

# **AODA ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

## **Calvin Christian School - Hamilton**

### **Our Commitment**

At Calvin Christian School, we are committed to doing things in a Christian manner, which includes providing excellent customer service to everyone who visits our school or attends our school functions, including people with disabilities.

This commitment means that we do our best to provide our goods and services to people with disabilities in a manner that respects their dignity and independence, while at the same time gives them the same opportunity to access our goods and services, and allows them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way, as all other customers.

### **Scope**

The Calvin Christian School Accessible Customer Service Policy applies to every person (employee, third party contracted by CCS, on site volunteers, and members of the Board of Directors) interacting with members of the public.

### **Definitions**

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

The foregoing definition includes disabilities of differing severity, whether visible or non-visible and whether temporary or permanent in nature.

## **Practices and Procedures**

As part of this commitment, we have established various practices and procedures for how our goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. These include the following areas:

1. Assistive Devices
2. Service Animals
3. Support Persons
4. Communication (availability and format of documents)
5. Temporary Disruptions
6. Training
7. Feedback

### **1. ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

At Calvin Christian School, we are committed to serving people with disabilities who use, or may benefit from the use of assistive devices; whether to access our goods or services, or for other reasons because of their disability.

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as but not limited to moving or communicating. It helps the person to maintain independence at home, at work and in the community.

We urge people who have vision loss, hearing loss, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, intellectual/developmental disabilities to inquire of us how we may be of assistance. Our staff members have been trained and are familiar with various types of assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods and services.

### **2. SERVICE ANIMALS**

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by service animals. Persons with disabilities are allowed to enter our premises and remain with the animal unless otherwise excluded by law. If the animal is excluded by law, we will do our utmost to have another measure available to enable the person to obtain, use or benefit from CCS's goods and services. CCS will provide staff training on how to interact with persons with disabilities whom a service animal accompanies.

If it is not readily apparent whether an animal is being used as a service animal, Ontario regulations state that we may request a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner confirming that the service animal is required for reasons relating to disability.

### **3. SUPPORT PERSONS**

Calvin Christian School (CCS) will welcome all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by providing, through both staff and volunteers, services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities. This will incorporate measures that include the use of support persons.

CCS recognizes that some people with disabilities have support people—for example, paid professionals, volunteers, family members or friends—to assist with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with accessing the school's services. A support person is distinct from a school staff member who works with the student.

Support persons are allowed in any part of CCS that is open to the person being supported. At no time will someone with a disability be prevented from having access to his or her support person while at CCS. If the support person cannot be present, a comfortable location will be provided nearby.

A support person attending a school event will not be asked to pay an admission fee. Additional personal expenses (for example, purchasing items at the school bazaar) are not included.

CCS will not provide confidential information about a student to a support person or in the presence of a support person unless permission has been given in writing by the parent or guardian of that student. The support person must also agree in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of any confidential information disclosed. A copy of the signed consent document will be retained in the office. A copy of the consent document is attached to the policy.

### **4. COMMUNICATION**

When it comes to accessible customer service, we have no secrets. Our accessible customer service documents are available to the public upon request, and we are happy to share them with you.

When providing any of these documents to a person with a disability, CCS will provide the documents, or information contained therein, in a format that takes into account the person's disability. Please see the assistive device section for more related information.

CCS will notify the public and other third parties about the availability of the documents by posting this information on its accessibility webpage. Such notice will:

- a) Indicate that these documents are available in accessible formats;
- b) provide a link to an electronic, plain-text version of these document;
- c) explain how to request alternate accessible formats of these documents.

CCS will also place a general notice in a conspicuous location at its premise regarding the availability of such documents.



Requests for accessible customer service documents may be made in person, by telephone, in writing, by facsimile, by e-mail or online. When such request is received, CCS will:

- a) inquire of the person which alternate format the document should be in;
- b) confirm whether the alternate format is feasible, or if the alternate format is not feasible, determine from the person making the request what other format is acceptable;
- c) confirm that the alternate format is acceptable to that person.

CCS will make every effort to ensure that requests for alternate accessible formats do not take significantly longer than requests for the same document in standard print.

More details about the availability of our Accessible Customer Service Documents are posted on our accessibility webpage at [www.ccs-hamilton.ca/accessibility](http://www.ccs-hamilton.ca/accessibility)

## **5. TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS**

We recognize that people with disabilities often rely on certain facilities or services being available at Calvin Christian School (e.g. accessible washroom; elevators; ramps; disabled parking... etc.).

As part of our commitment to providing accessible customer service, we will promptly notify customers whenever there is a temporary disruption – whether it is planned or unplanned. The notice will include:

- a) The reason for the disruption;
- b) its anticipated duration;
- c) a description of alternate facilities or services, if available;
- d) contact information.

In the case of an unplanned temporary disruption, the notice will be posted at a conspicuous place at the school, and depending on the nature and duration of the disruption, CCS may also post the notice to its accessibility webpage at [www.ccs-hamilton.ca/accessibility](http://www.ccs-hamilton.ca/accessibility).

In the case of a planned temporary disruption, CCS will post the notice in sufficient time at a conspicuous place at the school and, if appropriate, on its accessibility web page [www.ccs-hamilton.ca/accessibility](http://www.ccs-hamilton.ca/accessibility). Further, if appropriate, CCS may also elect to post the notice with institutions and agencies generally associated with the school.

Depending upon the type and duration of the temporary disruption, CCS may also elect to contact any persons with disabilities known to CCS who may likely be detrimentally affected by that specific temporary disruption.

## **5. TRAINING**

Calvin Christian School is committed to providing training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of Calvin Christian School. This same training is also provided to those at Calvin Christian School who are involved in establishing the policies, practices and procedures for how our goods and services are provided to people with disabilities.

This training includes:

- a) An overview of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of its Customer Service Standard;
- b) how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- c) how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- d) how to use any equipment or devices available at Calvin Christian School or otherwise that may help provide our goods and services to people with disabilities;
- e) what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our goods and services.

We strive to have this accessible customer service training provided to all employees within 14 days of being hired or transferred into an applicable position. After that, we provide updated training on an ongoing basis whenever changes are made to how our goods and services are provided to people with disabilities.

## **7. FEEDBACK PROCESS**

When it comes to providing accessible customer service, we will always try our best and will certainly learn from any mistakes. This is why we encourage and appreciate hearing about how we are doing – both good and bad.

Feedback may be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or online, on disk or otherwise. The feedback should contain as much information as possible including dates, times, names, contact information, a description of the event/concern etc.

A customer feedback form may be used to provide feedback but it is not mandatory.

Where possible, the feedback will be addressed immediately. Some feedback may, however, require more time to address and may need to be reviewed before an action is taken.

An answer to the feedback is not always practical or possible. Regardless, CCS will make every effort to respond within a reasonable time frame of not more than 21 days.

CCS will respond in the same format in which the feedback was received whenever reasonably possible, unless the feedback requests otherwise.

Feedback may be forwarded to:

The Principal @ Calvin Christian School

547 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9C 3P7

Telephone: 905-388-2645

Fax: 905-388-2769

Email: [info@ccshamilton.ca](mailto:info@ccshamilton.ca)

Feedback may also be submitted in person to the school Principal or the Administrative Assistant.

Details about Calvin Christian School's feedback process are posted on our accessibility webpage at [www.ccshamilton.ca/accessibility](http://www.ccshamilton.ca/accessibility)

### **Modifications to This or Other Policies**

Changes will not be made to this policy unless the impact of the changes on persons with disabilities has been considered.

Any CCS policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities will be modified.

**AODA Policy approved by the CCS BOD: February 7, 2012**

# Calvin Christian School

## Hamilton

### ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

At Calvin Christian School, we are committed to doing things the right way - and that includes providing excellent customer service to everyone, including people with disabilities.

To learn more about our commitment to accessible customer service:

- Ask any of our employees; or
- Visit our accessibility web page at [www.ccs-hamilton.ca](http://www.ccs-hamilton.ca); or
- Request a copy of any of our Accessible Customer Service documents (i.e. training records; notification of temporary disruption process; feedback process; policies, practices and procedures for providing our goods / services to people with disabilities, including those relating to assistive devices, communication, service animals and support persons).

To help us improve accessible customer service, we appreciate your feedback. Speak to any of our customer service representatives or visit our accessibility webpage at [www.ccs-hamilton.ca](http://www.ccs-hamilton.ca) for details of our feedback process.

CCS AODA Policy Statement Approved by CCS BOD: February 7, 2012



# **Calvin Christian School**

## **Hamilton**

### **NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION**

**Facility / Service:**

**Reason for Disruption:**

**Anticipated Duration:**

**Alternatives Available:**

**We appreciate your understanding, and regret any inconvenience that this temporary disruption may cause.**

**If you have any questions or concerns, please call 905-388-2645**

CCS AODA Policy Statement Approved by the BOD: February 7, 2012





**Calvin Christian School**  
**Form for the Sharing of Confidential Information for**  
**Support Persons**

Calvin Christian School, Hamilton, will not provide confidential information about a student to a support person or in the presence of a support person unless permission has been given in writing by means of this form by the parent or guardian of that student. The support person must also agree in writing to safeguard the confidentiality of any confidential information disclosed.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent, guardian) consent to the sharing of confidential information by the Principal, or \_\_\_\_\_, (other teacher or staff member) related to my child, \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of my support person named herein: \_\_\_\_\_.

My support person \_\_\_\_\_, consents to safeguarding confidentiality of the information shared.

**Affirmation of consent:**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Parent/Guardian (if the child is in a joint custody situation):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name(s) of Parent(s)/ Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of information shared between Calvin Christian School staff and the parent/guardian for whom I am a support person.

Support Person Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness (Principal or other staff member): \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Responsibilities (if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# **TRAINING APPENDIX**

## **Support Persons**

CCS will train staff in interacting with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

Tips for interacting with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person:

- Welcome and allow access to support persons.
- Speak directly with the person with a disability, not the support person.
- Ask if it is not clear who the support person is.
- Plan for support persons; save space for them and provide them with written materials.

## **Assistive Devices**

Many customers who have disabilities will have their own personal assistive devices, such as but not limited to wheelchairs, scooters or walkers. The assistive device is part of the customer's "personal space"; do not touch or handle an assistive device without permission.

**If your customer has difficulty accessing services, be flexible:**

- Ask: "May I help you?" (or "How Can I Help?") and wait for permission
- Solicit suggestions
- Provide assistance as requested, or find someone who is able to assist
- Confirm that needs are met

**How do I interact with a customer who uses an assistive device?**

### **A. Serving customers with physical disabilities**

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and not all require a wheelchair. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person who have a physical disability.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to your customer, not their companion or attendant.
- People who have physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Be patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.
- Don't touch assistive devices unnecessarily, unless it's an emergency.
- Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).



- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure clear passage

How to assist a person using a mobility device, including but not limited to a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutches.

- If you have permission to move a person in a wheelchair remember to:
  - Wait for and follow the person's instructions.
  - Confirm that your customer is ready to move.
  - Describe what you are going to do before you do it.
  - Try to avoid objects and uneven ground.
  - Don't leave the person in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.
- Don't move items or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer's reach.
- Respect your customer's personal space. Don't lean over the customer or their assistive device.

## **B. Using the phone to serve customers who have disabilities**

- Speak normally, clearly and directly.
- Don't worry about how their voice sounds. Concentrate on what's being said.
- Be patient, don't interrupt and don't finish your customer's sentences. Give your customer time to explain.
- Don't try to guess what your customer is saying. If you don't understand, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- If you're not certain what was said, just repeat or rephrase what you've heard.
- If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a TTY line, just speak normally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
- If your customer has great difficulty communicating, ask them if they prefer another way to communicate, including making arrangements to call back when it's convenient to speak with someone else.

## **C. How to use a TTY and the Telephone Relay Service – (not available)**

TTY (Teletypewriter) is a device that allows users to send typed messages across phone lines. Many people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or who are deaf/blind may use TTY's to call other individuals.

This device generally has a keyboard and display that lets the user send and receive typed messages over telephone lines. People who are deafblind may use an additional large print or Braille display to read the typed messages.

A stand-alone TTY must communicate with another TTY. TTY users can directly call other TTY numbers or they can call a Relay Service. The Relay Service operator will receive the messages on a TTY and relay the messages, by standard phone, to a person who does not have a TTY. A standard phone user can also place a call through the Relay Service operator to a TTY user.

If your business or organization has a TTY, learn how to operate the device.

To make a TTY call:



1. Push the "ON" switch.
2. Push the DISPLAY switch if you wish to use the screen alone, or the PRINT switch if you want what is typed both on screen and in print.
3. Place the telephone receiver on the TTY's rubber receptacles. Make sure that the receiver is firmly in place and that the telephone receiver cord is on the LEFT side of the TTY.
4. Check the telephone indicator light; if it is lit, you have the line.
5. Dial the number, and watch the telephone light; if it is flashing slowly, this indicates that the device on the other end is ringing.
6. When the person you are calling answers, you will see a phrase appear on the screen such as: "Hello, this is Richard GA." The "GA" stands for Go Ahead -- Don't forget to use "GA" whenever you have finished what you are saying, so that the other person will know it is his/her turn.
7. When you wish the call to end and you wish to advise the other person, type GA or SK ("Stop keying"). The person will respond by "SK" if he/she agrees. Be courteous - wait until the other person indicates "SK" before hanging up.

Note:

- The person who receives the call is always the one who starts typing first.
- Always switch the TTY "OFF" as soon as you have finished the call.
- How to communicate using the Relay Service (pending)
- Phone the Relay Service number (1-800-855-0511).
- Tell the operator your name, the name of the person you are calling, and the number you wish to reach.
- The operator will make the call for you. You speak to the operator as if you were talking directly to the person you are calling. For example, say "Hi, How are you doing?" Do not say: "Tell him I said hello."
- Remember to say "Go Ahead" when you finish speaking, so the person on the other end will know it is their turn to speak.
- If you normally speak very quickly, the operator may ask you to speak more slowly so your message can be typed while you are speaking. There will be brief silences as the operator types to the TTY user and the user replies.

**D. Serving Customers who have Vision Loss**

- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch your customer without asking for permission unless it is an emergency.
- Ask first if your customer wishes to be guided.
- If the answer is "yes", offer your arm (elbow). Ask which arm is better. Walk at a normal pace. The person will walk about a step behind. Announce handrails, doors (to the



right/left, push/pull to open etc.) and describe the surrounding areas (such as what is in an aisle – shelves and sections).

- If your customer is accompanied by a guide dog, stand to the right of your customer, as the guide dog is usually at the owner's left side. When guiding a customer with a dog, offer your left arm, but if the person you are guiding prefers to hold your right arm, that's okay too.
- When the customer has a guide dog, offer to open the door and wait for permission. The customer may be using the door's location as a reference point, or they may prefer to do it without assistance to protect the dog's paws.
- If you are guiding towards stairs:

~ Let the customer know if they have to walk up or down;

~ Approach the stairs head on, not at an angle and come to a full stop in front of the stairs;

~ Lead or guide your customer to the rail side to allow them to take hold of it;

~ Let them find the first step and then start to climb or descend the stairs;

~ Try to be one step ahead and announce the last step.

- If you are going through a narrow doorway, passage etc., the guide goes first, after explaining the circumstances and describing the area.
- Upon entering a room, offer to describe the dimensions and the location of people and furniture.
- If the person wishes to sit, offer to guide them and place their hand on the back of the chair.
- Keep the person informed when others approach or leave.
- If you must leave the individual alone, do not leave him or her standing in the middle of the room, with nothing to hold onto. If they are not seated, guide them to a door, wall, or piece of furniture. This will help the person to stay spatially oriented.

## **E. Serving customers who have speech or language impairments**

Some people have problems communicating. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Here are some tips on serving customers with speech or language impairments:

Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking; don't assume they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.

If you don't understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.

- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.

- Be patient and polite, and give your customer whatever time they need to get their point across.
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. Wait for them to finish.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

## **F. What you need to know about customers who have mental health disabilities**

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that your customer has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. And usually it will not affect your customer service at all. But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let your customer tell you how you can best help.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have mental health disabilities:

- Treat a person who has a mental health disability with respect and consideration.
- Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to meet their needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

In Hamilton, COAST (Crisis Outreach and Support Team) are available 24/7 at 905-972-8338 or <http://www.coasthamilton.ca/>. The COAST program serves the residents of Hamilton-Wentworth who have serious mental health issues and are in crisis. COAST is a multidisciplinary team consisting of child and youth crisis workers, mental health workers, nurses, social workers and plain-clothes police officers.

A mental health worker will respond to a call on the COAST crisis line and make a preliminary assessment regarding the mental health concern. The worker will determine whether to respond with telephone support or a mobile visit.

## **G. Serving customers who have learning disabilities**

Learning disabilities can result in different communication difficulties for people affecting how they receive, express or process information. It may not be initially evident that a person has a learning disability; however, you may notice by the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

Here are some tips on serving customers who have learning disabilities:

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Ask how you can best help. Speak normally, clearly, and directly to your customer.
- Be patient, allowing the customer time to process and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.
- Be courteous and patient and your customer will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

## **H. Serving customers who have intellectual or developmental disabilities**

People who have intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing routine tasks. It may not be initially evident that a person has an intellectual or developmental disability; however, you may notice by the way people act, ask questions or use body language.

Treat your customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability with courtesy and respect. Here are some tips on serving customers who have an intellectual or developmental disability

Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.

- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Make sure your customer understands what you've said.
- Don't try to guess what your customer is saying. If you don't understand, don't pretend. Just ask again.
- If you're not certain what was said, just repeat or rephrase what you've heard.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.

## **Training Module for Service Animals**

A service animal is trained to assist someone in need in several ways. Keep in mind that it is primarily a medical assistance aid and should be treated as such.

Places where animals are excluded by law: Regulations under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Food Safety and Quality Act - "where food is served, sold, or offered for sale to consumers". We are to provide a safe, secure place for the service animal to wait while the person with a disability concludes their business in said place.

**Areas where animals are excluded by law should be clearly identified.**

- 1. Treat services animal handlers with the same respect you would treat any other customer.**
  - Greet a service animal handler in a friendly, welcoming manner and ask if he or she would like some help.
  - Do not follow service animal handlers around your establishment unnecessarily.
  - Offer a service animal handler the same assistance you would any other customer.
  - Replace signs that state only guide animals are permitted with signs that state only service dogs are permitted.
- 2. Educate other patrons (parents and CCS community members) about service animals if the need arises.**

**What should I do if I meet a service animal team?**



Keeping the following points in mind when meeting or just passing by a service animal team will make a world of difference and the handler will certainly be appreciative.

- **Most importantly, do not distract the animal or interfere with his job.**

In order to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities, service animals must be able focus on either their handler, or the task at hand. Even though service animals are trained to the highest of standards and typically ignore distractions, they are not infallible. A distracted service animal could slip up on a key part of his job and put he and his partner in danger. Some things that can distract a service animal are:

- Calling to the animal
- Making barking or other sounds at the animal
- Petting the animal without permission

Please do not allow young children or pets to interfere with a service animal team.

- **Do not be offended...**

**A. If a service animal handler will not let you pet his or her animal.** Some service animal handlers have a strict “no petting” policy and some don’t. If a handler doesn’t allow petting, it may be because it would prevent the animal from performing his or her job correctly. It is up to the handler to decide, on a case by case basis, whether others may pet the service animal.

**B. If a service animal handler doesn’t stop to chat.** Many service animal handlers are happy to answer respectful questions about their service animals. However, this may not always be possible, as the handler may be in a hurry, may not feel well, or have other reasons not to be able to stop and talk at that moment.

- **Never offer food to a service animal without first receiving permission from his handler.**

Even service animals can be tempted by food. While service animals are trained to ignore food on the ground and not to beg when there is food around, it can still serve as a distraction. Furthermore, not all animals can eat all food- even animal food or animal treats. Feeding a service animal something that can cause an adverse reaction could not only make the animal sick, but this would also mean the animal cannot work until he is better. This would effectively take away his handler’s independence.

- **Offer help but do not insist.**

Service animal handlers are very appreciative of others who ask them if they need any help. If you think a service animal handler may need some help, ask before acting. Do not attempt to take the animal’s leash or harness from the handler and do not attempt to physically move or direct a handler unless he or she has given you permission to do so. If a service animal handler rejects your offer to help, please respect his or her wishes.

Example: Navigating roads with traffic can be very challenging for a service animal team. Many drivers and fellow pedestrians try to help, but end up making things more difficult for the team. Do not honk your horn at a service animal team to indicate that it is safe to cross the street, as this can make it more difficult for the





handler to observe other signals that traffic has stopped. Do not announce from afar that it is safe to cross the street. If you are a fellow pedestrian, simply ask the handler if he or she would like help crossing the street.

- **Treat service animal handlers with dignity.**

Speak to the handler, not to the animal. Speak to the handler as you would anyone else and do not ask personal questions about his or her disability.

- **Do not ask a service animal handler to have his or her animal demonstrate a task.**

It is in poor taste to ask a service animal handler to cue the animal to demonstrate a task. Service animals' jobs revolve around mitigating their handlers' disabilities, and disabilities are very personal matters. Furthermore, many service animals do work that is dependent on very specific circumstances that cannot be recreated on a whim.

- **Do not draw unnecessary attention to a service animal team.**

Pointing, exclaiming things like, "Look, an animal!" and doing other things to make a spectacle of a service animal team are rude and make service animal handlers feel uncomfortable. Allow a service animal handler to go about his or her business just as you would anyone else.

- **Do not photograph or video record a service animal team without permission.**

### **3. Use an encounter with a service animal team as an opportunity to educate children (and adults!)**

Explain to children what a service animal does and why it is important not to interfere with the team's work. Also explain that not all disabilities are obvious to others.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_Vb7y8Omf8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_Vb7y8Omf8)

#### **Notes for Discussion:**

- Staff is a term that includes employees, volunteers, agents, and others that provide services on behalf of our school.

- Service Animals is a term that refers to animals that provide services to individuals helping them function with greater self-sufficiency, prevent injuries, and summon help in a crisis. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing, training to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety. A service animal can also be a bird, cat, or other trained animal.

- We may under no circumstances ask about the nature of the disability for those with an unidentified service animal for persons with a disability. For those who are unaware that they

require a letter confirming that they need the animal for reasons relating to a disability, we should politely ask them to have it available the next time they come to our school.

- Places where animals are excluded by law: Regulations under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Food Safety and Quality Act - “where food is served, sold, or offered for sale to consumers”. We are to provide a safe, secure place for the service animal to wait while the person with a disability concludes their business in said place.
- Areas where animals are excluded by law should be clearly identified.