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Intent

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. Our conduct will demonstrate our belief in the strength that diversity brings to our communities.

All goods and services provided by Five Counties Children's Centre shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Scope

- This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at provided by Five Counties Children's Centre
- This policy applies to employees, students, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Five Counties Children's Centre, including when the provision of goods and services occurs off the premises of Five Counties Children's Centre, such as in schools, childcare programs and homes or community settings. It is the responsibility of all staff/volunteers and students to be familiar with this policy.
- The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned or operated by Five Counties Children's Centre.
- This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of the Five Counties Children's Centre's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

Definitions

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 or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

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

Service Animal – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- 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.

Support Person – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, 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, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices (staff to be familiar with supports, assistive devices, etc.)

- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals 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

Five Counties Children's Centre 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 clients receive the same value and quality;
- allowing clients 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 clients 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 client's disability.

B. The Use of Assistive Devices

Client's own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by Five Counties Children's Centre.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

Assistive devices provided by Five Counties Children's Centre:

Five Counties Children's Centre provides many devices to clients requiring them. Please speak to your therapist or the intake coordinator with regards to the availability of devices that you may require specific to your needs or your child's needs.

C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog 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, service animals and/or service dogs.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, Five Counties may request verification from the customer. Verification may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Five Counties Children's Centre will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Support Persons

People with a disability who are accompanied by a support person have the right to have access to that support person while accessing goods and services of Five Counties Children's Centre. If discussing confidential information and a support person (other than a parent or guardian) is present, consent must be obtained from the customer to have this conversation in the presence of the support person prior to any such conversation. (Employees are to ensure compliance with confidentiality policies: CHNS 07 and CHNS 06.)

E. Notice of Service Disruptions

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Five Counties Children's Centre. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use Five Counties Children's Centre's goods or services, 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 may include:

In the event that a notification needs to be posted, the following information may be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur Five Counties Children's Centre will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the Five Counties Children's Centre website;
- contacting customers with appointments, if deemed necessary;
- verbally notifying customers when they are making an appointment; or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

F. Feedback Process

Five Counties Children's Centre shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers and notice of the process will be made available upon request.

There are various methods of providing feedback, such as:

- verbally (in person or by telephone)
- written (handwritten, delivered, website or email)

Those with complaints are encouraged to follow the complaint process and contact the Program Manager at the location where the concern was encountered.

Submitting Feedback:

Customers can submit feedback to the Manager or designate at each location

Peterborough:

872 Dutton Rd. Phone: 705-748-2337; Toll Free: 1-888-779-9916
Peterborough, Ontario K9H 7G1

City of Kawartha Lakes/Haliburton:

9 Russell St. East Phone: 705-324-9320; Toll Free: 1-888-706-4734
Lindsay, Ontario K9V 1Z7

Cobourg/ Campbellford

800 Division Street, Unit 2 Phone: 905-377-0192; Toll Free: 1-877-574-5212
Cobourg, ON K9A 5V2

E-Mail: info@fivecounties.on.ca

Web Page: www.fivecounties.on.ca

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

G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- all employees, students, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of Five Counties Children's Centre; for example: drivers, vendors, third party marketing agents;
- those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

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

- 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, service dog or other service animal; or
 - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- Five Counties Children's Centre's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Training Schedule:

Five Counties Children's Centre will provide training as soon as practical. Training will be provided to new employees, students, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or act on our behalf during orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices.

Record of Training:

Five Counties Children's Centre will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training. A copy of this will be kept in each employee's personnel file.

H. Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Five Counties Children's Centre shall notify customers that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard 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 owned and operated by Five Counties Children's Centre, the Five Counties Children's Centre's website and/or any other reasonable method.

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

Referenced Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990
- Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario
- Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990