

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NIAGARA
CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
In Accordance with
The Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Effective January 1st, 2012

PREAMBLE

- The following policies and procedures apply to all aspects of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara.
- The word “parish”, when used, applies to all local sites including, but not limited to, parishes, chapels of ease, cemeteries, Synod offices, camps, and direct outreach programs (at either the local or Diocesan level).
- The word “staff”, when used, applies to paid employees, contract staff, outside contractors and volunteers.
- The word “Corporation”, when used, applies to Parish Corporations, Boards of Directors, Synod Council and other oversight bodies.
- The Diocese consists of many buildings with varying levels of staff, spread over a wide geographic area. The first principle is always to provide the best accommodation possible at a given location. Where appropriate each parish will indicate under the Practices section how it can best fulfill each policy.
- Parish Corporations will amend their job descriptions as required to include Customer Service standards Policies and Procedures
- Organizations/businesses who regularly rent or otherwise make use of space in a parish and who must comply with the legislation, are expected to provide that parish with a copy of their Customer Service Standards (e.g. a day-care centre).

ASSISTIVE DEVICES POLICY

POLICY

- The Diocese will provide, to the best of its ability at each location, equitable access to all services, programs, events, meetings and other opportunities to persons with disabilities who use personal assistive devices. They must be permitted to use their personal assistive devices, unless prohibited by law. They must be made aware of any assistive devices or services available on site which would be of assistance to them.
- Staff must be aware of how to access and use any devices on site
- Assistive devices must be offered in a manner which respects a person’s dignity and independence.

DEFINITIONS

- A personal assistive device is any technical aid, communication device or medical aid that is designed, made, adapted or customized to assist a person with a disability, to increase, maintain, or perform a particular task.
- Such devices include, but are not limited to, mobility aids, white canes or other identity aids, oxygen tanks, hearing aids, communication devices and amplifiers.

RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Diocese to ensure that all parishes etc. have, and adhere to, this policy and follow the procedures outlined below.
- It is the responsibility of the parish Corporation to see that this policy and the procedures are followed at the local level with the best possible practices for maximum compliance.
- The parish Corporation will ensure that all staff is made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

1. Persons with disabilities have the right to use their own assistive devices at all times. It is the responsibility of the persons with disabilities to ensure that their assistive devices are operated in a safe and controlled manner.
2. The Diocese recognizes that the ideal access to a building is to have the same entrance for everyone. If that is not feasible the next best option is to have a separate barrier-free entrance. The Diocese, through the Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings, will work with individual parishes to create opportunities for barrier-free access.
3. The person with a disability will be seated within the main contingent of the participants, unless the person with a disability chooses otherwise. If there is fixed seating (pews) permanent adaptations will be made by the parish to accommodate large assistive devices and service animals.
4. Persons with disability using small or no personal assistive devices will be seated where their need may be best met within the main body of participants. For example staff will respectfully ask other participants to move to allow someone with low hearing or vision to sit closer to the sound system or the front, particularly in circumstances where there is fixed seating (pews).
5. Staff may respectfully ask about preferred methods of communication or how the staff member can best provide access to the service, event etc. Example: during services bringing communion, anointing for healing et al to the communicant.
6. Those in each parish who come in direct contact with the public will be trained and made aware of the various assistive devices that they may encounter as well as to how to operate any fixed (e.g. lift) or portable devices owned by the parish
7. Staff may offer parish-owned portable assistive devices for the duration of the service/event along with instruction on their use.
8. The parish Corporation will amend job descriptions.

PRACTICES – *INSERT NAME OF THE PARISH*

GENERAL

- *How is the building accessed*
- *“manning” doors if there is no automatic opener*
- *instructions for using lift or elevator or accessing same*
- *accessible washrooms*
- *reserved parking spaces*
- *list of parishioners with special skills or knowledge*

SERVICES

- *Expectations for greeters/sidespeople*
- *What assistive materials are available: large print bulletins? Large print BAS/BCP*
- *Sound system*
- *Extra lighting*

MEETINGS/PROGRAMS

- *using only those spaces which are accessible*

EVENTS

- *Barrier-free access for any events held off site*

COMMUNICATION POLICY

POLICY

The Diocese will communicate, to the best of its ability at each location, with persons who have disabilities in ways that are respectful, maintain their dignity and independence and take into account the person’s disability.

DEFINITIONS

Communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. The staff must consider how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communications.

RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Diocese to ensure that all parishes have, and adhere to, this policy and follow the procedures outlined below.
- It is the responsibility of the parish Corporation to see that this policy and the procedures are followed at the local level with the best possible practices for maximum compliance.
- The parish Corporation will ensure that all staff is made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

1. Parishes will ensure, where possible, that inclusive methods of communications will be made available to persons who have disabilities to take into account a person's disability.
2. The public will be made aware of what kinds of inclusive communications methods are available at that site and how to access them.
3. Staff must be aware of what methods are available and how to access them.
4. Those in each parish who come in direct contact with the public will be trained on how to communicate with different types of disabilities.
5. Regarding Synod and Synod Council, the Diocese will make every effort to provide suitable communications devices (such as American Sign Language interpretation or Braille documents) to delegates with disabilities provided these services are booked with the Synod office when the delegated is elected or appointed. Any alternate delegate must give at least two months notice.
6. When it is possible on a short turn-around, parishes will adapt weekly paper documents, such as service bulletins. For example the bulletin can be enlarged but cannot be produced in Braille in that time frame. Parishes should have on hand some copies of the service book (BAS or BCP) in large format and consider other formats for regular attendees with an identifiable need.

PRACTICES – *Inset name of parish*

GENERAL

- *Pencil & paper on hand*
- *List of people with special skills*
- *Communicating with the office*

SERVICES

- *Service/hymn books*
- *Weekly bulletin*
- *Greeting attendees*

MEETINGS/PROGRAMS

- *Sunday School materials*

EVENTS

- *greeting*

DISRUPTION NOTICE POLICY

POLICY

Each parish will, in advance where possible and in a timely manner, provide notice when services are temporarily disrupted, particularly those services used by or relied upon by persons with disabilities.

DEFINITIONS

Disruption of service may include closure of a service or program whether temporary or permanent and any disruption that would normally be considered unanticipated or unexpected. Examples:

- Entrance inaccessible or unsafe
- Equipment failure e.g. elevator
- Insufficient lighting for persons with low vision
- Building maintenance

RESPONSIBILITY

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PROCEDURES

1. Where there is any temporary disruption in services, in whole or in part, disruption notices will be posted in a timely manner as soon as parish Corporation has been made aware.
2. Written notices will be posted visibly in appropriate areas, and include inclusive communication modes such as symbols or barrier tape where possible.
3. Notice of disruption will be provided to all users of a parish space, both internal and external, as well as to the Synod office.
4. Notices of disruption will be provided to parishioners through telephone or e-mail. Notices in advance will be provided through telephone, e-mail or regular postal service.
5. Notices will include:
 - reason for the disruption
 - anticipated duration of the disruption
 - temporary relocations (e.g. for a meeting or service)
 - nearest alternative location, if applicable

PRACTICES

To follow the procedures as outlined above.

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

POLICY

The Diocese of Niagara welcomes and provides equitable access for persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal to all of its locations. The person will be permitted to enter the building with the service animal and will be permitted to keep the animal with her/him unless the animal is excluded by law from the premise, or area within the premise.

DEFINITIONS

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to carry out tasks for persons with disabilities. Service animals are generally dogs, but may include other types of animals such as, but not limited to cats, rabbits or reptiles. Such service animals may be used to assist a person who is blind, has a vision impairment or low vision; a person who is deaf, deafened or hard of hearing; a person who has a mobility disability or difficulties with strength or dexterity; a person who has autism or a developmental disability; a person who has a mental health disability, and many other reasons.

RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Diocese to ensure that all parishes have, and adhere to, this policy and follow the procedures outlined below.
- It is the responsibility of the parish Corporation to see that this policy and the procedures are followed at the local level with the best possible practices for maximum compliance.
- The parish Corporation will ensure that all staff is made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

1. Animals that function as service animals for persons with disabilities are permitted in all Diocesan premises (whether owned or rented), unless prohibited by another law. Note: Ontario Regulation 562, ss60 (1a) and Ontario Regulation 31/05 of Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001, ss44.2 allow service dogs to go to places where food is normally served, sold or offered for sale. Other types of service animals are not included in this exception.
2. The parish will ensure that clear signage, regarding any specific rules for out-of-bounds or prohibited areas that exclude service animals, is posted in conspicuous locations.
3. Persons with disabilities who use service animals cannot be asked to remove their service animals from the premises, isolated from other or charged extra fees for the use of the animal.
4. In exceptional circumstances the service animal may be prohibited by law, e.g. The Dog Owners Liability Act 2005 regarding pit bulls and related animals. In this case staff will explain, in a respectful manner, that the service animal must be removed from the public area due to the Act and make alternative arrangements to provide the service.

5. A person with a disability, who uses service animals, cannot be denied access or refused service/participation because others have allergies or express a fear of the service animal. All efforts must be made to respectfully accommodate both individuals.
6. In very exceptional circumstances that the animal becomes out of control, causing a clear disruption or a threat to the health and safety of others and the animals' behaviour is not corrected by the owner, a person with a disability can be asked to remove their service animal from the premises.
7. If an incident occurs under items 4 to 6, the Synod office must be notified.

PRACTICES

To follow the procedures as outlined above.

SUPPORT PERSONS POLICY

POLICY

The Diocese welcomes and is committed to ensuing equitable access at all locations for persons with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons. There may be a need to require a person with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with disability or the health and safety of others on the premise.

DEFINITIONS

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods, services, programs and opportunities.

RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Diocese to ensure that all parishes have, and adhere to, this policy and follow the procedures outlined below.
- It is the responsibility of the parish Corporation to see that this policy and the procedures are followed at the local level with the best possible practices for maximum compliance.
- The parish Corporation will ensure that all staff is made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

1. Both the person with a disability and their support person will be provided with access to all public areas in a respectful manner.
2. The normal fee for a program, service or event may be charged to the support person as well as the person with a disability if the former is a full participant Example: a parish dinner where both individuals will be having a meal. The person with a disability or the support person must be made aware of this at the time of booking.
3. The person with a disability may choose not to introduce the support person.

4. Where confidentiality is important, because of the sensitivity of information discussed, staff may, in appropriate circumstances require the support person to sign a confidentiality agreement. Example: a person with a disability in private conversation with their priest. Such documentation is available from the Diocesan Offices.
5. Once the staff member has determined which individual is the person with a disability, the staff member must address the person with the disability directly, rather than the support person, unless directed otherwise by the person with the disability.
6. The person with a disability and the accompanying support worker will be seated together unless the person with a disability chooses otherwise. If necessary, staff will respectfully ask other participants to move to accommodate this need, especially in circumstances where there is fixed seating (pews). Such seating should always be within the main contingent of the participants, unless the person with a disability chooses otherwise.
7. Staff will be trained to understand respectful ways to interact with a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person. It would be disrespectful to ask for written confirmation stating that the individual is a support person or to ask for an explanation about the type of support being provided.
8. The parish may ask that a support person accompany a person with a disability for certain types of events or programs, for the health and safety of all involved. Example: overnight youth group event or where behavioural issues are involved. This must be discussed in advance with the person with a disability or the legal guardian of such a person.

PRACTICES

To follow the procedures as outlined above.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

POLICY

The Diocese, through its parishes, will establish a two-way feedback/complaints process for receiving and responding to the manner in which goods, services, programs and opportunities are provided to persons who have disabilities.

RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Diocese to ensure that all parishes have, and adhere to, this policy and follow the procedures outlined below.
- It is the responsibility of the parish Corporation to see that this policy and the procedures are followed at the local level with the best possible practices for maximum compliance.
- The parish Corporation will ensure that all staff is made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

1. Copies of the feedback/complaints process should be available on request at all locations.
2. A standardized form will be prepared by the Diocese and be available on request at all locations.. Other methods than the standardized form may be used to make the process more inclusive.
3. While receiving the feedback or complaint, staff must explain to the individual how it will be processed (who reads it, when a response will be provided, if requested, time-frame for resolution or action and follow-up).
4. The process must begin at the parish level and move to the Diocesan level if there is no satisfactory resolution. Anything of a personal nature or involving one or more parishioners should be directed to the Incumbent. It will be his/her decision whether to pass the incident on to the rest of Corporation.
5. The Synod office must be informed of all negative incidents and any resolution. Parishes may choose whether to forward to the Synod office compliments or positive feedback.
6. Follow-up will be within 10 working days, unless there are circumstances that prevent such response time. If a response is delayed, the person providing the feedback or making a complaint must be apprised of the delay.

TRAINING POLICY

POLICY

The Diocese, through the parishes, will ensure that all staff (as defined in the preamble) is appropriately trained, knowledgeable and skilled in providing goods, services, programs and opportunities to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided through the Synod office on an annual or semi-annual basis. The training will embrace the core principles of on-going respect for human dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity.

RESPONSIBILITY

- It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Diocese to ensure that all parishes have, and adhere to, this policy and follow the procedures outlined below.
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- The parish Corporation will ensure that all staff is made aware of the purpose and intent of this policy and its procedures.

PROCEDURES

1. The Synod office will provide Customer Care Service Standard accessibility training to all employees, contract staff, members of parish Corporation and volunteers who provide customer care service.

2. In cases where distance from a training opportunity and/or the large numbers of individuals involved are considerations, individual parishes may opt to provide their own training if the trainer and program have been approved by the Synod office.
3. The Synod office will notify, via the Incumbent, current paid and contract staff of the requirement to attend such training. It will be a condition of employment in all future hiring.
4. The parish Corporation will inform all volunteer staff, paid staff who are not on the Synod payroll, and third party contractors who need to attend this training.
5. The parish Corporation will amend all job descriptions for positions requiring this training.
6. Training and awareness regarding the Customer Service Standard will be provide to:
 - 6.1 All priests
 - 6.2 All members of parish Corporation
 - 6.3 First contact staff including greeters and sidespeople
 - 6.4 Program leaders
 - 6.5 Parish secretaries
 - 6.6 Anyone else the Bishop, Executive Archdeacon, Regional Archdeacon or parish Corporation feels should be included
7. Training will include:
 - 7.1 The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and the requirements of the Customer service Standard
 - 7.2 How best to interact and communicate with people who have a wide range of disabilities
 - 7.3 How to interact respectfully with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or are accompanied by a service animal or a support person
 - 7.4 How to assist persons who have disabilities access services, programs and opportunities offered in the Diocese of Niagara
 - 7.5 How to use on-site equipment or assistive devices or how to access staff who have this knowledge
 - 7.6 What to do if a person with a disability appears to be having difficulty accessing/participating in a service, program, meeting, or event. This will include asking the person whether they need assistance
 - 7.7 The Diocese of Niagara policies, procedures and practices relating to the Customer Service Standard
 - 7.8 Any up-dates or changes as they arise

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