

	POLICY NO: 1.4
Adopted	2012
Projected Review Date	2030
Revisions	2017, 2021, 2026

POLICY: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to support the creation of inclusive and accessible environments by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities. The policy outlines HWDSB's commitment to meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (Regulation 191/11)*, while promoting the school board's values: compassion, dignity, trust, and joy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB is committed to:

- Complying with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and *Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, specifically:
 - Information and Communication Standards
 - Employment Standards
 - Transportation Standards
 - Design of Public Spaces Standards
 - Customer Service Standard
- Providing an environment that promotes independence, dignity, integration, equal opportunity and respect for students, parents/guardians/caregivers, the public and staff.
- Making all appropriate and reasonable efforts to create policies, practices and procedures consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equity of opportunity.
- Recognizing the importance of upholding the rights and educational wellness of Indigenous students, families and community. This includes acknowledging the unique histories, cultures, and experiences of Indigenous communities when addressing accessibility.
- Recognizing and understanding that barriers to equity and inclusion are often intensified by intersecting identities such as race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and other dimensions of diversity.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

HWDSB will:

- Establish and maintain accessibility policies, develop a multi-year accessibility plan, provide accessibility training to employees and volunteers, and consider accessibility when procuring goods, services or facilities as required under Ontario Regulation 191/11.

- Endeavor to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, through the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*, in the service areas of customer service (i.e. support for students), information and communication, employment, physical environment, and student transportation.
- Provide equitable opportunities for access to services and physical spaces.
- Ensure that the policies and procedures related to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are made available to the public in accessible formats.
- Work collaboratively across the organization to implement the actions contained in this policy.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Chief Executive Officer

TERMINOLOGY:

Accommodation: is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of the Board.

Barriers: According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), a barrier is not the disability itself, but rather any external obstacle that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society. Barriers may be:

- Physical – such as inaccessible buildings or spaces.
- Attitudinal – including stereotypes, stigma, or discriminatory attitudes.
- Systemic – embedded in policies, procedures, or practices.
- Technological – such as digital platforms that are not accessible.
- Communication – including formats or methods that are not inclusive of all abilities.

Duty to Accommodate: A legal obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code requiring organizations to identify and remove barriers and make necessary adjustments to policies, practices, and physical environments so that individuals protected under the Code, such as people with disabilities, can participate equally and fully.

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation: An Ontario regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* that brings together multiple accessibility standards into one unified regulation. It sets out requirements that public and private organizations, including school boards, must follow to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

Intersectionality: Recognized as the understanding that each person simultaneously exists within multiple and overlapping identities.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: A written plan required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation)* that outlines the Board’s strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. The plan is developed in

consultation with persons with disabilities, is updated annually, and progress is reported publicly through an annual accessibility report available in accessible formats.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Use appropriate and reasonable efforts to ensure that all of the Board’s policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- Maintain procedures that foster independence, dignity, and respect for students, parents/guardians/caregivers, the public, and staff.
- Provide applicable training related to this policy and as required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 191/11*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it relates to persons with disabilities for all employees, volunteers and other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of HWDSB.
- Publicly share progress on accessibility through the HWDSB Annual Accessibility Report on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Review policy effectiveness through inclusive consultation as part of the Policy review process

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Establish and maintain accessibility policies, develop a multi-year accessibility plan, provide accessibility training to employees and volunteers, and consider accessibility when procuring goods, services or facilities.	As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables on an annual basis.
Endeavor to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), in the service areas of customer service (i.e. support for students), information and communication, employment, physical environment, and student transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Surveys • Parent and Family Voice Surveys • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) • Student and Staff Affinity Groups • Student Advisory Circles • Staff Advisory Groups
Provide equitable opportunities for access to services and physical spaces.	As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables on an annual basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Surveys • Parent and Family Voice Surveys • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Staff Affinity Groups • Student Advisory Circles • Staff Advisory Groups
Ensure that the policies and procedures related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 are made available to the public in accessible formats.	<p>As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables within the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on an annual basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Surveys • Parent and Family Voice Surveys • Special Education Advisor Committee (SEAC) • Student and Staff Affinity Groups • Student Advisory Circles • Staff Advisory Groups
Work collaboratively across the organization to implement the actions contained in this policy.	<p>As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables within the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on an annual basis.</p>

REFERENCES:

Government Documents:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Integrated Accessibility Standard, Ontario Regulation 191/11 Ontario Human Rights Code

Revisions:

Policy Review, May 2026