Accessibility Plan

Choice School for Gifted Children

2024

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1. Introduction

The Accessibility British Columbia Act became law in BC in June 2021. Accessibility standards being developed and implemented will help remove and prevent barriers that restrict people with disabilities from equally participating in their community and foster an inclusive environment.

The province has proclaimed Saturday December 3, 2022, as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This awareness day, which the United Nations first observed in 1992, has the theme of "transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fueling an accessible and equitable world".

Accessibility Week has now been established, beginning on the last Sunday in May each year.

Government and listed organizations, including independent schools and public-school districts, must complete the following requirements under Part 3 of the Accessible BC Act (by September 1, 2023):

1. Establish an Accessibility Committee
2. Develop an Accessibility Plan
3. Create a mechanism to receive feedback on barriers to accessibility from members of the community.

2. Terms

Barriers to Accessibility

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

A **barrier** is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person navigating needs or disabilities.

Impairment includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

3. Types of barriers

1. **Architectural Barrier**: A barrier resulting from building design, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, the size of doorways, and so on.

 2. **Attitudinal Barrier**: A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.

3. **Communication Barrier**: A barrier that arises from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists or other staff, and receiving training.

4. **Information Barrier**: A barrier that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, and so on.

5. **Policy or Practice Barrier**: Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society. Policy, practice, and procedures that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.

6. **Technological Barrier**: Barriers resulting from computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, including the lack of assistive technologies

4. About our School Comminuty

Choice School is an independent school serving 50 students from across the Lower Mainland on a campus located in Richmond, BC. Our school currently offers education from K-Grade 8.

We have a wide variety of specialty programs, including all geared towards gifted children.

Leadership Team:

Head of School – Mr. Sukhbir Bolina

Teaching Staff - 8

EA's - 5

Administrative & Support Staff - 4

The **Choice School** Board establishes policies and the strategic direction of Choice School. The Choice School Board meets regularly throughout the year and addresses issues as they arise.

5. A Message from the Head of the School

At Choice School, we are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all students and staff and provides equitable opportunities to support our diverse community. A key element to supporting our community is the development of a Three-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan identifies system needs, priorities, and action plans, and draws on feedback from our school community and the work of the Accessibility Committee to enhance equity of access to programming and our facilities.

Our Accessibility Committee is a diverse team that meets regularly in order to identify priorities and develop and monitor action plans highlighted in the Three-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan identifies measurable actions across the pillars of the Accessibility Act, supporting equal opportunity for persons with disabilities by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to access.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for those with disabilities but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to advancing the efforts of the Accessibility Committee to improve equity and ease of access to services, as well as access to our facilities. Through the actions in this Three-Year Accessibility Plan, we commit to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students and the larger school community.

6. Territorial Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and thank the Katzie, Tsawwassen, Kwantlen, and Musqueam First Peoples on who's traditional, unceded, and stolen territories we live, work, and play.
We acknowledge the ancestors; those who have walked before us and thank them for the stewardship of this beautiful, bountiful land where we learn, teach, and create. We commit to take care of it, respect it, and use the resources wisely.

We acknowledge the Elders, the keepers of traditional knowledge, wisdom, and Indigenous ways of knowing. We have much to learn about resilience and responsibility from you. We commit to asking questions, being open to learning from others, and acknowledging what we don't know.

7. Framework Guiding Our Work

Choice School Accessibility plan falls under the umbrella of the AMS (FISA) Accessibility Committee Plan and will be reviewed, updated, and revised as necessary on an ongoing basis in response to community feedback that is received.

Choice School Accessibility Working Group will do a physical audit of the property and buildings to determine upgrades/goals to be achieved by June 2023.

Thereafter, an accessibility plan will be devised that will highlight some of the areas that need to be visited. The plan will include the barriers, objectives and an action plan with a time frame.

In addition, the accessibility plan will be revised at least once every three years so that we can keep up to date and monitor the progress.

8. Choice School Accessibility Working Group

Choice School Working Group Members:

- Mr. Sukhbir Bolina
- Ms. Carly Fredette
- Ms. Tracee Bonnici
- Ms. Amber Howlett
- Mr. Ben Chu

Members of the community are invited to express interest in joining the Accessibility Working Group, including those people:

- With disabilities
- With children or youth with disabilities
- People who work or volunteer for Choice School
- People or organizations that support people with disabilities.

The Choice School Working Group will follow the principle of "nothing about us without us."

The group will meet 3 times per year.

To apply to become a member of the Choice School Working Group, please complete send your request to the Principal.

9.Community Feedback Tool

Choice School provides an online feedback tool that includes a series of questions about accessibility experiences that students, staff and members of the school community can complete. The tool was posted to the main page of the school website and an information announcement about the tool was provided to students, staff and parents/guardians. Feedback can be anonymous, or people could add their name and contact information if they wished to be contacted.

10.Choice School Accessibility Plan 2024 – 2027

The curriculum				
Area	Current barrier	Aim	Strategy/Action	Time scale
IT	Current computers are old and dated and slow	Students and staff should have access to good IT equipment	Purchase tablets and PCs for students and staff	2024
Choice Challenge	Due to limited enrollment, students are not able to participate in the Choice Challenge of their choice	Students should be able to participate in the activity of their choice	Ensure that students can participate in their choice of activity 2 out of 3 terms	Ongoing

The physical environment				
Area	Current barrier	Aim	Strategy/Action	Time scale
Parking lot	We only have one "disabled" parking spot available	Any parent or visitor with a "disabled" sign in their vehicle should be able to park near the entrance	Install a second parking spot for persons with physical disabilities	2024/2025
Playground	The PA system does not carry far into the playground. As a result, many students and staff in the playground may not be able to hear any announcements.	Every part of the school should have a PA system that can be heard by everyone	Upgrade the PA system	Summer 2025
Gymnasium	The gym heating has not been working for a couple of weeks and this makes it difficult to use the gym for PHE classes. Particularly difficult for individuals with sensitivities.	The gym should have adequate heating and temperature control	Contact HVAC companies and obtain quotes to repair and upgrade the heating system	Winter 2024/25

Gymnasium	There is a step to the entrance to the gym. This can cause difficulty for individuals with wheelchairs to access the gym.	The gym should be accessible by everyone, including individuals with wheelchairs.	Install ramps near the entrance to the gym to ease access into the gym.	2024/25

Communication and Information sharing				
Area	Current barrier	Aim	Strategy/Action	Time scale
School website	The school website can be difficult to navigate.	Develop and implement a clear and east to navigate school website	A website survey should be conducted to ascertain the potential barriers Then a plan should be put into place to improve the website and make it easy to navigate	Ongoing
Report cards	The current report cards are often more than 15 pages long and contain information that is not necessary. They can be rather difficult to read.	Develop and implement a new form of school report cards that: - Contain relevant information - Are easy to read - Are easy write	Introduce new report card templates to make the report card writing and reading processes easier.	Winter 2024/25
Newsletter	The monthly newsletter is published at the end of each month. It is published in English and hence not accessible for individuals who do not have a good use of English.	Allow newsletters and other school communication tools to be translated	Find ways that a reader could translate the school newsletter into a different language	2025