



Accessibility Policy

Stride is committed to achieving a fully accessible organization. This policy outlines Stride's responsibilities in providing programs and services to people with disabilities in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Accessible Customer Service standard.

To achieve this commitment, all Stride staff, students and volunteers share in the responsibility for advancing accessibility by playing unique and important roles in removing and preventing barriers to participation.

DEFINITIONS:

A disability, as defined by the AODA, includes physical, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. Disabilities come in many different forms, sometimes obvious and sometimes not. Disabilities may be visible or invisible, they may differ in severity, and the effects of a disability may be continuous or intermittent.

The impact of a disability depends on the person's ability to access services, assistive devices, transportation, education and employment.

PROCEDURES:

Stride is committed to excellence in serving all service users, including people with disabilities. This commitment is demonstrated in a variety of ways that are detailed below.

1. Communication

- 1.1 Stride staff shall communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability by asking how they can help and taking guidance from the person with whom they are communicating.

2. Telephone Services

- 2.1 Accessible telephone service is provided to service users within the scope of Stride's resources.
- 2.2 When communicating with clients and participants, staff shall speak clearly and at a pace the person can understand.
- 2.3 If telephone or communication is not suitable to a person's communication needs or is not available, communication with service users can be done through secure e-mail, written means, relay services and TTY services where a TTY machine is available.



3. Assistive Devices

- 3.1 Staff teams are responsible for identifying the types of assistive devices their clients and participants may use while accessing Stride programs or services and developing a familiarity with these devices.

4. Use of Service Animals

- 4.1 Stride welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- 4.2 At no time shall a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal be prevented from having access to their service animal.

5. Use of Space

- 5.1 Stride is committed to achieving a fully accessible meeting space for all staff and service users. If a space is not accessible then accommodations will be made.

6. Use of Support Persons

- 6.1 Stride welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- 6.2 At no time shall a person with a disability, who is accompanied by a support person, be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.
- 6.3 Support persons who participate in a program or service for the purposes of supporting a person with a disability shall not be charged a fee.

7. Notice of Temporary Disruption

- 7.1 In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption, Stride shall provide service users with as much advance notice as is reasonable.
- 7.2 This notice shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- 7.3 The notice shall be placed on Stride's voice message systems, at all public entrances and at reception counters on Stride premises. If clients/participants will not reasonably have had access to notifications through these means, staff shall make every effort to contact them by phone or e-mail to inform them of the disruption.

8. Training for Personnel

- 8.1 Stride shall provide training to all staff, students and volunteers who deal with the public or other third parties on its behalf.
- 8.2 This training shall be provided within one month of the date of hire after staff commence their duties. The following people/positions shall take lead responsibility with respect to this:



- The hiring manager shall ensure all newly hired staff members, students and volunteers undergo training as part of their orientation.

8.3 Training shall include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard
- 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 TTY (if applicable to their role)
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Stride's programs and services
- Stride's policy on accessible customer service

This training shall be accessed electronically at the following website:

Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service
<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html>

8.4 Staff, students and volunteers shall report completion of this training to the appropriate person, within one month of their date of hire/placement.

9. Feedback, Complaints and Questions

9.1 Feedback, complaints and questions shall be addressed according to Stride's Complaint policy and procedures.

10. Modifications to Policies

10.1 All policies about Stride shall respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Any policies that do not meet these standards will be reviewed, and a decision will be made on whether they should be modified or removed.

Other useful resources:

Ontario Interpreting Service

<http://www.chs.ca/en/and> search for Accessibility Services

Braille: www.canadianbraillepress.com

DOCUMENT REFERENCE:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

ES 5.5.2 Client Complaint Policy