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1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to identify what the equal treatment provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, through the AODA and the regulation, require as a minimum legal standard in program design and service delivery to persons with disabilities. We will ensure that we address barriers that prevent residents, their families and prospective residents from receiving services that would contribute to quality of life. We will also ensure that we address barriers that prevent staff from doing their jobs effectively.

2.0 POLICY


The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the “AODA”) is a provincial act with the purpose of developing, implementing and mandating accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities, with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07, called “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” (the “regulation”), came into force for the Villa on January 1, 2012. The regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

St. Joseph’s Villa strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. It applies to all staff, residents, families, volunteers and visitors.

Barriers to accessibility will be identified and reviewed on an ongoing basis. The Villa will create and implement plans to address and/or remove barriers to accessing care, services and employment. Accessibility planning will address needs of residents, families, staff, and other stakeholders as necessary

The Villa will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA.

Dignity: Goods and services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person’s importance.

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Independence: Accommodating a person’s disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive goods and services.

Integration: Persons with disabilities can access all goods and services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

Equal Opportunity: Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access goods and services is equal to that given to others.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Accessibility: the minimization or elimination of barriers or other impediments.


Barriers can come in many forms. Below are listed seven key areas where barriers can be found, with examples of each one.

- **Architectural:** width of doors, design of building
- **Environment:** poor signage, low lighting, noise, odors
- **Attitudes:** assumptions based on age, ethnic background, socio-economic status
- **Finances:** people cannot afford services
- **Employment:** shortages in critical areas (e.g. RN/RPNs), English as a second language
- **Communication:** lack of translation materials (other languages/formats), necessary information not provided
- **Transportation:** staff/residents/families cannot get to the services/to work (limited public transit)

4.0 PROCEDURE

4.1 Identification of Barriers to Accessibility

The management team will gather input regarding barriers from staff, residents, family members and the Board of Trustees on an on-going basis.

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Each year when the Resident/Family Satisfaction Surveys are tabulated, any accessibility issues will be referred to the Administrator / delegate.

Accessibility issues identified during compliance inspections will be referred to the Administrator / delegate.

Any Villa stakeholder (i.e. Resident Council, Family Council, employee or committee) is welcome throughout the year to refer accessibility issues for consideration to the Administrator / delegate.

4.2 Accessibility Plan Development

An accessibility plan will be developed from the input identified in 4.1 above. The plan will include identified barriers, and actions planned/taken (including timelines) to remove barriers.

The Administrator / delegate will provide a report to the Executive Team as necessary identifying the areas that have been addressed.

4.3 Requests for Reasonable Accommodation


The Villa will consider all requests for accommodation. If an accommodation cannot be made, communication to the person making the request will include the reason(s) why the request cannot be accommodated. The Villa may refer the person making the request to other sources.

4.4 Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, staff will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. The Villa will provide training on customer service to all current and future staff and volunteers. This training will, in particular, include how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

4.5 Notice of Planned or Unplanned Disruption in-services and Facilities

In the event of a service disruption affecting residents, families, staff, volunteers, or visitors, the Villa will take reasonable steps to report such disruption in a timely fashion through appropriate information channels. Such channels may

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include (but are not limited to) temporary signage posted at the location of the disruption, posting on the website, communication via email, etc. In accordance with the AODA, the notice must be conspicuous and indicate any alternatives that exist to allow access to persons with disabilities during the disruption. The required information necessary for any communication of a temporary disruption may include:

- The time, date and location of the disruption
- Information about the reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration of the disruption
- Descriptions of alternative facilities or services, if any
- Contact information


4.6 Assistive Technology

Personal assistive technologies are permitted and unrestricted in all areas of the Villa to which residents, families, staff, volunteers, visitors and the public have access, except when subject to operator safety and/or Villa security. The Villa will train current and future staff and volunteers in the use of various assistive devices and related policies/procedures related to his/her role and responsibilities. . The provision, use and safety of personal assistive devices is the responsibility of the person with a disability.

4.7 Service Animals

Persons with a disability who are accompanied by a service animal may access the Villa's premises, if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Villa will ensure that alternate means are available within reasonable time and location to provide persons with a disability to access the Villa's services.

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by a service animal needs to be considered. Examples of such situations include (but are not limited to)

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- a location where chemicals and/or equipment present a hazard to other persons and/or the service animal; or
- where a person is allergic to animals and adversely affected if they are in close proximity to a service animal.
- Where a home-area/unit is in outbreak

If deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be conducted that identifies:

- the risks inherent with the service animal being in the area of concern
- alternative measures available to enable the person with a disability to access this service.


If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal, the Villa may ask an individual with a service animal to provide verification of the animal's duty. The use and safety of the service animal is the responsibility of the person with a disability.

4.8 Support Persons

The Villa welcomes staff, residents, families, volunteers, and visitors who are accompanied by a support person, when the support person has been hired or chosen by the person with a disability to accompany them in order to assist in accessing goods or services and/or for the purposes of providing support with mobility, personal assistance and/or communication. Persons with a disability who require a support person may access the premises with their support person.

Support persons are permitted to accompany residents, families, staff, volunteers and visitors. However, there may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of health and safety of another person, allowing a person with a disability to enter a premises accompanied by their support person needs to be considered. Examples of such situations may include potential fire code violations. If deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be conducted to identify:

- the risks inherent with the support person being in the area of concern
- alternative measures available to enable the person with a disability to access this service.

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If a support person is accompanying a person with a disability during a meal, the support person shall be charged a fee to cover the cost of the meal provided (the same rate charged to family members who join residents for a meal). St. Joseph's Villa is not responsible for any fees associated with services for a support person rendered by resident, volunteer or third party representative with a disability.

4.9 Feedback

Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is welcomed, as it may identify areas that require change and assist the Villa in continuously improving its services. Such feedback may be made by telephone, in person, in writing, via email, or other means. The Villa will make every effort to provide a response in the same format in which the feedback was received.

Where possible, feedback will be addressed immediately. Some feedback may, however, require more effort to address and may need to be reviewed before an action is taken. The Villa will respond within 21 working days using the same process outlined in ADM-POL/5 Complaints. Information about the feedback process will be posted on the Villa's website.

Feedback may be provided directly to the department concerned and/or to:

Mail: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Coordinator

St. Joseph's Villa

56 Governor's Road

Dundas, ON L9H 5G7

Phone: (905) 627-9011, extension 2224


Fax: (905) 628-0825

Email: dfernandes@sjv.on.ca

In person: Deborah Fernandes, Administrator

4.10 Training

The Villa will provide training on the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in

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the development of policies, procedures and standards related to the provision of our goods and services.

All staff will be trained on Accessible Customer Service upon hire at general orientation. Further, a review of the Accessible Customer Service standard will take place annually thereafter on Surge Learning. Record of training for staff will be maintained in the Human Resources department. Training records for volunteers will be maintained by the Volunteer Manager.


Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
- The Villa’s policy related to Accessible Customer Service standards
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on site that may help with providing goods and services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the Villa’s goods and services
- Staff will be trained when significant changes are made to SJV’s accessible customer service plan.

4.11 Availability and Format of Documents (Alternative Formats)

All documents required by the AODA and regulation, including this accessible customer service policy, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process are available upon request. When providing these documents to a person with a disability, the Villa will endeavour to provide the document, or information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person’s disability into account. Notice of the availability of the documents required by the AODA and regulation will be posted on the Villa’s website.

5.0 REFERENCE SOURCES

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Ontario College of Art and Design “Accessible Customer Service Policy”, March 2010

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07