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| C:\Users\bzehr\Pictures\Logo\e@b-logo.jpeg | **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY** | **POLICY # XX** |
| Created: | November 2016 | |
| Last review date: |  | |
| Review frequency: | Bi-annually | |

**ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

**INTENT**

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code, *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* is committed to ensuring equal access and participation in our Centre and to our services for people with disabilities.

By identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in a timely manner, the Centre will strive to create and fosters an inclusive environment that is considerate and accommodating for all individuals and that treats people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

To that end, the Centre will strive to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following core principles as outlined in the AODA:

*Dignity*: Services are provided in a manner that is respectful to persons with a disability and does not diminish the person’s importance.

*Independence*: Accommodating a person’s disability means respecting their right to do for themselves and to choose the way they wish to receive services.

*Integration*: Persons with disabilities can access all services. This may require alternative formats and flexible approaches. It means inclusiveness and full participation. This is a fundamental human right.

*Equal Opportunity*: Service is provided to persons with disabilities in a way that their opportunity to access services is equal to that given to others.

**SCOPE**

All staff, children and families, volunteers, students and visitors.

**POLICY**

**Assistive devices**

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services or facility.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our services or facility.

We will ensure that our staff, volunteers and students are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services or facility.

**Communication**

The Centre will make every effort to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. The Centre will encourage people with disabilities to identify to the Centre what method of communication works for them in order to ensure our communication with them is successful.

**Service animals**

The Centre recognizes that service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks. However, when we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

* College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
* College of Chiropractors of Ontario
* College of Nurses of Ontario
* College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
* College of Optometrists of Ontario
* College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
* College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
* College of Psychologists of Ontario
* College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 562 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O., 1990, service animals will be prohibited from the Centre’s kitchen or any other room where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled or our lunch room where food is served, displayed and stored.

**Support persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

If a support person accompanies a child on a field trip, arrangements for alternative transportation or any extra costs associated with the trip or admission fees are the responsibility of the parent/family.

In certain cases, *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of the person with a disability or others on the premises.

Before making a decision, *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* will:

* consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
* consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
* determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

**Notice of temporary disruption**

In the event of an unexpected disruption of service or access to the facility, *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* will provide notice as soon as possible. During the disruption, the Centre will make every effort to provide alternative accommodations that take into consideration the needs of the individual.

When the Centre needs to provide notice of a temporary disruption in service, it will do so by clearly identifying the following:

* The nature of the disruption in service
* The reason for disruption
* The expected duration of the disruption
* A description of alternatives to service, if available
* A contact number for more information

The notice will be made publicly available through our website and Facebook page as well as local radio stations (in the event of inclement weather).

**Training**

*Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* will provide accessible customer service training to all employees, students and volunteers within the orientation period.

Training will include:

* purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard
* *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre’s* policies related to 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
* how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing services to people with disabilities
* what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre*’s services

Staff will also be trained when substantive changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

**Feedback process**

*Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Current and prospective families will be notified of how to provide feedback on our Facebook page and website as well as within our parent handbook.

Anyone who wishes to provide feedback on the way *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* provides services to people with disabilities can provide feedback by emailing the Centre’s administration or requesting to meet directly with either the Director of Operations or Executive Director.

*Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

**Notice of availability of documents**

*Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available, upon request, by posting a notice on the Centre’s Facebook page and website.

*Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, upon request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

**Fair and accessible employment practices**

The Centre will provide information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities on any job posting. Successful applicants will be notified about the Centre’s practice and policies for accommodating employees with disabilities within their offer of employment.

The Centre will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee’s accessibility needs due to a disability.

Upon an employee’s request, the Centre will consult with the employee to assist in identifying accessible formats and communication supports needed in order to perform the employee’s job; and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

The Centre will have in place a documented return to work process for employees returning to work due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations. A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans will be developed for employees with disabilities.

The Centre will include accessibility considerations in performance management and career development plans.

**Modifications to this or other policies**

Any policies of *Emmanuel at Brighton Childcare Centre* that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.