

GENERAL MANUAL POLICY

PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Intent

George Jeffrey Children's Centre (GJCC) will strive at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers. All goods and services provided by GJCC shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves. The policy is intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their accommodation respected whenever they interact with George Jeffrey Children's Centre.

Scope

The policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties who act on behalf of GJCC. The policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises operated by George Jeffrey Children's Centre. It also applies when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of George Jeffrey Children's Centre.

Definitions

Assistive Device – Any device used by a person with a disability that assists with some aspect of daily living. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or oxygen tank. A personal device might assist with hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Accommodations – The measures taken to remove possible barriers that exist, which could hinder an individual with a disability from fully accessing the goods and services provided by an organization.

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

- 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;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

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' Right Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – a dog, other than a guide dog for the blind, or other animal, where:

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

Support Person – in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

General Principles

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability and Format of Required Documents

A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

GJCC will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- Ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- Allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- Using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- Taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- Communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability

B. Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods and services provided by GJCC. The Centre is equipped with various assistive devices, such as lift systems, which may be used by persons with disabilities, provided they, their support person and/or their therapist or therapy assistant have received appropriate training in proper use and safety of the device.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services.

C. Guide Dogs and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs or service animals. Access does not have to be granted to places or areas public does not have access to.

Exclusion Guidelines If a guide dog or service animal is excluded by law (see applicable laws below), GJCC will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

Applicable Laws:

- *Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulations 31/05*
- *The Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60*
- *Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario*

Care and Control of the Animal The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies If a health and safety concern presents itself in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, GJCC will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Support Persons

The Centre will welcome any person with a disability to be accompanied onto the premises by a support person. If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, GJCC will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

Considering the nature of information being shared, confidentiality is very important. Where the nature of information is extremely sensitive, the support person may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The Centre may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premise, only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Admission Fees GJCC does not charge admission fees to access the Centre. On rare instances, where a fee will be charged (eg, use of the Snoezelen room or pool by individuals who are not clients of GJCC), no additional fee will be placed on the support person.

E. Notice of Disruption in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of GJCC. In the event of any temporary disruption to the facilities, goods or services that customer's with disabilities rely on, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

Notifications will include:

- Goods and services that are disrupted or unavailable
- Reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- A description of alternative services or options

When disruptions occur, GJCC will provide notice by the most suitable means possible, which may include:

- Posting notices in conspicuous places (e.g., main entrance, at the point of disruption, on the website)
- Contacting customers by telephone or in writing
- By any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances

F. Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of this policy is to meet service delivery expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Customers can submit feedback by:

- Electronic-mail to accessibility@georgejeffrey.com
- Verbally, by calling (807) 623-4381
- In person, by visiting George Jeffrey Children's Centre
- In writing, to George Jeffrey Children's Centre, 200 Brock St. E., Thunder Bay, ON P7E 0A2

Customers who provide formal feedback will have privacy respected and will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

G. Training

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- A review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - Use assistive devices
 - Require the assistance of a guide dog or service animal; or
 - Require the assistance of a support person (including the handling of admission fees)
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- GJCC policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, third parties who interact with the public on behalf of GJCC and to anyone who participates in the development and approval of customer service policies and procedures for the organization.

GJCC will provide training as soon as practicable. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

GJCC shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the customer's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place, the Centre's website www.georgejeffrey.com and/or any other reasonable method.

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures, please contact:

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P7E 0A2
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