanied by service animals are responsible for the care and supervision of their service animals at all times.

4.2.2 Support Persons

People with a disability who use a support person are entitled to bring that support person with them while accessing goods and services at the Hospital. However, the Hospital may limit a support persons access on the basis of medical or safety considerations. In a situation where the Hospital deems it necessary to deny access to

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a support person, the Hospital will assume responsibility for basic care of the individual with a disability. The Hospital may also require the presence of a support person, if it is deemed by staff that a significant risk is incurred by an individual with a disability who is attempting to access Hospital goods and services without assistance.

4.3 Notice of Temporary Disruptions

The Hospital will provide notice to the public in the event of planned or unexpected disruptions in the services used by people with disabilities. All disruptions in accessibility services must be reported to Communications and Public Affairs (205058) so that a notice of temporary disruption can be issued.

These notices will include information about:

- The reason for the disruption.
- The anticipated duration of the disruption.
- Alternative facilities and/or services.
- Who to contact for questions (accessibility.questions@sickkids.ca or (416) 813-7654 ext. 228315).

4.4 Emergency Response for Employees with Disabilities


Plans will be in place that identify appropriate measures to assist employees with disabilities in the event of an emergency situation to ensure that all employees are able to evacuate a hazardous environment in a safe manner. For further information please reference the [Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities](#) Policy.

4.5 Accessibility Training

All SickKids staff, trainees, and volunteers and third parties providing goods and services to members of the public on SickKids behalf, as well as those who develop the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties will receive accessibility training which will include a review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, the Integrated Accessibility Standards and instruction about the following matters:

- Understanding how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- Recognizing how to support people with disabilities who use assistive devices, or require the assistance of a service or support animal
- How to access equipment made available by the Hospital to help people with disabilities access care and services
- How to manage a situation where a person with a disability is experiencing difficulty in accessing a service.
- How to report an accessibility concern or complaint.
- Related Hospital policies and procedures.

The training will be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training will take place as soon as is practicable and is mandatory for all staff.

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4.6 Feedback Process

The Hospital will actively encourage feedback and comments on the quality of care and accommodation provided to people with disabilities. All feedback will be reviewed and responded to as appropriate. The reporting process to address feedback related to accommodation for individuals with disabilities is as follows:

4.6.1 Patients and Families

- Feedback is received by a member of the patient's health care team or the Office of Patient and Family Experience (206181).
- Immediate action should be taken at the site to address the issue where appropriate/needed
- If required, a safety report is submitted by either the person providing or receiving the feedback.
- If the feedback requires further follow up, staff should consult with the Office of Patient and Family Experience (OPFE) and/or Supervisor.
- The feedback is managed via the standard process used by Office of Patient and Family Experience (OPFE) for addressing patient and family feedback.
- Please refer to the Office of Patient and Family Experience (OPFE) guidelines for additional information.

4.6.2 Visitors

- Visitors should address their concerns through the Office of Patient and Family Experience (206181).

4.6.3 Employees/Contractors/Third Party Agents

- The feedback is received by the supervisor of the area.
- For employees, if the concern requires further attention, the supervisor may contact Occupational Health and Safety Services at 208696.

4.7 Notice of Availability of Documents


- Notice of the availability of documents will be provided on the Hospital's websites and through other printed methods. Anyone who wishes to obtain a copy of this policy should contact Communications & Public Affairs at public.affairs@sickkids.ca or (416) 813-5058.

5.0 Accessible Formats & Communication Supports

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, SickKids, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, will provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities.

6.0 Emergency Procedures, Plans & Information

SickKids will provide all existing public emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, upon request, in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports in a timely manner.

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7.0 Employment Standards

The Employment Accessibility Standard proposes that the following employment standards be instituted to allow for the workplace to be accessible to employees with disabilities:

- Preparing accessible employment policies.
- Letting job applicants know that the recruitment and hiring process can and will be modified to accommodate their disabilities, if requested.
- Providing information about a job, including applications, in accessible formats.
- Giving disability awareness training to all employees.
- Creating a process for developing and documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities and individual return to work plans for employees who are returning to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities.
- Preparing accommodation plans to help employees perform their job.
- Preparing individual emergency response plans when necessary.

Please refer to the following SickKids policies for additional information:

[Hiring Policy](#)

[Health Absence Management and Accommodation Policy](#)

[Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities](#)

[Respect in the Workplace: The Management of Disrespectful Conduct](#)

Please contact the Health Absence Management Team (HAMP) in Occupational Health and Safety Services (202656) for more information on workplace accommodation or emergency response plans for employees with disabilities.

8.0 Responsibilities


The SickKids Accessibility Steering Committee is responsible for reviewing this policy annually and recommending amendments to ensure on-going compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations.

8.1 SickKids Accessibility Steering Committee

- Provides advice and direction on the implementation of this policy.
- The Committee is represented by SickKids staff from various areas of the hospital and Family Advisors.
- Working groups are established as needed.

8.2 Supervisors, Managers & Staff

- Ensure that they and their staff and trainees are familiar with and comply with this policy.
- Monitor current practices to ensure compliance.
- Process accommodation requests from employees with disability and consult Occupational Health and Safety to support employee needs.

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9.0 Definitions

9.1 Disability:

The AODA defines disability as:

- 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.
- 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).

9.2 Accommodation:

A term used to describe the support, resources and or services required for individuals with temporary or permanent disabilities to enable them to compensate for the challenges that may arise from their disability and to optimize their potential functional abilities. Accommodations in relation to care may include, but are not limited to , facilitating access to care, providing extra time to communicate with individuals and using technology to provide information. Accommodations to the workplace may include, but are not limited to, modified work hours, modified work and access to assistive devices.


9.3 Assistive Devices:

Assistive devices are auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (e.g. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).

The following assistive devices are available at SickKids:

Amplifiers:

These devices can amplify sound to assist the hearing impaired. Examples include the super phone ringer (a device to amplify the ringing of a phone set), the alert master (provides visual alert to noises like a doorbell), call

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alert (gives a visual indicator of any device that emits an alarm) and the pocket talker (amplifies conversation via headphones). Amplifiers can be obtained through Communications/Information Services (207500).

Information Boards:

These boards allow a person to use letters, words or visual icons to express themselves. Communication boards can be obtained through Child Life Services (206627).

Computer Add-ons:

These add-ons can help a person communicate in the written word. Examples include screen magnifiers (which makes the screen more readable), high contrast screens (which allows for alternative colours and font sizes to be shown) and on-screen keyboards (for people with mobility impairment). To learn more about these computer add-ons or to access one, please contact the Information Services Help Desk (206722).

Teletypewriter (TTY):

These devices can be used to write out telephone conversations. Teletypewriters can be obtained through Communications/Information Services (207500).

Bell Relay Service:

A free service where Bell acts as an intermediary between a hearing person and a person with a hearing disability talking over the telephone. The service can be reached at 1-800-855-0511.

Interpreter Services:

A free service that provides interpretation services for many languages, including American Sign Language. This service can be used for individuals who are hearing impaired and/or with individuals with limited English proficiency. For assistance, please contact Interpreter Services (206618).


Telephone Interpreters:

This service provides 24-hour access to interpreters through the telephone. The service can be reached at 416-504-4578. A client ID is required to access this service; this department ID is available through the department's manager or by contacting Interpreter Services Department (206618).

Video Remote Interpreting Services

A free service that provides video interpretation for many languages, including American Sign Language if an in-person interpreter is unavailable. This technology connects patients and families virtually to an interpreter. For assistance, please contact Interpreter Services (206618) or ask your healthcare team.

Wheelchairs:

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There are several different wheelchairs available at SickKids. These include wheelchairs that tilt, have head rests and those that provide secure seating with a harness. They are available in three sizes: toddler, school age, and teenager. To obtain a wheelchair, please contact Transportation Services (208666).

9.4 Service Animal:

An animal specially trained to assist a person with a disability, if:

- a) It is readily apparent the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability.
- b) The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

9.5 Guide Dog:

A dog trained as a guide for people who are blind and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1). Blind Persons Rights Act. A guide dog is a dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in the Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons' Rights Act to act as a guide dog for people who are blind.

9.6 Support Person:

An individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. The support person could be a paid personal support worker, a volunteer, a friend or a family member.

9.7 Unconvertible:

Information or communication that are not technically feasible to convert are termed unconvertible. Technology to convert the information is not readily available.

10.0 References

1. Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter H.7.
2. Human Rights Code R.S.O. 1990, Chapter H.19.
3. Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. (2008). Accessibility Standards.
4. Ontario regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards.
5. Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
6. www.accessforward.ca.