

## Accessible Customer Service Policy

### 1. Our Mission

At Hillfield Strathallan College it is our mission to prepare young people for higher learning and life by emphasizing academic excellence and the nurturing of the whole child.

### 2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Hillfield Strathallan College is committed to providing our service in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our community and allowing them to benefit from the same opportunities, as much as reasonably possible, in the same place and in a similar way as other members of the community.

### 3. Providing services to people with disabilities

Hillfield Strathallan College is committed to excellence in serving our community including those with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

#### a. Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will train our staff who communicate with members of the community and the broader general public on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

#### b. Telephone services

We will train our staff on how to interact and communicate with customers over the telephone in clear plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by other methods, i.e. email if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

#### c. Assistive devices

We are committed to servicing people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our College. If barriers to the use of an assistive device exist at any premise, these barriers, where reasonably possible, will be removed.

#### d. Billing

Hillfield Strathallan College is committed to providing accessible invoices for all parents/customers of the College. For this reason, invoices will be provided in alternative formats upon request.

#### e. Other

When teaching our students, staff will take into account the diverse needs of people with disabilities.

### 4. Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

#### Service Animals

Persons with a disability may enter Hillfield Strathallan College's premises accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them, if the public has access to such premises, and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. While visiting the campus, it is the responsibility of the person with a service animal to control the animal at all times.

In the event a member of the staff or community is allergic to animals, alternative arrangements will be negotiated.

#### Support Person

Persons with a disability may enter the College Campus accompanied by a support person, in situations where it is necessary to protect the health and safety of a person with a disability, or the health and safety of others on the premises.

Consent from the person with a disability is required when communicating private issues related to a person with a disability in the presence of a support person.

### **5. Notice of Temporary Disruption**

Hillfield Strathallan College will make reasonable effort to provide customers with notice in the event of a disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. We will not be able to give adequate notice in case of an emergency temporary disruption.

In order to make information accessible, the signs and printed notices should be clearly laid out, of sufficient size and easily readable.

The signs and printed notices will be displayed prominently at the entrance of the College, on the College website, voice messaging or any other reasonable alternative in a particular circumstance. It is expected that consideration will be given to which people with disabilities will be most affected by the disruption and steps will be taken to ensure the information about the disruption will be communicated in a way that best matches these needs.

### **6. Customer Service Training**

The College will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. In addition, training will be provided to employees as part of orientation for new employees, and on a continuing basis as required.

The training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of Regulation 429/07 and address the following matters:

- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or support person;
- how to use equipment or devices available on College premises, if any, that may assist with the provision of services; and
- What to do if a person with a particular disability is having difficulty accessing College services.

Training must be provided to each person as soon as practical after assignment of applicable duties. Ongoing training must also be provided in connection with any changes to the policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of services to people with disabilities. Records of the training will be kept including, the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

### **7. Feedback Process**

Any person wishing to provide feedback to the College about the manner in which it provides service to people with disabilities may do so in a variety of ways, including, in person, by telephone, in writing by email, hard copy, or fax, or by some other communication technology.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the complaint is to be forwarded to the College's Human Resources Department, to the attention of Manager of Human Resources. Upon receipt of a complaint the matter will be reviewed by the Manager or designate, and a response will be provided to the person making the complaint either verbally or in writing, as appropriate, concerning their complaint and any action which may have been taken as a result

### **8. Questions about this policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework through which the College can achieve service excellence for people with disabilities. If anyone has questions about this policy please contact Human Resources at Hillfield Strathallan College:

Human Resources  
Hillfield Strathallan College  
299 Fennell Avenue West  
Hamilton, ON L9C 1G3  
Tel: 905-389-1367 ext. 159  
Fax: 905-389-6366

## **Procedures for Servicing People with Disabilities**

The College is committed to offering its services that respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, and allow people with disabilities to obtain the same services, in the same places and in similar ways as other customers. The following tips may assist in providing excellent customer service, while taking into account a person's disability.

There are a wide variety of disabilities and responding in the most appropriate manner to each person with a disability always requires common sense, patience, respect and a genuine willingness to find the best way to help when serving a person with a disability.

HSC has reviewed their policies, practices and procedures affecting customer service to ensure alignment with the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

### **1. Communication**

When communicating with people with disabilities staff will communicate in a means that enable persons with disabilities to communicate effectively for purposes of using, receiving and requesting HSC services, goods or facilities. All staff are expected to demonstrate a working knowledge and understanding of a range of communication methods helpful to persons with disabilities including:

- Pen and paper
- Typing back and forth
- Adjusting speaking style to speak more slowly or clearly
- Electronic communication systems
- Gestures

The College will respond to accommodation requests in the same manner we would to other event-related questions. All invitations sent will provide someone to contact for any accommodation needs.

### **2. Assistive Device**

The College will ensure people have unencumbered access to the assistive devices they bring with them. Staff should not operate or otherwise interfere with a person's assistive device, unless invited to do so by the user or their support person, i.e. do not move a person's wheelchair unless asked to do so.

### **3. Service Animals**

Service animals are allowed to go with any person with a disability while they are obtaining services from the School. Where the animal is not allowed by law, other options should be explored. For example, a guide dog is not allowed in the kitchen, someone with low vision or no vision might need someone to guide them while the dog waits in another location. Another option would be to provide the service in another part of the premises. At all times, solutions and options should be discussed with the customer.

Never touch a person who has a disability such as a vision or hearing disability without obtaining permission first, unless it is an emergency. You can however, offer to guide a person, if appropriate, by offering your arm. Again, take your cues from the person with the disability – they are best able to advise you of the most appropriate way to provide them assistance.

Do not address or touch a service animal. It is working and has to pay attention at all times.

### **4. Support Persons**

Support persons are allowed to go with any person with a disability while they are obtaining services from the School. Some services, such as meetings with regard to students, should be considered private and confidential. If a person with a disability uses a support person and is attending a confidential meeting or parent teacher interview, the person with the disability may need to provide permission for the support person to attend. This permission should be documented in writing or as appropriate.

Always direct your attention to the person with the disability, rather than the support person. As always, take your cues from the person with the disability to understand how to best meet their needs.

When a support person(s) is attending a College event where an admission fee is charged, the support person will be made aware of what the charge, if any, would be ahead of time.

### **5. Disruptions of Service**

All disruptions of service will be posted and the College will make every reasonable effort to provide notice of a disruption of services or in the facilities usually used by people with disabilities.

### **6. Training**

All staff of the College will be required to do training on providing goods and services to people with disabilities as outlined in the Accessible Customer Service Standard.

### **7. Feedback and questions**

Feedback and questions should be directed to HR at HSC.

#### Notice on the Feedback Process

We would welcome your feedback on our efforts in providing accessibility to our customers with disabilities. Please call 905 389 1367 or email Human Resources to provide your comments. A copy of our customer service policy is also available upon your request.

Thank-you,

Marc Ayotte  
Head of College