St. Joseph's School Accessibility Plan
September 2023

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Section 1: Introduction

Territorial Acknowledgement

St. Joseph's School is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Coast Salish People including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship, and voice.

About Our School Community

St. Joseph's School is a Catholic Independent School and is part of the Catholic Independent Schools Vancouver Archdiocese "CISVA". The school is located in the municipality of Vancouver and serves approximately 194 students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven.

Our leadership team includes a Principal, 13 teaching staff, and 12 support/non-teaching staff.

A Message from the Principal

At St. Joseph's School, we are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all students and staff and provides equitable opportunities to support our diverse community. A key element to supporting our community is the development of a Three-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan identifies system needs, priorities, and action plans, and will draw on feedback from our school community and the work of the CISVA Accessibility Committee to enhance equity of access to programming and our facilities.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for those with disabilities but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to advancing the efforts of the Accessibility Committee to improve equity and ease of access to services, as well as access to our facilities. Through the actions in this Accessibility Plan, we commit to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students, staff, and the larger school community.

The CISVA Accessibility Committee continues to look for individuals to serve, as members, if you are interested information is available on both the school and CISVA website.

Definitions

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

Accessibility Committee: An official group formed by one or more organizations in collaboration with people with disabilities, to create an accessibility plan and feedback mechanism.

Accessibility Plan: A plan developed by an accessibility committee that identifies challenges and solutions for addressing accessibility barriers.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes architectural, attitudinal, information, communications, policy or practice, and technological barriers. Types of barriers:

1. **Architectural Barrier:** A barrier resulting from building design, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, the size of doorways, and so on.
2. **Attitudinal Barrier:** A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.
3. **Communication Barrier**: A barrier that arises from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists or other staff, and receiving training.
4. **Information Barrier**: A barrier that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, and so on.
5. **Policy or Practice Barrier**: Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society. Policy, practice, and procedures that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum

and fully participating in the school community.

6. **Technological Barrier:** Barriers resulting from computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones, and switches, including the lack of assistive technologies.
7. **Temporal Barrier:** Barriers that occur during a specific time, such as busy times of day or during special events.
8. **Disability:** The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and a barrier. (For more information about disability and types of disability and support, refer to Appendix A: Disabilities.)
9. **Impairment:** A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work

The St. Joseph's School accessibility plan builds on global, national, provincial and school specific actions to promote and support accessibility.

Global Context – United Nations

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace and within the larger community. The United Nations has been instrumental in leading the importance of disability as a global health issue. In 2006, the United Nations led efforts to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2010, Canada ratified the CRPD and described the CPRD as follows:

> "The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human right treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Parties to the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law."

Canadian Context and Legislation – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada-wide, around one in five people had some form of disability in 2017. Nationally, Canadian accessibility legislation started in 1985 where disability was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in 1986, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were included in the new federal Employment Equity Act. The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) came into force in 2019, with the overarching goal to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. This act applies to federally regulated entities. The ACA has seven focus areas, and was developed based on the following guiding principles:

1. All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities.
2. All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities.

3. All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.
4. All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities.
5. Laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons.
6. PWDs must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures.
7. The development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for PWDs.

B.C. Context and Legislation - Accessible B.C. Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act was enacted in June 2021, and initially, the accessibility planning requirements only applied to provincial government organizations.

The Accessible British Columbia Regulation, under the Accessible British Columbia Act, came into force on September 1, 2022. These regulations identify schools as accessible organizations, and school districts and independent schools will be required to have an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility by September 1, 2023:

The goal of the act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and involve them in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

Principles in the Accessible B.C. Act:

The Accessible B.C. Act includes a list of principles that must be considered as organizations develop an accessibility plan. The Definitions are adapted from the foundational document BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation.

1. **Adaptability:** Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

2. **Collaboration:** Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for Organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

3. **Diversity:** Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.

4. **Inclusion:** All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

5. **Self-Determination:** Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

6. **Universal Design:** The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as "the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability." An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who interact with the Organization.

Our Commitment to Accessibility:

Accessibility refers to the degree of ease with which people with disabilities can use and enjoy something such as a device, service, or place. At St. Joseph's School, we are committed to providing an environment that is accessible and practical for all members of our diverse community. We recognize the importance of conscious planning, design, and effort in ensuring that barriers are removed, and accessibility is increased.

Our school is committed to working collaboratively with the community to provide equitable treatment to people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity. To achieve this goal, we have outlined the following commitments:

- Engage with staff, community members and people with disabilities in the development and review of its accessibility plan.
- Ensure that our school policies and procedures align with the principles of accessibility.
- Improve access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and community members.
- Continually improve accessibility for people with disabilities in our school community.

Our Approach:

At St. Joseph's School, we believe that all members of our community have the right to be treated with dignity, given an opportunity to participate, and provided with access to learning and community. Our approach is grounded in the core provincial principles of accessibility, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design.

In June 2023, St. Joseph's, in conjunction with the CISVA, began the process of establishing an accessibility committee and identifying barriers to accessibility in our community this process included:

- Calling for applications for members for the CISVA Accessibility Committee

- Assessing the current physical and architectural accessibility of our school.
- Initializing the opportunity for stakeholders within the school community to provide feedback to understand the issues, challenges, and priorities within our school community. This process continues.
- Holding initial discussions to identify barriers to accessibility
- Developing a school feedback tool
- Prioritization of actions to be taken
- Devoloping a monitoring and evaluation process

Our approach is designed to recognize the gaps and opportunities to improve accessibility in our school community. By engaging in thoughtful planning, meaningful engagement, training, and direct action, we aim to deliver lasting accessibility improvements for all members of our community.

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee

Purpose of the Accessibility Committee

St. Joseph's School is part of the CISVA Accessibility Committee. Under the Accessible B.C. Act, organizations must establish an Accessibility Committee to assist with identifying and preventing barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. The purpose of the accessibility committee is to work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community. The Accessibility Committee also advises the CISVA Superintendents Office and CISVA school administrators on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory and other barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of school community life.

Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, the selection of accessibility committee members must, to the extent possible, align with the following goals:

- At least half the members are persons with disabilities (PWD), or individuals who support or are from organizations that support PWDs;
- At least one member is an Indigenous person; and
- Members reflect the diversity of persons in B.C.

A callout for applications to the Accessibility Committee was conducted in June 2023 to recruit representatives as outlined above. The Accessibility Committee was formally constituted in October 2023. Current members of the CISVA Accessibility Committee are listed below.

Accessibility Committee Membership

Committee Member	Position/Representation
Nick Schneider	• Executive Director of Finance and Admin (CISVA) • Parent of child with disability
Anne Yam	• Principal of St. Francis Xavier Elementary School • Person with a disability
Jolette Moeliker	• Teacher St. Mary's Elementary School Chilliwack • Person with disability
Alexis Grace	• Indigenous consultant to CISVA

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

Barrier-identification Methodologies

The CISVA Accessibility Committee used or will use the following barrier-identification methods:

Methodology	Description	Status
Survey to Staff	An accessibility survey was developed and made available to staff.	Ongoing
Survey to Parents/Guardians	An accessibility survey was developed and made available to students, parents and/or guardians.	Ongoing
School Physical Accessibility Audit	Each school completed the Physical Accessibility Audit the information was then consolidated	September 2023

Accessibility Committee	The Accessible Committee reviewed Physical Accessibility Audit The Committee collaborated to suggest priority areas to target in the Accessibility Plan. This was shared with school administrators.	December 2023

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool

St. Joseph's School, in conjunction with the CISVA, developed a feedback form that includes a series of questions about accessibility experiences that students, staff and members of the school community can complete. The form has been posted to the main page of the school website and an information announcement about the form has been/will be provided to students, staff, and parents/guardians.

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers

Accessibility Accomplishments Identified

The guiding principles of inclusive practice inform school programs, policies, practices, and services to reduce and minimize barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. We strive to create an environment that is accessible and to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

There are several initiatives at our school to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The following is a summary of some of the achievements.

Learning

1. Several key universal supports are currently implemented in classrooms. These universal supports include providing varied seating opportunities, the use of visual supports and schedules, and having noise cancelling headphones widely available. We partner with SLP and BI's to provide space in the school for one-on-one sessions and have partnered with the Learning Disability Society to provide space for affordable Orton Gillingham Tutoring Sessions for some students.
2. The school continues its efforts toward inclusion and accessibility to learning from the feedback it receives from stakeholders.

Physical and Architectural Environment

1. Our school conducted a Physical and Architectural Environment Audit to identify areas of physical accessibility and areas for improvement in the physical and architectural environment of the school. Accomplishments included the creation of a

new sensory room space as well as a small group learning space. There has also been planning done to create another sensory room in the school

School Policy and Practice

1. Adaptations for Students:
    - The school continues to assess student accommodation requirements on a case-by-case basis and uses all relevant information to respond to each scenario.
    - The school has established practices and procedures by which adaptations are offered throughout the school.
2. Mental Health and Well-being Supports
    - The school recognizes the importance of the mental health and well-being of its students and staff. Initiatives have taken place to assess and improve the mental health and well-being of students and staff to ensure support and positive outcomes.
    - Training programs are offered to staff to promote student mental health and improve personal mental health and well-being and reduce stigma associated with mental illness.
3. Universal Design for Learning Training
    - Ongoing training continues to be provided to staff and students that supports accessibility to learning.

Accessibility Barriers Identified

1. Classrooms and the gym might be loud, depending on the activities. The noise level in these places might make it difficult for students to participate in activities in those spaces.

2. Some students may need to work in a quieter or more sensory-friendly environments that are not always readily available.

3. As our school does not have air conditioning, there are times during the year that the physical comfort of students may not allow for an ideal learning environment.

4. As our school has three classrooms on a second level, there would be accessibility issues to any student with mobility issues that cannot climb or descend stairs.

Physical and Architecture Environment

1. Classrooms have noise issues that make it difficult for some students and staff to learn and function. Noise reduction solutions would be helpful to address this noise issue.
2. Students may require quieter environments or alternative workspaces, which are not always readily available.
3. As our school has three classrooms on a second level, there would be accessibility issues to any student with mobility issues that cannot climb or descend stairs.
4. Heating and cooling can sometimes be an issue, so the physical comfort of students may not be optimal for learning.

Attitudinal Barriers

1. Students may feel misunderstood by staff who make assumptions that they were lazy or uncooperative or lacked motivation, when in fact they were dealing with mental health and other disabilities that made it difficult for them to work, learn and communicate.

Resource Barriers

1. Some teachers and students are not familiar with the accessibility features on school laptops/computers such as voice-to-text, text to voice, web readers and other features.

School Policy and Practice Barriers

1. There is a need for further staff training to understand and better support different learning needs.
2. Emergency evacuation protocols, individual plans and evacuation equipment are not in place for students with physical disabilities.

Section 7: Our Three-Year Plan (2023-2026)

Overview:

This Accessibility Plan outlines the measures CISVA Schools (See Appendix C for a list of schools included in this plan) will take to remove or prevent barriers to learning and participation and to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in our school community. The Plan is based on the Accessibility Principles of Adaptability, Collaboration, Diversity, Inclusion, Self-Determination, and Universal Design, as set out in the Accessible B.C. Act and defined in Section 1.

Accessibility Priorities:

Information about accessibility was gathered through the Physical and Environment Audit and continues to be gathered from staff, parents/guardians, and students. Based on this information and the need to develop a long-term process the initial priorities have been set. Priorities will be updated upon completion and from feedback received from members in the school community.

Priority #1: Physical Accessibility Audit of each School Facility

By September 1, 2023, all CISVA schools will conduct a thorough audit of the school facility using the 9-page SCSBC audit checklist. The CISVA will gather and summarize the information provided by all schools and provide each school a summary of their response's vs the collective whole. This information will form the basis and prioritize next steps to address accessibility needs of the school facility in a three-year plan that culminates June 30, 2026. The plan will be posted on the school website and shared with CISVA.:

Priority #2: Development of a CISVA Accessibility Committee

In 2023-24, the CISVA will form and register an Accessibility committee. The committee will begin to develop an accessibility plan for CISVA schools.

Priority #3: Physical and Architectural Environment

CISVA Schools will work to improve the accessibility of the physical and architectural environment for all individuals, including those with disabilities. This will include items that were identified in the Physical Accessibility Audit completed by each school.

Priority #4: Policy and Practice

St. Joseph's and the CISVA will review and revise policies and practices to ensure they align with the principles of accessibility, and to address any identified gaps in staff training or knowledge on accessibility issues.

Priority #5: Development of Feedback Mechanism

The CISVA Accessibility Committee will develop a feedback mechanism to share with our schools to gather information on the plan, this information will serve as one of the guides for future plans.

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Committee meets 4 times yearly, or as required, to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and plan for increased accessibility throughout CISVA schools. The committee will ensure the following steps are taken regarding the Three-Year Accessibility Plan:

1. Prepare an annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan. This will be reported at the AGM.
2. Review and update the Three-Year Accessibility Plan every three years in consultation with persons with disabilities and other relevant community members.

Section 9: How to Give us Feedback about the Plan

In addition to the public availability of the plan, St. Joseph's School will post an annual status report on the progress of the Three-Year Accessibility Plan on the

school's website. Accessible formats of the plan will be made available upon request. Questions, comments, or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to either the school or to the CISVA Accessibility Committee. There is a feedback form available on both the school and the CISVA website.

Section 10: Appendices

Appendix A: About Disability

The Disability Continuum

Although there is no universally accepted meaning for the word "disability". However, the Ontario Human Rights Code provides definitions of disability that form our guiding principles. Definitions of disability can be placed on a continuum. At one end, disability is explained in terms of medical conditions (medical model). At the opposite end, disability is explained in terms of the social and physical contexts in which it occurs (environmental model).

The medical model focuses on deficiencies, symptoms and treatments. The World Health Organization's (WHO) 1976 definition for disability, for example, is "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." Medical model definitions promote the idea that disability is a deviation from the norm.

Many people with disabilities are troubled by definitions that regard disability as abnormal, preferring instead to portray disability as commonplace, natural, and in fact, inevitable. As people age, they experience gradual declines in visual acuity, auditory sensitivity, range of motion, bodily strength and mental powers. Significant functional limitations affect almost half of people between the ages of 55 and 79, and over 70% of people over 80 (World Health Organization (WHO) report titled "Ageing and health", 2015). Beyond middle age, disability is the norm.

The environmental model explains disability in relation to social and physical contexts. In this view, the environment, not an individual's medical condition, causes disability. For example, during an electrical blackout, a person who is completely blind can effortlessly navigate around the home, hammer nails, and, if a Braille user, read a novel.

A sighted person would be unable to perform these tasks easily, if at all. In this example, the environment disables the sighted person.

The environmental model emphasizes that people with disabilities are capable individuals, and it is the barriers in the built and human environments, not their medical conditions, that create disability. Disability occurs when the world is designed only for a certain way of living, without considering the natural variation among human beings. Barriers are created by humans, and modifying how we live, the tools we use, and our understanding of the proper way to do things can eliminate or minimize design problems that cause barriers. Systematic barriers can be eliminated by modifying policies, plans, and processes. Attitudes that cause barriers can be addressed through disability awareness, respect, and positive interactions with people with disabilities.

Types of Disability and Functional Limitations

A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively challenging to perform everyday tasks such as operating a keyboard, reading a sign, differentiating colours, distinguishing sounds, climbing stairs, grasping small items, remembering words, or doing arithmetic.

There are many kinds of disabilities, including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. Disabilities can be visible or invisible.

Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities reduce one’s ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Some have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Impaired vision can restrict a person’s ability to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a visual disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with visual disabilities:

- Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like “handicapped”.

- Unless it is an emergency, only touch the person if you have been given permission.
- If you offer assistance, wait until your receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Service animals are working and have to pay attention at all times. Refrain from engaging with the animal.
- If you're giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so. Don't just assume the individual can't see you.
- When entering a room, show the individual to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the person to the environment around them.
- Ensure you say good-bye prior to leaving the individual.
- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Hard of Hearing and Deafness

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. People who are hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating. While some people may use sign language, notes or hearing aids when communicating, others may also use email, pagers, TTY telephone service or Bell Canada Relay Service.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Attract the person's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where the person can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to the person. Address the person, not their interpreter.

- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.
- Keep your face clearly visible when speaking.
- Be clear and precise when giving directions and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Service animals are working and have to pay attention at all times. Refrain from engaging with the animal.
- Any personal (e.g., financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing
- Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf is different because their first language may not be English. It may be American Sign Language (ASL).
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities and not all require a wheelchair. For example, people who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions, or amputations may also have difficulty moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to the person rather than someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like “handicapped”.
- Be patient and be sure you understand their needs.
- Unless it is an emergency, refrain from touching any assistive devices, including wheelchairs.
- Provide the person with information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

Intellectual Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit one's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or body language.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with intellectual disabilities:

- As much as possible, treat the person with an intellectual disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect.
- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Make sure the person understands what you've said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, ask again.
- Give one piece of information at a time.
- Be polite and patient.
- Speak directly to the person, not to someone who is with the person.

Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Learning or cognitive disabilities can result in a host of different communications difficulties for people. They can be subtle, as in having difficulty reading, or more pronounced, but they can interfere with the person's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or body language.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with learning disabilities or disabilities:

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Recognize that some people with communication difficulties use augmentative communication systems such as Signed English and Picture Exchange System.
- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best help.
- Speak normally and clearly, and directly to the person
- Take some time — people with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.
- If you're dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Be courteous and patient and the person will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

Mental Health Disabilities

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that the person has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let the person tell you how you can best help.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with mental health disabilities:

- Treat people with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident and reassuring and listen to persons with a mental health disability and their needs.

If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help.

- Take the person with a mental health disability seriously, and work with them to meet their needs.

Speech and Language Disabilities

Some people have communication challenges. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards, sign language or other assistive devices.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with speech and language disabilities:

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a person has difficulty speaking; make no assumption they have an intellectual disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask the person to repeat the information.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Take some time. Be patient and polite and give the person whatever time they need to get their point across.
- Allow the individual to finish their sentences themselves without interruption.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

Deaf-Blind Disabilities

A person who is deafblind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deafblind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating. Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people who are deafblind:

- Make no assumptions about what a person can or cannot do. Some deaf-blind people have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like “handicapped”.
- A deaf-blind person is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Speak directly to the person, as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach the person who is deaf-blind.
- Don’t touch service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Unless it’s an emergency, refrain from touching a deaf-blind person without permission.

Appendix B: Suggested References/Resources

Canadian and Local Accessibility Context and Legislation

Accessible British Columbia Act

BC Accessibility Legislation Plan Language Summary

British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada Ratifies the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility Planning Resources for Schools

A Guide to Creating Accessible Play Spaces (Rick Hansen Foundation)
Accessible Resource Centre - BC
BC Accessibility Hub
BC Association for Advancing Communications
Brain Injury Canada
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Canadian Hearing Services
Comprehensive literacy for all: Teaching students with significant disabilities to read and write
Creating an Accessibility Committee
Gifted Children's Association of BC
Kelty Mental Health (BC Children's Hospital)
Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
Rick Hansen Accessibility Advisory Services
Rick Hansen Accessibility Resources for Building Accessibility
Specialist Association of Gifted Educators in BC
Spinal Cord Injury Canada
Tourette Canada
Undoing Ableism: Teaching about disability in K-12 Classrooms
Universal Design

BC Provincial Resource Programs:

Auditory Outreach Provincial Resource Program
Provincial Inclusion Outreach Program (Complex Needs)
Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI)
Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders
Provincial Outreach Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (POPDHH)
Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness
Special Education Technology BC (SET BC)

Potential Grant Sources

BC Gaming Grants

Disability Alliance BC Accessibility Projects

Enabling Accessibility Fund

Rick Hansen Accessibility Grant

Accessibility Products

Accessibile Places (B.C. Distributor of Evac Chairs/Slings)

Advice about Placement of Automatic Door Openers alfred@accessibleplaces.ca

Appendix C: List of CISVA Schools

St. Francis of Assisi
Notre Dame Regional Secondary
St. Bernadette School
Corpus Christi School
St. Anthony of Padua School
Sacred Heart School
Star of the Sea School
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Cloverdale Catholic School
St. James Elementary School
St. Mary's School-Chilliwack
Our Lady of the Assumption
Queen of All Saints
St. Michael's School
St. Francis de Sales
St. Helen's Elementary School
St. Edmund's School
Holy Trinity
St. Augustine's School
Blessed Sacrament
St. Patrick's Regional School
St. Joseph's School
Assumption School
Seminary of Christ the King
Saint John Paul II Academy
Little Flower Academy
Our Lady of Sorrows
St Jude's School, St.
Mary's Elementary School – Vancouver
St. Andrew's School
St. Paul School
St. Joseph the Worker Elementary School
Immaculate Conception Delta School
Holy Cross Regional Secondary School
St. Catherine's School
St. John Brebeuf Regional Secondary
St. Patrick's Elementary School – Maple Ridge
Archbishop Carney Regional Secondary School
Our Lady of Fatima School
Our Lady of Mercy
Holy Cross Elementary School
St. Pius X Elementary School
St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Secondary School
St. Anthony's West Vancouver
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Immaculate Conception Vancouver
St. Patrick's Elementary School
St. Francis Xavier School
St. Matthew's Elementary
Vancouver College
Saint Thomas More Collegiate