

## The Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) and Disability

The Code offers protection of everyone's rights, equal opportunity, and freedom from discrimination. It applies directly to employment, housing and services, stating that people with disabilities must be accommodated to the point of undue hardship. What this means is that organizations must make every reasonable effort to accommodate people with disabilities.

Organizations must take the steps necessary to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility before problems arise whenever possible. This can be done through education as well as proactive and inclusive planning and design.

For more information on the Code and how it relates to disability, go to [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).

## What are the differences between the Code and the IASR?

The Code and the integrated accessibility standards under the AODA are both provincial laws. They share the same definition of disability and work together to promote equity and accessibility in Ontario.



The IASR and the AODA were developed to complement and support the Code. The Code takes precedence in Ontario. In other words, if a conflict exists between the AODA and the Code, the Code comes first. The AODA and all other provincial laws (with few exceptions) must follow the Code.

For more information on the Code and the integrated accessibility standards under the AODA, view Working Together: The Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).

## Are there policies, practices and procedures in place for KPR?

Yes. The Board has policies, practices and procedures in place to guide accessible goods and services for people with disabilities.

We also have:

- an Equity and Diversity Committee, whose trustee and employee representatives recommend ways to maintain equitable, diverse and inclusive schools and services
- a Special Education Advisory Committee, with representatives from a wide variety of community groups and agencies, who make recommendations on special education programs and services for exceptional students
- an Accessibility Working Group, which meets regularly to identify, prevent and remove any barriers and offer recommendations for removing those barriers
- Equity & Diversity contacts at each school
- a Special Services and Special Education branch of the Teaching and Learning Department
- employees in Human Resource Services and Equity and Diversity who provide support to ensure accessibility criteria are met within the Board.

## Some important tips to remember:

- Don't make assumptions based on a person's disability.
- Identify yourself, by speaking directly to the person you are serving, not to a support person.
- Speak clearly and be precise when giving instructions.
- Don't interrupt or finish someone's sentence.
- Don't touch or speak to service animals. They are working and need to stay alert.
- Don't touch the person or the assistive device, such as a wheelchair or computer, without permission.
- Respect people's personal space and preferences.
- Be patient, and listen carefully.
- If you can't understand what someone said, just politely ask again.
- Try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.
- Use plain language, and speak in short sentences.

To request an accessible copy of this brochure, to learn more about our policies, practices and procedures, or to complete online accessibility awareness training modules, please visit the "Accessibility at the Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB" link located on the board website at [www.kprschoools.ca](http://www.kprschoools.ca).



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# Accessibility at the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board



## Accessibility at KPR

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board is committed to equity, diversity and inclusiveness.

“Inclusiveness” means that all individuals:

- feel welcome, accepted and valued
- feel that they belong
- are able to participate fully in all aspects of life
- are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

### What kinds of disabilities do people face?

We tend to think of disabilities in terms of visible, physical challenges. The fact is, however, that disabilities can be visible, hidden, permanent, or occur only at certain times.

They may include:

- hearing or vision loss or impairments
- intellectual or mental health challenges
- speech or language difficulties
- deaf-blindness
- physical disabilities
- learning or developmental disabilities.

### What does the law require?

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is an important law that guides our efforts towards inclusion. It works



hand-in-hand with the Ontario Human Rights Code to ensure everything we do supports and respects the dignity of all humans.

The AODA was established with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility for all Ontarians by 2025.

The standards require that employers identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in five key areas of daily living:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- Built Environment.

A barrier is anything that keeps someone from participating fully in all aspects of society. Barriers may be visible or invisible. They can relate to physical or architectural barriers, information and communications methods, technology, policy or practices, and attitudes.

Barriers are often reinforced by:

- a lack of information and awareness
- stereotypes
- bias
- prejudice

### What is the Customer Service Standard?

The Accessible Customer Service Standard was the first regulation under the AODA. It applies to all public and private service providers and requires all of us at KPR to:

- communicate with people in a manner that takes individual abilities and disabilities into account
- support people with disabilities who require service animals, support persons, or assistive devices to access areas of KPR properties and buildings available to the public
- inform people of any admission charge for support persons who accompany people with disabilities before events take place
- provide notice when facilities or services are temporarily unavailable, due to planned or unplanned disruptions; for example, if an elevator is out of service
- train staff who develop KPR's policies, practices and procedures, as well as everyone who interacts with the public on behalf of KPR
- establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback from all individuals.

### How do I interact and communicate with customers who have a disability?

The term “customers” can apply to all members of the school board community. It is everyone with whom we come in contact, whether students, parents, guardians, or community members who may require particular considerations to access our services. Each person with a disability might need a different type of accommodation. For example,

a person who is hearing impaired might prefer to communicate with pen and paper, or a person with a visual impairment may request that communications be provided using a specific text size and format.

Whatever the disability, every individual deserves to be treated with respect, dignity, independence and equality of opportunity.

A good starting point in serving all people is to ask, "How may I help you?". Your customers will know if they need help, and how you can provide it.

### What is the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)?

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA contains the standards for Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation.

The Information and Communications Standard aims to help Ontario businesses and organizations make information more accessible for people with disabilities. The Transportation Standard is intended to make travel easier for everyone in Ontario, including students. This standard applies to school boards and the transportation companies, like Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO), that support them. Finally, the Employment Standard aims to make accessibility a regular part of recruiting, hiring and providing support to employees with disabilities.

The IASR requires that school boards do the following:

#### General requirements:

- develop a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- develop policies, procedures and guidelines on accessibility
- use accessibility when buying or acquiring goods, services and facilities
- provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery
- ensure staff and volunteers, as well as providers of goods and services to the Board, receive training about the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and its requirements, as well as about the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

#### Information and Communications:

- ensure new websites and web content are accessible according to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. (Level A and AA)
- provide accessible formats and communications supports when requested by a person with a disability. This should be done in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the person with a disability. This may include educational or training resources; course or program requirements, availability or descriptions; and



student records

- Provide accessible ways for people to offer feedback through accessible formats and communications supports, when requested
- make public emergency information accessible, when requested.

#### Transportation:

- provide integrated, accessible school transportation services to students with disabilities, where possible
- provide alternative accessible transportation services for students with disabilities when integrated transportation is not the best option for the student with a disability
- develop individual school transportation plans for students with disabilities that detail a student's assistance needs; include plans for students getting on the bus, remaining secure while riding, and getting off the bus; and identify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of the transportation provider, parents or guardians, the bus driver, appropriate school staff, and the student with the disability. The school must develop this plan in consultation with parents or guardians.

#### Employment:

- inform job applicants that our recruitment and hiring processes will be modified to accommodate individual needs, if requested
- build the accessibility needs of employees into our human resources practices
- develop and document individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities
- help employees stay safe in an emergency by providing them with individualized emergency response information when necessary
- make workplace information and communications available in accessible formats
- accommodate employees returning to work after disability related absences.

For more information on the IASR, go to [www.accessforward.ca](http://www.accessforward.ca)