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**SUBJECT: USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

*Legal References: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Blind Persons' Rights Act R.R.O. 1990, REGULATION 58*

*Related References: Avon Maitland District School Board Annual Accessibility Plan 2009-10, Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, Ministry of Education, 2009, Annual Accessibility Plan – Avon Maitland District School Board, AP No.144 Notification of Disruption of Service, AP No.145 Use of Support Person by the General Public, AP No.146 Use of Service Animals by the General Public, AP No.147 Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service, AP 142 Racism and Ethnocultural Equity*

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**1.0 Background and Expectations**

The Avon Maitland District School Board makes all reasonable efforts to ensure that all practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for all, with particular attention to persons with disabilities. The board will welcome all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities. Such services incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of assistive devices.

To ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities, the Avon Maitland District School Board provides appropriate training for all staff who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Board. This training is provided to all staff and when appropriate, to volunteers. Training is also a component of the orientation of new staff within a reasonable timeframe as they are hired.

All administrative procedures, and particularly those related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, are available to the public and in a format that takes into account a person's disability.

**2.0 Definition/Explanation of Assistive Devices:**

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

**3.0 Responsibility**

3.1 Supervisory Officers, Principals and Departmental Managers will ensure that staffs are trained to support parents and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing board services.

3.2 Training will be focused on how to interact with people using assistive devices rather than on the technical use of the assistive devices.

- 3.3 Individuals or groups using school or board facilities under a Community Use of Schools Agreement will be responsible for supporting their members who may use assistive devices.
- 3.4 Students and staff will have separate and specific procedures related to their personal use of assistive devices.

#### **4.0 Communication Regarding Use of Assistive Devices**

##### *Assistive Devices Carried by Persons with Disabilities*

- 4.1 The board website and each school website will indicate that all board facilities provide services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities and offer services that include the use of assistive devices.
- 4.2 Each board facility that is open to the public will post information in the front office/reception area that welcomes the use of assistive devices and encourages users to seek support from staff and volunteers as they require it.

##### *Assistive Devices/Services – Made available by the Board\**

- 4.3 The board website and school websites, as applicable, will indicate the assistive devices provided by the board or school to assist in provision of services to people with disabilities. Upon prior request of the user it may be possible to utilize assistive devices that are generally available at another site, in a particular site, for a particular event.
- 4.4 Each board facility that is open to the public will, as applicable, post information in the front office/reception area that indicates the availability of assistive devices and encourage potential users to seek support from staff and volunteers as they require it.

(\*Note – these could include: **Assistive devices:** TTY service, telephones with large numbers, amplifiers, lifts. **Services:** Sign language interpretation, oral interpretation, real-time captioning. **Alternate service methods:** Assistance of a staff person to complete a transaction, e.g., school registration)

#### **APPENDIX**

- A. Interacting with People using Assistive Devices
- B. Use of TELETYPEWRITER (TTY)

## INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE USING ASSISTIVE DEVICES

Examples of personal assistive devices include:

- wheelchairs,
- scooters
- walkers
- amplification devices that boost sound for listeners who are hard-of-hearing without reducing background noise
- hearing aids
- oxygen tanks
- electronic notebooks or laptop computers
- personal data managers
- communication boards used to communicate using symbols, words or pictures
- speech-generating devices that “speak” when a symbol, word or picture is pressed

Many persons with disabilities who use board services and facilities will have their own personal assistive devices.

***Key Point To Remember: One should not touch or handle an assistive device without permission.***

## MOVING PERSONAL ASSISTIVE DEVICES

If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair, remember to:

- wait for and follow the person’s instructions;
- confirm that the person is ready to move;
- describe what you are going to do before you do it;
- avoid uneven ground and objects that create a bumpy or unsafe ride; and
- practise consideration and safety – do not leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

Do not move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of the user’s reach.

Respect personal space. Do not lean over a person with a disability or lean on their assistive device.

Let the person know about accessible features in the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

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## HOW TO USE TELETYPEWRITER (TTY) AND CANADA RELAY SERVICES

### How to make a call with a TTY and the Relay System:

1. Push the ON switch
2. Push the DISPLAY switch if you wish to use the screen alone or the PRINT switch if you want what is typed both on screen and in print.
3. Place the telephone receiver on the TTY's rubber receptacles. Make sure that the receiver is firmly in place and that the telephone's receiver cord is on the LEFT side of the TTY.
4. Check the telephone indicator light; if it is lit, you have the line.
5. Dial the number, and watch the telephone light; if it is flashing slowly, this indicates that the device on the other end is ringing.
6. When the person you are calling answers, you will see a phrase appear on the screen such as: "Hello, Richard Smith here, GA." The "GA" stands for "Go Ahead". Don't forget to use it whenever you have finished speaking, so the other person will know it's his or her turn to speak. The person who receives the call is always the one who starts typing first.
7. When the call is over and you want to advise the other person that you are ready to get off the phone, type "SK". It means Stop Keying. The other person will respond by typing "SK" if he or she agrees that the call is completed. To be courteous, each person waits until the other one has indicated "SK" before hanging up the phone. Always switch the TTY "OFF" as soon as you have finished the call.

### To make a call using the Relay System:

1. Phone the number (1-800-855-0511), and tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach.
2. The operator will make the call for you, and you speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. For example, say "Hi, `How are you doing?" Do not say: "Tell him I said hello." Remember to say "Go Ahead" when you finish speaking, so the person on the other end will know it is his or her turn to speak.
3. If you normally speak very quickly, the operator may ask you to speak slower so your message can be typed. There will be brief silences as the operator types to the TTY user and the user replies.
4. Operators will not betray confidences. They will not relay profanity, threats or criminal propositions, but will relay marriage proposals, banking and personal financial information and other personal (and even intimate) conversations.