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Introduction and Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Ontario Human Rights Code establishes the right of all Ontarians to be free from discrimination in services, including education services, based on disability.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), together with its Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, aims to address the right to equal opportunity and inclusion for persons with disabilities throughout society by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to access.

The AODA and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation require organizations to create policies and adopt practices that address barriers related to:

- Customer service
- Information and communication
- Employment
- Transportation (where applicable)
- Built environment

The Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) is committed to working towards accessible services and spaces for all members of the Thames Valley community.

This Plan states the goals of TVDSB in continuing to identify and remove structural, attitudinal, systemic and communication barriers to access for persons with disabilities.

The Plan also describes the tasks that TVDSB will undertake to move towards these goals and anticipated indicators of progress. **This Plan** is one of many TVDSB documents developed to support equitable and inclusive learning and working environments. Equity is the foundation of the board's **Strategic Plan** and **Operational Plan** and is embodied in **board policies, procedures, plans and guidelines**.

Disability Defined

“Students with disabilities are a **diverse group**, and experience disability, impairment and societal barriers in many **different** ways. **Disabilities** are often “**invisible**” ...”

– Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy
on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities,
March 2018

This Plan adopts an understanding of disability, consistent with the AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code, as any physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities, and which includes invisible disabilities such as mental illness, and cognitive or learning disabilities.

Under the AODA, for example, physical disabilities may include brain injury or amputation, or a visual, hearing or speech impediment. The AODA also encompasses mental impairments and developmental disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health disabilities.

The Thames Valley Community

The communities the TVDSB serves are very diverse, reflecting a multitude of abilities, identities and lived experiences. The district encompasses more than **7,000** square kilometres that includes the **City of London**, the counties of **Middlesex, Oxford** and **Elgin**, and the **First Nations** communities of **Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation**, and **Munsee-Delaware Nation**.

TVDSB's **12,000** staff work to support approximately **80,000** students.



Accessibility Accomplishments

This section documents existing or ongoing accessibility initiatives or developments in the TVDSB.

Customer Service

- Service Excellence professional learning (to support accessible and inclusive interactions with caregivers and community members) was provided to all school secretarial staff and system administrative assistants and all staff at the board's administrative buildings, including zone leaders and supervisors in TVDSB Facility Services.
- Human Rights foundations (including accommodation) professional learning was provided to all system leaders.
- Ongoing system supports were provided to schools in arriving at inclusive accommodations for caregivers with disabilities.
- Community Accommodation Request and Accessibility Feedback mechanisms in place for all community members.

Employment

- All staff and administration involved in hiring received interactive training on understanding and minimizing the impact of bias in hiring.
- An Accommodation Policy and Procedure applicable to all staff was developed.
- An Accommodation Statement is included in all job postings, including postings for Long Term Occasional (LTO) assignments.
- Accessibility improvements were made to third party recruiter application forms to ensure equitable access for vision impaired applicants.

“TVDSB embraces its community’s diversity, as the **foundation** upon which each **student’s success** is built.”

Information and Communication

- Use of electronic formats and technological platforms with built-in accessibility features was expanded across the system.
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards were maintained for the TVDSB website.
- Thousands of devices were deployed to support students learning remotely and ensure caregivers and families stayed connected.

Built Environment

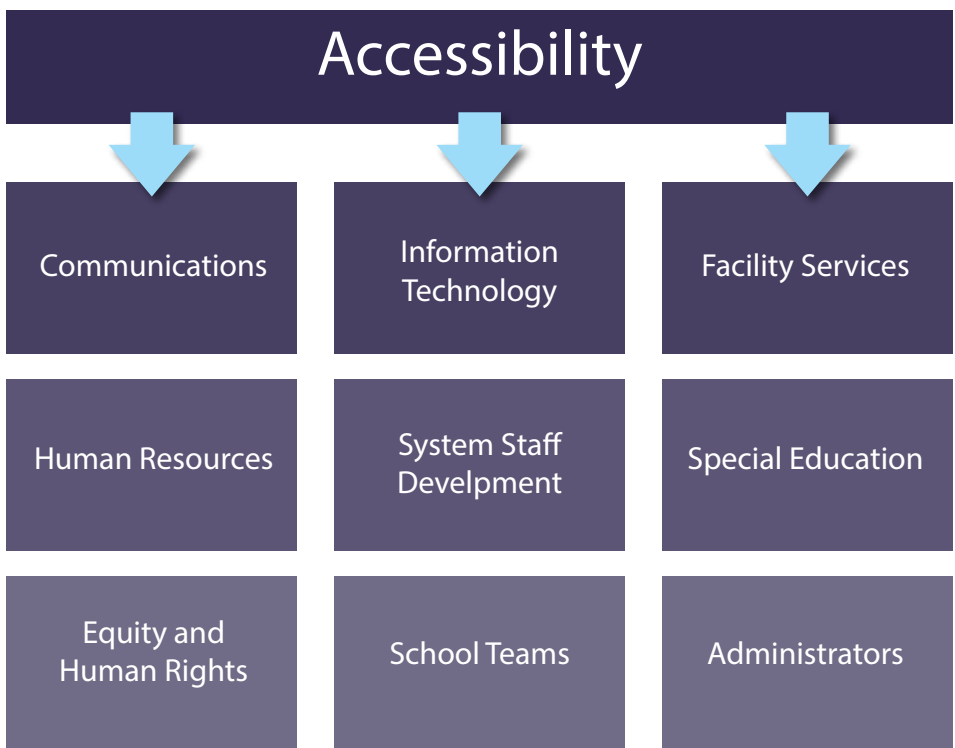
- A designated Facility Services Project Coordinator completed Accessibility Assessor training through the Rick Hansen Foundation.
- An AODA/Ontario Building Code (OBC) Facility Assessment Compliance Checklist was created for TVDSB buildings to assess key accessibility priorities in the built environment, including:
 - o Barrier-free path of travel to a designated accessible entrance(s)
 - o Designated accessible parking space(s)
 - o Accessible and universal washroom(s)
 - o Accessibility signage
- Accessibility upgrades were completed at TVDSB sites (see Appendix A))

The Accessibility Working Group and Plan Development

The TVDSB Accessibility Working Group supports the development of TVDSB's Accessibility Plan and accessibility-related work within our district. The Working Group consists of staff, administration, families, community representatives, and a Trustee.

The Group continues to expand and evolve in its membership in an ongoing effort to engage diverse voices and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Collective Responsibility



Multi-Year Plan 2023-2026

This section states the specific actions that TVDSB will take to fulfill its accessibility objectives. Each action represents an intentional step towards measureable outcomes to be achieved during the period covered by this Plan.

Objectives: The goals TVDSB intends to achieve by the end of our multi-year Plan.

Actions: Specific steps TVDSB will take to achieve our accessibility goals.

Progress Indicators: Information that will assist us in measuring our success in meeting our objectives

Customer Service

Objectives

Actions

Progress Indicators

1. Build staff capacity to identify, understand and address accessibility barriers for caregivers and the broader public as part of everyday operations.

a) Develop human rights foundations (including accommodation) training for staff engaging with caregivers and families.

i) Number of staff and type of roles trained each year.
ii) Pre- and post- training session surveys; scheduling of and enrollment in additional sessions.

2. Enhance, and improve ease of access to school accessibility information for caregivers and community.

a) Enhance and update information on accessibility related upgrades to school sites available on the TVDSB website.
b) Develop information resources for school managed websites to support accessibility improvements.
c) Embed mini-surveys on websites for public feedback on accessibility strengths and limitations.

i) Reporting on accessibility improvements and upgrades to TVDSB Website.
ii) Results of mini-surveys about accessibility of TVDSB websites.
iii) Number and types of resources developed to support accessible communication with caregivers.

Information and Communication

Objectives	Actions	Progress Indicators
1. Build staff capacity to create and share accessible documents and communications with caregivers and the broader public.	a) Create a website form where staff and caregivers can submit any feedback about accessibility of communications from the school. b) Review current practices, existing training materials (not just those related to accessibility) and identify gaps in accessibility information. c) Create additional guides/tools to support staff in creating and sharing accessible documents (e.g., quick reference guides). d) Develop targeted training and resources for specific groups of users (e.g., LSTs, Teacher Librarians). e) Expand awareness, availability and ease of access for existing training materials on accessibility features of basic tools (e.g., Word, PowerPoint) and commonly used platforms (e.g., Bright Space, School Messenger).	i) Inventory of supports (resources and tools) available for specific platforms and increased number of supports. ii) Number of individuals who access supports and requests for training support. iii) Accessibility spot audits of communication outputs, using automated systems where possible. iv) Analysis of any feedback submitted through the web form to identify barriers and determine potential solutions.
2. Ongoing review of TVDSB website to ensure it is accessible and easy to use.	a) Ensure consistency of TVDSB website accessibility through routine use of accessibility evaluation tools (e.g. https://wave.webaim.org/report#/www.tvdsb.ca). b) Develop an audit process to assess, on an ongoing basis, useability and ease of navigation of the TVDSB website.	i) Board website is accessible. ii) Audits indicate website consistently meets needs of all users.

Employment

Objectives	Actions	Progress Indicators
1. Identify and remove barriers for employees who identify as persons with a disability.	a) Continue voluntary collection of identity-based data from employees to support understanding of barriers faced by staff who identify as persons with disabilities.	i) Analysis of data collected through employee survey. ii) Work plan identifying objectives and actions to address any identified barriers.
2. Identify and remove barriers in the hiring process for applicants with disabilities.	a) Conduct periodic equity-focused audits of competitions. Audit team should include people with lived experience (staff or community members). b) Gather feedback from successful applicants on accessibility of hiring practices.	i) Documented outcomes of equity audits. ii) Feedback from new hires on accessibility of the hiring process.

Built Environment

Our Goal: Pending funding, provide all facilities with barrier-free accessibility. Prioritize the following objectives to support barrier removal:

1. Barrier-free paths of travel to, and within buildings
2. Access to all stories within a building
3. Installation of visual fire safety devices
4. Barrier-free and universal washrooms
5. Accessible and adaptable seating space
6. Development of standards for vision and hearing impairment-related accessibility upgrades in TVDSB schools.

Objectives

Actions

1. Provide barrier-free paths of travel to, and within buildings.

- a) Create accessible parking spaces;
- b) Ensure common access to, and circulation throughout buildings
- c) Create barrier-free entrances (e.g. through installation of power door operators and widening doorways)
- d) Create passing, rest, and turning spaces for mobility assistive devices
- e) Install ramps and alter existing ramp dimensions

2. Ensure access to all levels within a building.

- a) Install, for example inclined platform lifts or vertical lifts to provide access to all stories.



Objectives

Actions

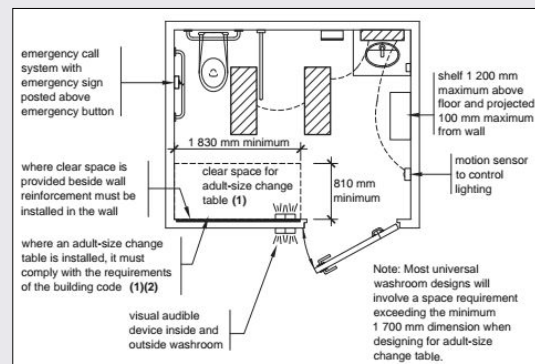
3. Enhance fire safety at TVDSB sites through the installation of visual fire safety devices

- a) Install fire and smoke alarms equipped with a visual component to enhance the safety and security of all occupants.



4. Ensure equitable access to washroom facilities

- a) Provide barrier-free and universal washrooms in public areas on a barrier-free path of travel on all floor levels.
- b) Ensure the design of washrooms includes turning spaces, accessible doorway widths, power door operators, grab bars, counter heights, space for an adult change table, signage, and a visual and audible emergency device.
- c) Investigate the use of motion sensor doors, soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers.



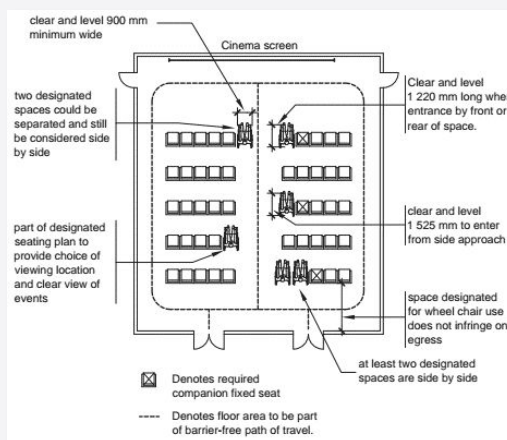
Built Environment

Objectives

Actions

5. Provide equitable, independent access to educational opportunities in spaces with fixed seating.

- a) Include seating space in auditoriums suitable for side transfer from a wheelchair, storage spaces for wheelchairs and other mobility assistive devices.
- b) Provide a variety of options, such as integrated rows of accessible seating, removable arms on fixed seating.
- c) Investigate raised seating.



6. Develop standards for vision and hearing impairment-related accessibility upgrades in TVDSB schools.

- a) Develop standards for vision and hearing impairment-related accessibility upgrades in TVDSB schools.
- b) Identify main accessibility barriers for vision and hearing-impaired students, staff and visitors to school sites.
- c) Develop a plan to prioritize and implement upgrades to address key barriers.

Progress Indicators

- i) Public reporting of accessibility-related improvements to school sites annually through Special Education Plan and Accessibility Plan Update.
- ii) Updates to site-specific information available on TVDSB website.



Accessible Transportation

Transportation services are provided to Thames Valley students by a joint transportation "consortium" that also provides service to the London District Catholic School Board. Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (STS) is a non-profit corporation responsible for the planning and coordination of school bus service for Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford counties and in the City of London.

STS is committed to providing accessible and specialized transportation service to students in a way that affirms students' dignity and supports inclusion. This commitment is reflected in STS's governing policies and procedures that are jointly agreed upon by its member school boards, in ongoing training for all staff, and in equitable and timely resolution of individual accommodation concerns in collaboration with TVDSB senior administration and staff.

Ongoing Consultation and Communication of the Plan

The Draft TVDSB Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 will be displayed on the TVDSB web site at www.tvdsb.ca/accessibility as we develop further engagement opportunities for students, staff, caregivers and community partners in relation to accessibility in Thames Valley. Hard copies and alternate formats will be provided upon request by contacting:

Thames Valley District School Board
1250 Dundas Street
Email: a.marlowe@tvdsb.ca

Review and Monitoring

The Accessibility Working Group will meet, at a minimum, three times during each school year to review the implementation of the tasks outlined in the Plan.

Board administration will be responsible for follow up and reporting of efforts in responsible departments/areas to achieve the objectives outlined in the plan, as necessary.

Appendix A: Accessibility Projects 2021-2022



The following projects were completed during the 2021-2022 school year:

TVDSB Site	Location	Project Completed
Annandale Public School	Tillsonburg, Oxford County	
Caradoc Public School	Mt. Brydges, Middlesex County	
Eagle Heights Public School	City of London	
Elgin Court Public School	St. Thomas, Elgin County	
Hillcrest Public School	City of London	
Innerkip Central Public School	Innerkip, Oxford County	
Lord Nelson Public School	City of London	 
Louise Arbour French Immersion Public School	City of London	

The following projects were completed during the 2021-2022 school year:

TVDSB Site	Location	Project Completed	
North Meadows Public School	Strathroy, Middlesex County		
Northdale Public School	Woodstock, Oxford County		
Orchard Park Public School	City of London		
Parkview Public School	Komoka, Middlesex County		
Port Burwell Public School	Port Burwell, Elgin County		
Rick Hansen Public School	City of London		
Thamesford Public School	Thamesford, Oxford County		
Trafalgar Public School	City of London		
Tweedsmuir Public School	City of London		
West Oaks French Immersion Public School	City of London		
Wilfrid Jury Public School	City of London		
A.B. Lucas Secondary School	City of London		
Central Elgin Collegiate Institute	St. Thomas, Elgin County		
College Avenue Secondary School	Woodstock, Oxford County		
North Middlesex District High School	Parkhill, Middlesex County		
Westminster Secondary School	City of London		
Woodstock Collegiate Institute	Woodstock, Oxford County		

Appendix B: Accessibility Working Group

Marianne Rozak

TVDSB – SEA Technology Coordinator,
Information Technology Services

Alison Morse

Easter Seals Ontario – Senior Manager,
Advocacy and Family Engagement

Samantha Edwards

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation
Services (STS) – Service Development Manager

Randy McGivern

Thames Valley Children's Centre (TVCC) –
TCS Clinical Coordinator

Heather and Brian Van Arnhem

Parent representatives

Rebecca Calvert-Hamilton

OSSTF District 11-Thames Valley –
Federation Services Officer/Health
and Safety Officer,

Andrea Marlowe

TVDSB – Human Rights Policy Advisor

Andrew Canham

TVDSB – Superintendent of Student Achievement,
Special Education

Sherri Moore

TVDSB – Trustee
London, Wards 7, 8, 9, 10 & 13

Roseanne Ferrara

TVDSB – Learning Supervisor,
Special Education

Lorraine Stewart-McIntyre

TVDSB – Manager, Human Resources,
Health and Safety, Abilities and Wellness,
TVARRIS and HRIS

Stacey Webb

TVDSB – Communications Specialist

Derrik Campbell

TVDSB – Website Design Developer

Kevin McMurray

TVDSB – Project Coordinator, Facility Services

Vivek Nath

Thames Valley Occasional Teachers' Local –
2nd Vice-President

Appendix C: Procedure: Notification of Disruption of Service (Procedure No. 5012c)

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements

The Thames Valley District School Board follows a strict preventative maintenance program on accessible elements at all properties. Preventative maintenance plans are developed by taking into consideration the applicable codes, standards and regulatory authorities that govern each item.

Thames Valley District School Board

PROCEDURE

Title	Notification of Disruption of Service	Procedure No.	5012c
Department	Business Services		
Reference(s)	Policy: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service	Effective Date	2009 Dec. 15

- 1.0 People with disabilities may rely on certain facilities, services or systems in order to access the services of the school or board offices. When those facilities or services are temporarily unavailable or if they are expected to be temporarily unavailable in the near future, a notice of disruption of service is required.

Disruptions to all of the Board's services, such as during a major storm or power outage, do not require this special notice.

2.0 Procedures for Notification of Disruption in Service

- 2.1 Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place at or in board facilities. Other options that may be used include posting on the board and/or school website and direct communication with users of the services.
- 2.2 If the disruption is planned, notice should be provided in advance of the disruption. If the notice is unplanned, notice should be provided as soon as possible after the disruption has been identified.
- 2.3 The notice of disruption of service must include information about the reason for disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

NOTICE

Please be aware that the following disruption of service is expected:

Site: _____

Service Affected: _____

Reason for Disruption: _____

Date and Duration of Planned Disruption: _____

Alternative Facilities/Services (if available): _____

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

Thank you,

Signature

Administered By	Program Services
Amendment Date(s)	

NOTICE

Please be aware that the following disruption of service has occurred:

Site: _____

Service Affected: _____

Reason for Disruption: _____

Expected Duration of Disruption: _____

Alternative Facilities/Services (if available): _____

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

Thank you,

Signature

Administered By

Program Services

Amendment Date(s)



Thames Valley
District School Board

For more information, contact us at:

Thames Valley District School Board
1250 Dundas Street
London, ON N5W 5P2

www.tvdsb.ca