**CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

**Providing Services to People with Disabilities**

**Purpose**:

The John G. Althouse Before and After School Program strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers

**Guidelines**:

**The John G. Althouse Before and After School Program** is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

1. **Communication**

* We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
* We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

1. **Telephone services**

* We are committed to providing accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
* We will offer to communicate with customers by e-mail if telephone communication is not suitable to their needs.

1. **Assistive devices**

* We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

1. **Billing**

* We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print, email
* We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

continued page 2

1. **Use of service animals and support persons**

* We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
* We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the premises with his or her support person. At no time will 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.
* Fees will not be charged to support persons.

1. **Notice of temporary disruption**

* The John G. Althouse Before and After School Program will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected 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.
* The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises

1. **Training for staff**

* The John G. Althouse Before and After School Program will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.
* Training will be provided by the Director within 30 days of staff commencing their duties.
* Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures

1. **Training will include the following:**

* The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the 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

**CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

continued page 3

* How to use any available equipment on the school premises i.e. wheelchair ramps, automatic door buttons or otherwise that may help with the provision of services to people with disabilities.
* What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing services.
* Program policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

1. **Feedback process**

* The ultimate goal of the Program is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated. Feedback regarding the way the Program provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in the following ways: e-mail, verbally in person, written form, suggestion box or Program Evaluation. All feedback will be directed to the Program Director and customers can expect to hear back within two business days. Complaints will be addressed according to established policies and our Programs’ Conflict Resolution Matrix.

1. **Modifications to this or other policies**

* We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of the John G. Althouse Before and After School Program that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

1. **Handling Complaints**
2. A copy of the Customer Service Policy will be provided to all board members, employees and service users
3. All issues and concerns will be investigated by a committee comprised of the Director and selected board members, maintaining confidentiality will be a priority
4. Complaints lodged against the programme with respect to the Customer Service Policy

will be brought to the attention of the Board Of Directors immediately

1. Complaints lodged against the programme with respect to the Customer Service Policy

will be reported as a Serious Occurrence and all documentation with respect to the Serious

Occurrence Policy will be completed, reported and posted

Information to develop this policy was taken from the [**Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07**](http://209.167.40.96/page.asp?unit=cust-serv-reg&doc=guide&lang=en)