

Procedure Title	Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – Use of Support Persons by the General Public		
Date of Issue	January 19, 2010	Related Policy	BP 1411-D
Revision Dates	March 25, 2015; July 6, 2016	Related Forms	AF 1412
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA); Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07; Ontario Human Rights Code; Annual Accessibility Plan; AP 1411-D; Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public; AP 1413-D; Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – Disruption of Service; AP 1414-D Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – Monitoring and Feedback; AP 6822-D “Code of Conduct”			

Procedure:

1.0 RATIONALE

Bluewater District School 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 support persons.

2.0 DEFINITION

A **support person** is a person who assists or interprets for a parent/guardian or person from the general public with a disability who accesses the services of the board. A **support person** is distinct from an employee who provides support services to a student or staff person in the system – separate and specific procedures apply.

A **support person** is an individual chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services. Personal care needs may include, but are not limited to, physically transferring an individual from one location to another or assisting an individual with eating or using the washroom. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual’s health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure.

The **support person** could be a paid professional, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. He or she does not require special training or qualifications.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Responsibility

- a) Supervisory Officers, Principals and Departmental Managers will ensure that staff members receive standard Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) training in interacting with people with disabilities who are accessing board services accompanied by a support person.

3.2 Access to board premises

- a) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be welcomed on board and/or school premises with his or her support person. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.
- b) This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or board offices where the public does not have access.

3.3 Confidentiality

- a) Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability, who is the parent/guardian of a student, for the purpose of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information concerning the student, the superintendent, principal or other staff member must first secure the consent of the parent/guardian regarding such disclosure.
- b) Consent to the disclosure of confidential information in the presence of the support person must be given in writing by the parent or guardian. Refer to administrative form AF 1412.
- c) A copy of the signed consent document will be retained in the school/board office.
- d) If the parent/guardian uses a different support person for subsequent meetings, a new signed consent will be required.

3.4 Support persons accompanying a person with a disability at school events for which there is an admission fee

- a) Where an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a support person wishes to attend a school, family of schools or board-organized event for which a fee is charged, the notice of the event will include information as to whether support persons will be charged a fee and specify the amount of the fee, except where Section 3.5 applies.

3.5 Where Bluewater District School Board may require the presence of a support person

- a) Bluewater District School Board may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.
(NOTE: This would be a **highly rare situation** and would only occur where, after consultation with the person with the disability, requiring a support person is the only means available to allow the person to be on the premises and, at the same time, fulfill the board's obligations to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or of others on the premises.)
- b) Where Bluewater District School Board requires a support person to accompany a person with a disability in order to attend a school, family of schools, or board-organized event for which a fee is charged, the fee shall be waived for the support person.
- c) Bluewater District School Board requires the support person to adhere to the board's administrative procedure AP 6822-D "Code of Conduct" within their assistive duties while in board facilities.

3.6 Follow up Checklist for Administrators

- a) Ensure that staff receive training in interacting with people with disabilities who are accessing board services accompanied by a support person.
- b) Secure appropriate consents when confidential information concerning the student is being shared.
- c) For any board event for which there is a fee, ensure that information on the event includes whether support persons will be charged this fee and specify the amount of the fee, except where Section 3.5 applies.