



## **Accessible Customer Service**

### **Policy Statement**

The Guelph Public Library is committed to accessibility for all its' patrons by creating accessible facilities, programs, and services based on the principles of universal access; removing existing barriers for persons with both visible and non-visible disabilities, and providing information and training to create an environment of inclusion within the Library. The Library will comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 101-11. The Guelph Public Library will ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of the standards: dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

### **1 Principles**

- 1.1 The Library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible by:
  - a. Encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access our services and programs.
  - b. Permitting service animals to assist clients and provide alternative accommodations when the animal is disallowed under the law.
  - c. Encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities.
  - d. Waiving fines for those who are unable to visit the library independently and must rely on support persons for home delivery of library materials.
- 1.2 The Library will make every effort to communicate with patrons in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by:
  - a. Providing reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and programs for people with disabilities.

- b. Providing and publicizing this Accessible Customer Service Policy and, upon request making it available in alternative formats.
  - c. Providing a feedback, response, and tasking process that enables increased integration and the accessibility of the Library's collections and services.
- 1.3 Training will be provided to all library staff and associated parties:
- a. Involved specifically in the development of the policies, practices and procedures as required in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Customer Service Standards.
  - b. In the provision of the customer service for people with disabilities and the library's accessible services and programs.
  - c. The library will maintain records of staff trained in the Customer Service Standards and will ensure that the Accessible Customer Service Standards training is integrated into the orientation program for all new employees.

## **2 General Operations**

### **2.1 Opening Procedures**

- a. Staff should ensure that access to the Library entrances are free of snow, ice or other obstructions and should contact their supervisor or the administrative assistant if clearing is required.
- b. Accessible parking spaces should also be kept clear of snow and ice.
- c. Central Library staff should ensure that the elevator is in working order.
- d. Upon opening the doors to the public, staff should check that the automated doors are operational and should report any problems to their supervisor.

### **2.2 Special Services and Collections**

2.2.1 The library offers a variety of services and collections that are particularly relevant to the needs of patrons with disabilities.

- a. Relevant library collections include:
  - i. Audiobooks
  - ii. Closed captioned DVDs
  - iii. Large Print Books
  - iv. DAISY players and DAISY format audiobooks
  - v. eBooks and eAudiobooks
  - vi. Braille Books (Children's Services only)

Please note: There are no restrictions on these collections and these items can be borrowed by any card holder.

b. Visiting Library Services

Patrons with special needs or who are unable to visit the library are encouraged to register with the library's Outreach Services department. Library staff will assemble library materials of interest to the patron in question. These items can then be delivered to the patron by a family member or a library-assigned volunteer.

c. Shut-in/Outreach Services Accessibility accounts

Individuals who make use of the services offered through Visiting Library Services are exempt from paying fines associated with overdue items.

d. Bookmobile

The Bookmobile makes regularly scheduled stops throughout the city including those at Senior's residences.

e. Accessible Computers

Screen magnification, text narration, and an on-screen keyboard are available on all public computers. There is a large-print keyboard and trackball mouse available for use at each library location.

### **3 Programs**

3.1 The majority of adult interest programs are intended for an open audience, though children's programs are often geared to a specific age range and interest level. Some programs do require pre-registration by participants.

3.2 The attendance and participation of support persons is encouraged and welcomed.

3.3 If crowds are large, individuals in wheelchairs or using walkers or other assistive devices (and their support persons or service animal if applicable) will be admitted first.

3.4 Though we generally do not charge admittance fees for library programs, fees for support persons will be waived if applicable. If it is deemed necessary that support persons will be required to pay admittance charges, advance notification of this fact must be made available.

### **4 Service Animals**

Service animals are welcomed at all library locations.

## **5 Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

- 5.1 The public should be notified should any of the following services become unavailable.
  - a. Accessible Washrooms
  - b. Elevator
  - c. Automatic Door Openers
  - d. Accessible Parking Spot
  - e. Wheelchair Access PAC terminals
  - f. Visual Magnification/Sight Enhancement software
- 5.2 Signage should be placed at the entrance to the building as well as at the actual point of service. A help desk request should be submitted, informing System's staff that an update to the website is required. Signage and web site announcements should include the expected length of the disruption and any alternative facilities or services that may be available.
- 5.3 Bookmobile staff are responsible for the following procedures when they are unable to make their scheduled stops:
  - a. Notify contacts at each affected stop. Senior residences will generally make an announcement in house to ensure that patrons are not waiting for us.
  - b. Send an email to all staff informing them of the service disruption.
  - c. Submit a help desk request regarding the creation of an online announcement as well as the automatic extension of affected due dates.
  - d. Call any patrons that have items on hold.

## **6 Emergency Procedures**

In case of fire or other emergency, library staff will ensure that all library patrons have evacuated the building. Special care will be taken to assist patrons with disabilities to safely exit the premises.

- 6.1 Wheelchair or Walker Assisted
  - a. Accompany the customer to exit or delegate someone to do so.
  - b. Enter a stairwell exit only when crowd has thinned.
  - c. Consult with customer for best method of assistance.
- 6.2 Visually Impaired
  - a. Accompany customer to exit, offering your arm to guide the person.

- b. If there is a guide dog, let the dog follow or ask the customer to bring it on the leash.
- c. Enter a stairwell exit when crowd has thinned.
- d. Accompany the customer to a place of safety.

### 6.3 Hearing Impaired

- a. Communicate the need to evacuate the building by speaking slowly, writing a note or using sign language.
- b. Accompany the customer to a place of safety.
- c. Be sure to check isolated areas.

## **7 Feedback Process**

Feedback from patrons is welcomed and encouraged.

- a. In person
- b. By email – via [Contact Us](#)
- c. By telephone – 519-824-6220
- d. Alternate formats are also available upon request by submitting the [Alternative Format and Communication Support Request Form](#)