

HUMAN RESOURCES Policy and Procedures

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References:	AODA: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07		

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

1.0 PURPOSE

This Policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standards included in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all staff members, resource caregivers, board members, students, and volunteers of the Children's Aid Society of Oxford County, and any other person who may provide service on behalf of the Agency.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Assistive Device** – An Assistive Device is a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker, a personal oxygen tank, or other device that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering, and/or reading.

3.2 **Disability** – The term Disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- 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 dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;

- d. A mental disorder; or
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

3.3 **Guide Dog** – A Guide Dog is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

3.4 **Service Animal** – An animal is a Service Animal for a person with a disability if:

- a. the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b. the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - i. A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
 - ii. A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
 - iii. A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario;
 - iv. A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
 - v. A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
 - vi. A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
 - vii. A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
 - viii. A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
 - ix. A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

3.5 **Service Dog** – As reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562* a dog, other than a guide dog for the blind, is a Service Dog if:

- a. it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- b. the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

- 3.6 **Support Person** – A Support Person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies that person in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods and services.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 The Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County meets the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- 4.2 All services provided by the Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County abide by the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.
- 4.3 The Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County makes every reasonable effort to ensure that its Policies and Procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Communication

- 5.1.1 The Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County communicates with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- 5.1.2 The Agency trains employees, student interns, volunteers, and any other individuals who provide services on its behalf on Ontario’s accessibility laws and on accessibility aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code which apply to persons with disabilities.

5.2 Telephone Services

- 5.2.1 The Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County trains staff to communicate with persons over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly.
- 5.2.2 The Agency offers to communicate by e-mail, mail, or any means the person uses, should telephone communication not be suitable for their communication needs or is not available.

5.3 Billing

- 5.3.1 The Children’s Aid Society of Oxford County provides accessible invoices to clients. Invoices may be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print, or e-mail.

5.3.2 Any questions clients may have about the content of an invoice are answered in person, by telephone, or e-mail.

5.4 The Use of Assistive Devices

5.4.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County ensures that people with disabilities who use assistive devices may obtain, use, or benefit from its services.

5.4.2 The Agency ensures that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing services.

5.4.3 Staff Members, Students, and Volunteers:

- a. Do not touch or handle any assistive devices without permission.
- b. Do not move assistive devices or equipment out of a person's reach.
- c. Inform clients about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g. accessible washrooms).
- d. Make worksite accommodations to ease the use of any assistive devices.

5.5 The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals, and Service Dogs

5.5.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog, service dog, or service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

5.5.2 The Agency ensures that all staff, volunteers, and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog, service dog, or service animal.

5.5.3 If a health and safety concern presents itself in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, all reasonable efforts are made to meet the needs of all individuals.

5.5.4 Staff Members, Students, and Volunteers:

- a. Do not distract or disrupt service animals by touching, petting, or talking to the animal.
- b. Ask the person if there is uncertainty whether the animal is a pet or if the animal is a guide dog, service dog or service animal.

- c. Do not separate the person from their guide dog, service dog, or service animal.

5.6 The Use of Support Persons

- 5.6.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- 5.6.2 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is permitted to enter the Agency's premises with their support person.
- 5.6.3 At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on Agency premises, unless a health and safety concern arises regarding the behavior of the support person.
- 5.6.4 In situations where confidential information is discussed, consent is obtained from the client before proceeding with any such conversation.
- 5.6.5 Staff Members, Students, and Volunteers:
 - a. Speak directly to clients, and not the support person.
 - b. Treat all parties with respect and dignity.
 - c. Obtain consent from the service user prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

5.7 Notice of Disruptions in Service

- 5.7.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County provides notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. Such notice includes information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- 5.7.2 The notice is placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises. If possible, all reasonable efforts are made to contact those with appointments who are affected by the disruption.
- 5.7.3 In the case of an office closure, closure information is placed on the Agency's website wherever possible, and advertised through various community media outlets

5.7.4 Staff Members, Students, and Volunteers

- a. Immediately notify the Human Resources department when service disruptions occur.
- b. If possible, notify all scheduled clients of any disruptions.

5.8 Training

5.8.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County provides training to all employees, student interns, volunteers, all individuals who provide services on behalf of the Agency, and all individuals who are involved in the development and approval of policies, practices, and procedures.

5.8.2 Training includes the following:

- a. A review of the Agency's Accessibility policies, procedures, and practices surrounding the legislation.
- b. The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- c. Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- d. Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a service animal, or require the use of a support person.
- e. Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at Agency premises or that the Agency provides which may help people with disabilities;
- f. Instructions on how to use equipment or devices available on Agency premises that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities.
- g. Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Agency services.

5.8.3 The Agency provides training as soon as practicable. Training is provided to new employees, volunteers, and other applicable persons during orientation. Revised training is provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures, policies, and/or practices.

5.8.4 The Agency maintains a record of training which includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

5.9 Feedback

5.9.1 Feedback regarding the manner in which the Children's Aid Society of Oxford County provides services to people with disabilities can be made verbally (in person or by telephone), or in writing (e-mail or mail). Alternative methods of providing feedback are available upon request. All feedback is directed to:

Ashley Herron
Manager of Human Resources
712 Peel Street
Woodstock, ON N4S 0B4
Email: aherron@casoxford.on.ca

5.9.2 Individuals can expect to receive a response within seven business days.

5.9.3 Complaints are addressed according to complaint procedures already established in the Agency's Internal Complaint Review Process.

5.9.4 Staff Members, Students, and Volunteers

- a. Assist individuals with the feedback process if requested.
- b. Accommodate the feedback process to meet individual needs.
- c. Forward all feedback to the Manager of Human Resources and the Director of Service.

5.10 Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

5.10.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County notifies the public that documents related to the Customer Service Standards are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

5.10.2 Notification is given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by the Children's Aid Society of Oxford County, the Agency's website, and/or any other reasonable method.

5.11 Administration

5.11.1 The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity of

people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes are made to this Policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

5.11.2 Any policy of the Oxford Children's Aid Society that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or repealed.

5.11.3 This Policy exists to achieve service excellence to persons with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the Policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation is provided, or referred to the Human Resources department.

6.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policy & Procedure: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Policy & Procedure: IASR Employment Standards

Policy & Procedure: IASR Information and Communication Standards

Policy & Procedure: IASR Transportation and Design of Public Spaces

7.0 APPENDICES

None