





## Our Mission

We are an inclusive Catholic learning community called to love unconditionally and educate hearts and minds in the way of Christ.

## Our Vision

As a community of believers, we strive to...

- Cultivate an active faith journey rooted in the Word of God, prayer, and the sacraments.
- Reverence the dignity of the whole person.
- Recognize and remove barriers to create just and equitable opportunities for all.
- Nurture the well-being, self-worth and potential of each individual.
- Foster student ability to think critically, communicate effectively and work collaboratively.
- Instill a desire for life-long learning and a pursuit of excellence.
- Develop and integrate a distinctive and relevant Catholic curriculum based on the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.
- Model a servant leadership style following the example of Jesus.
- Live by and proclaim the principles of Catholic social teaching.
- Build a relationship with Indigenous communities founded on a deep respect for their identities, beliefs, and traditions to support healing and work toward reconciliation.
- Embrace our role as global stewards cherishing the environment and all life in it.
- Enhance relationships among members of the home, school, parish, and extended community.
- Sustain safe school environments characterized by warmth, hospitality, good humour, and joy.
- Be instruments of peace, grace, and hope.

*This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God. -Micah 6:8*

*Schools to believe in!*

Re-animated by the Catholic Community of Renfrew County in 2022

## Availability of the Plan

The *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* Accessibility Plan is available in the following formats:

1. On the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* website at [www.rccdsb.ca](http://www.rccdsb.ca).
2. At the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* office at 499 Pembroke Street West, Pembroke, ON, K8A 5P1.
3. In accessible formats, upon request to:

Mr. Clint Young  
Superintendent of Education  
Renfrew County Catholic District School Board  
499 Pembroke Street West  
Pembroke, ON, K8A 5P1  
613.735.1031  
[clint.young@rccdsb.ca](mailto:clint.young@rccdsb.ca)

## Feedback Process

The public can provide accessibility concerns and feedback through the following channels:

- A dedicated contact on the RCCDSB website - please visit the *Accessibility* section at [www.rccdsb.ca](http://www.rccdsb.ca) (Clint Young, Superintendent, 613-735-1031).
- RCCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC): The Board actively seeks feedback through constituency groups like SEAC.

All feedback gathered is reviewed by the Accessibility Working Group to identify ways to better support students, staff, parents/caregivers, and community members with disabilities.

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers and to promote their full participation in the life of the province. To this end, the AODA requires each school board to prepare a multi-year accessibility plan, to consult with people with disabilities in the preparation of this plan, and to make the plan public.

This is the fourteenth plan prepared by the Accessibility Working Group of the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board (RCCDSB)*. The report describes:

- the measures that the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* has taken in the past, and
- the measures that the Board will take in the next year to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the Board, including students, staff, parents and other members of the community.

**The *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* remains committed to the continual improvement of access to school board facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for those with disabilities, including students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and members of the community.**

To demonstrate our commitment, our plan provides for the participation of people with disabilities and various disability groups.

## Description of the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board

Located in Eastern Ontario, approximately 100 kilometers northwest of Ottawa, the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* comprises 19 schools (17 English Catholic elementary schools and 2 English Catholic secondary schools) in sixteen communities, the majority of which are rural. Our district covers a wide geographical area of more than 7,851 square kilometers from Deep River in the north to Calabogie in the south to Arnprior in the east and to Barry's Bay in the west. There are 550 employees providing education for approximately 4,600 students.

## Aim

This report describes the measures that the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* has taken in the past three years, and the continued efforts that will be made over the next year to identify, prevent and remove barriers for those individuals with disabilities as they access our services and facilities.

## Objectives

This plan:

- describes the process by which the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- review efforts at the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities during the past years.
- outline the policies, procedures, programs, practices and services that the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* will review in the upcoming years to identify barriers for people with disabilities.
- describe the measures the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* will take in the upcoming years to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.
- describe how the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* will make the accessibility plan available to the public.

## Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* is committed to:

- establishing an Accessibility Working Group.
- consulting with people with disabilities and community-based agencies that advocate on behalf of those with disabilities.
- ensuring school board policies and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility, and
- improving access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and members of the community.

## Universal Design for Learning Philosophy

Throughout the Ontario Ministry of Education document, [Learning for All- A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013](#), school boards in Ontario were directed to follow a universal design for learning (UDL) model.

[Universal Design for Learning](#) was inspired by work in architecture on the planning of buildings with a view of accessibility for people with physical disabilities (Turnbull et al., 2002). Architects observed that the added improvements facilitate access for all users, not just people with physical disabilities. An access ramp, for instance, provides a person using a wheelchair with easier access to a building but it also makes it easier for a parent with a child's stroller, a traveler with a baggage trolley, or someone using a walker.

Eventually, researchers in other fields noted that specialized technology meant for the target population is also useful for others. The notion that assistance targeted at a specific group can help everyone, bolstered by recent research on inclusion and new technologies, has now made its way into the field of education.

Universal design ensures that the classroom and other learning environments are as usable as possible for students, regardless of their age, ability, or situation.

Some examples of UDL principles include:

- equitable use
- appropriate designed space
- flexibility
- simplicity
- safety
- provide options for perception.

The principles of universal design guide decisions made by the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board*. Launched in the Fall of 2023, our [Achievement and Action Plan](#) highlights that educating the hearts and minds of our students should incorporate the principles and guidelines of *Universal Design for Learning*, and *Learning for All*. These will foster a sense of inclusivity, engagement, well-being, belonging, and achievement in our diverse and equitable learning environments.

## Accessibility Working Group

The focus and commitment of the Accessibility Group includes:

- conducting surveys and consulting with schools, staff, and students to determine present barriers with respect to supports, services, and facilities in the school board.
- examining the reasons 'why' certain barriers exist and determining how these barriers will be addressed, prevented, and removed.
- preparing reports and supporting documentation regarding current states and practices with regards to barriers and services for those with disabilities.
- updating and presenting the Accessibility Plan to the Special Education Advisory Committee and the Board of Education for approval at least once every five years.
- making the plan available and accessible to the public.

## Accessibility Working Group Members

Member	Role & Position	Contact
Clint Young	Superintendent of Education, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Katherine McLaughlin	Chairperson, Coordinator of Special Education, RCCDSB	613.735.5496
Angela Bergeron	Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerant Teacher and Accessibility SPAT, RCCDSB	613.732.2248
Kelly Etmanskie	Coordinator of Special Education, RCCDSB	613.757.3113
Jenna Lemke	Principal, St. James Catholic School, RCCDSB	613.628.2927
Jillian Burchart	Manager of Human Resources, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Heather Francis	Assistant Manager of Human Resources, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Renee Rivard	Community Use of Schools/Plant Services Officer, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Jaime Russell	Health and Safety/Plant Services Officer, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Tom Carroll	Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching Contact, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Donna McEwen	Administrative Assistant to the Superintendents/SEA Secretary, RCCDSB	613.735.1031
Susan Taylor Justin Jeffrey	Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium	613.732.8419
Jodi Cotnam Tania Clouthier	Occupational Therapists, Integrated Care Delivery, CHEO	613.737.7600
Pierre Beaupre	Custodian, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, RCCDSB	613.732.4633
Student Representative	James Allen, Bishop Smith Catholic High School, RCCDSB	

## Definition of Disability

The ODA (Ontarians with Disabilities) adopts the broad definition for disability that is set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### **Disability\* is:**

**any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.**

- (a) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.**
- (b) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.**
- (c) a mental disorder, or**
- (d) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.**

### **\*Further consideration regarding *disability***

*Invisible Disability-An invisible disability is classified as a physical, mental, or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities. People usually assume disabilities to be physical or visual when many disabilities are not apparent. A disability is generally defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially affects your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

## Barriers

Several barriers have been identified for people with disabilities. The categories include:

- **Attitudinal barriers**, for example, assuming people with disabilities can't perform a certain task when, in fact, they can.
- **Architectural and physical barriers**, for example, a step at the entrance to a building or counters that are too high.
- **Technological barriers**, such as websites not formatted for screen readers or font adjusters.
- **Information or communication barriers**, for example a publication that is not available in large print.
- **Policies and practices which create barriers**, for example, not offering different ways to complete a test or an interview.

For further information on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), please access the following link: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-laws>

## Barrier Identification Process

The Accessibility Working Group met in May 2023 & September 2024 to review the previous 3-year plan and provide updates for this revised Accessibility Plan. The goals of this meeting include:

- discussing barriers that were addressed in previous year(s)/plan(s).
- Identifying new barriers to be addressed or areas that require focus.
- re-designing the Accessibility Plan.

## Process for Reporting Barriers

1. The individual discusses their concern with the principal or manager of the facility within which the issue exists.
2. The principal or manager notifies the Chair of the Accessibility Committee of the concern.
3. The appropriate course of action will be recommended:
  - a. Work order
  - b. Resources
  - c. Consultation for direction

## Recent Barrier Removal Initiatives

### Attitudinal Barriers

The *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* continues to promote inclusive practices for all students, staff, and community members.

- During the 2022-2023 school year, the Renfrew County Catholic DSB's theme from our reanimated vision was "*As a community of believers, we strive to recognize and remove barriers to create just and equitable opportunities for all*".
- A diverse representation of members has been maintained on the Accessibility Working Group. Members include staff from Plant Services department, Human Resources, Principals, Senior Administration, our Transportation Consortium partner, as well as CHEO School-Based Rehabilitation Service Professionals.
- An itinerant teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was hired to help support our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students across RCCDSB.
- The creation of an Accessibility Special Assignment Teacher position (through Ministry project funding) to remove barriers and create equitable learning environments for students with disabilities.
- Numerous professional development opportunities for staff including *Trauma & Attachment, Student Crisis Planning, Orbit Note/Google Read&Write, LD@School Resources, Individual Education Plans, Everyday Speech (Social Skills Training), Sensory Strategies, Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Training, etc.*
- The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board continues to work in partnership with local associations and community partners (Community Living, Family and Children's Services, CHEO, etc.) to ensure support is available for students with disabilities. Many of these agencies have provided professional development opportunities for students, parents, and staff.
- A diverse representation of members has been maintained on the Accessibility Working Group. Members include staff from Plant Services, Human Resources, Principals, Senior Administration, our Transportation Consortium partner, as well as CHEO School-Based Rehabilitation Service Professionals.
- Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's Wholeness and Wellness Program supports positive mental health in the workplace, providing access for RCCDSB students and staff to seek the help they need and create positive change.
- Accessibility Committee Representation on our Board's Equity and Inclusion Committee.

## Architectural and Physical Barriers

The Plant Services Department is committed to greater accessibility in, out, and around the buildings for which we are responsible. They will continue to monitor, and address identified barriers as budget and timelines permit.

Throughout 2020-2023, some highlights included:

- Close monitoring of new playground updates to ensure they meet accessibility requirements, including engineered wood fiber for playground surfaces.
- LED lighting (dimmers) at St. John XXIII, St. Joseph's Arnprior, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Andrews, St. Michaels, St. John Bosco, and two classrooms at St. Francis of Assisi.
- An accessible washroom at George Vanier and Bishop Smith Catholic High School (grade 7/8 area).
- The installation of automatic door openers (with accessible kick plates) at Bishop Smith Catholic High School for all exterior doors and accessible washrooms.
- A consulting architectural firm will provide recommendations to Plant Services and Senior Administration on critical accessibility features that are required in our schools.

## Technological Barriers

We continue to support exceptional learners who use adaptive equipment and programs.

Technological initiatives throughout 2020-2023 included:

- SEA (Special Equipment Amount) claims for students within the school board that include but are not limited to:
  - Sensory equipment
  - Remote Microphone systems (for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students) and Hushhups
  - Computer hardware including laptops, tablets, Chromebooks®, Winbooks® and accessories (e.g., headphones, mice, chargers, etc.)
  - Google Education, Read & Write (speech-to-text/text-to-speech), various speech and language applications and programs, etc.
  - CPens® and LiveScribe Echo SmartPens®
  - Students with SEA continue to be provided with several hours of individualized or small-group training by an assistive technology trainer.

- School staff and, when possible, parents/guardians are invited to participate in student training to provide a continuity of support for the exceptional learner in both the classroom and home settings.
- Monitoring and training on specialized equipment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students (for the student and staff supporting the student).
- SEA is upgraded as needed (e.g., if there are changes in student needs or if the equipment is outdated).
- Both small and large group training sessions on assistive technology have been provided upon request to staff and students by our *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* assistive technology trainers.
- Securing a SEA trainer for each school, allowing for updated inventories of SEA, in-house support when a student or staff member is having technical difficulties, and in-house assistive technology training (initial and refresher).
- The purchase of Boardmaker® and Everyday Speech® licenses to support students with language impairments and Autism, although students with a variety of learning needs benefit from these programs as well.

## Information and Communication Barriers

The *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Focus areas throughout 2020-2023 included:

- Board and school websites reviewed on a regular basis to assess level of accessibility.
- Ensuring our new website meets WCAG 2.0 Level A standards (WCAG- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).
- Supporting secondary school libraries & classroom teachers to ensure accessible or conversion-ready formats of print resources upon request and within a reasonable time frame (e.g. [Alternative Education Resources Ontario](#), [SORA](#), etc.).
- Single sign-on feature available for staff to ensure easy access to Board resources, information, and documentation.
- Continued promotion to ensure all students (and in particular those with vision, hearing and/or learning disabilities) and staff are aware of built-in [Google for Education Accessibility features](#) on their devices.
- Focused training and promotion of Google Read and Write® and OrbitNote® as a more seamless way for students to access documents.
- For students who require Alternative and Augmentative Communication devices, training for the students as well as staff who work with students requiring specialized devices and applications (e.g TouchChat) is delivered by our Speech and Language team.

## Policy Barriers

The *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* ensures that all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure equity, inclusion, and accessibility for all.

Focus areas throughout the past few years included:

- Continued implementation of Human Resources' bias-free hiring policies.
- Ensuring recruitment and hiring practices are accessible. Applicants are aware of accessibility accommodations and successful applicants are notified of policies for accommodating employees.
- Through the Board's Return to Work program, support is provided for employees with an occupational or non-occupational illness or injury who require accommodations to return to work. The objective of the program is to return employees to their pre-illness/injury status as soon as possible, consistent with their medical condition.
- Review of policies on a cyclical basis, including the consideration of *Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility* legislation.
- the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board* Attendance Support Program (a non-disciplinary program) aims to support regular, punctual attendance at work and to treat absences consistently and equitably across the organization.
- A revision and updates to the Board's policy for Guide Dogs/Services animals for students in our schools.

## Areas of Focus for 2024-2025

Type of Barrier	Action
<p><b>Attitudinal</b>            The <i>Renfrew County Catholic District School Board</i> will continue to promote inclusionary practices for all students, staff, and community members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with and feedback from employees (e.g. Educational Assistants, Administrators, SERTs, teachers, etc.) on accessibility across RCCDSB, including barriers that are encountered as well as inclusive practices that should be encouraged and adopted.</li> <li>• A Student Safety Plan Working Group has revised the board's High Needs Safety Plan. As a next step, they will provide professional development to Administrators and SERTs to ensure consistency with its implementation and use.</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities for staff by our ABA team to ensure deeper understanding and consistent messaging regarding strategies, techniques and principles used to bring positive changes in behaviour.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to SERTs through our SESH (Special Education Support Hour) model on a wide range of topics (e.g. Psychoeducational Assessments, Learning Disabilities, Learner Profiles, Student Safety Plans) to build knowledge and support a wide range of learners with exceptionalities.</li> <li>• Members of our Special Education team participated in training with the <a href="#">Rick Hansen Foundation</a> - <i>Inclusion and Accessibility Learning for Educators</i>.</li> <li>• Educational Assistants will receive professional development on a number of topics (Mental Health, Behaviour Management Systems, ABA Principles, Alternative and Augmentative Communication, Assistive Technology, etc.) to build capacity, promote inclusive practices, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.</li> <li>• Collaboration between the Special Education team and the Physical Education and Outdoor Education Special Assignment Teacher to eliminate barriers and ensure equitable access to physical activities for students with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Architectural and Physical</b>            The <i>Renfrew County Catholic District School Board</i> is committed to greater accessibility in, out of, and around the buildings for which we are responsible. Plant Services continues to monitor, and address identified barriers as budgets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant Services will continue to plan and provide accessible facilities, ensuring all renovations and additions meet building code requirements (Ontario Regulation 368/13 AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards).</li> <li>• Playgrounds will continue to be updated with engineered wood fiber.</li> <li>• Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School's walkways and parking lot will receive updates.</li> <li>• Exterior doors and lobbies that are too narrow for a wheelchair, scooter or walker will be adjusted to ensure accessibility.</li> </ul>

<p>and timelines permit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reviewing the feasibility of an accessible washroom on every level in our schools.</li> <li>● New elevators are planned for St. Mary's Our Lady of Good Counsel and Cathedral Catholic School.</li> <li>● Replacement elevators at Our Lady of Fatima, Bishop Smith Catholic High School and St. Joseph's Catholic School (Arnprior).</li> <li>● A lift for access to the gymnasium will be installed at St. Mary's Our Lady of Good Counsel school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technological</b> The <i>Renfrew County Catholic District School Board</i> will continue to support exceptional learners who use adaptive equipment and programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to provide support to our board's <i>Assistive Technology Trainers</i> on the utilization of assistive technology for students with SEA (e.g., Read and Write®, speech-to-text features, built-in accessibility features, etc.).</li> <li>● Provide training to students with SEA funded assistive technology on the use of specialized equipment and programs, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication training from our Speech and Language team.</li> <li>● In collaboration with the Information Technology department, the Coordinators of Special Education will roll out a timelier and more efficient allocation process of SEA Assistive Technology devices for students.</li> <li>● Designated technical support process for troubleshooting issues related to SEA, to ensure limited interruption of use for students.</li> <li>● Coordinators of Special Education will work with the Information Technology department when upgrades are required for student devices (e.g. iPads, Chromebooks, laptops).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information and Communication</b> The <i>Renfrew County Catholic District School Board</i> will continue to enhance the accessibility of board and school communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continued promotion of SORA- a digital library that offers eBooks and audiobooks at students' and staffs' fingertips; learning tools within the app include dyslexia font, enlarged text, read-alongs and audiobooks.</li> <li>● Continue to encourage the use of the various accessibility features available through Google for Education (e.g., contrast between text and background, closed captioning, screen reader, etc.).</li> <li>● Continue to encourage the public to provide input through the Accessibility web page on issues related to Accommodations and Accessibility; this input could be communicated by contacting Clint Young, Superintendent of Special Education.</li> <li>● Monitor capacity of school libraries to provide accessible or conversion-ready formats of digital and multimedia resources upon request.</li> <li>● Monitor accessibility features of all updates and purchases related to board and school websites in anticipation of WCAG</li> </ul>

	<p>2.0 Level AA Standards 2021 deadline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Representation from our Accessibility Committee on the board's Learning Technologies Committee, as well as involvement in the development of the board's website.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy</b> The <i>Renfrew County Catholic District School Board</i> ensures that all policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure Equity and Inclusion and Accessibility for All.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication regarding Professional Development will ensure staff are encouraged to let facilitators know of accommodations that will meet their learning needs.</li> <li>● All policies are reviewed on a cyclical basis and will include consideration of Equity and Inclusion and Accessibility legislation.</li> <li>● All new policies will include Equity and Inclusion and Accessibility legislation.</li> <li>● Updates to the <i>Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's</i> Employee Handbook to include a revised section on Accessibility Awareness, including how the board is preventing and removing barriers for its employees with disabilities in accordance with the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other (e.g., Transportation)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing accessible school transportation services or accessible alternative transportation to students with disabilities as well as reviewing policies with the <i>Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium</i>.</li> <li>● In consultation with principals and the Coordinators of Special Education, the <i>Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium</i> will identify students with disabilities before the commencement of each school year or during the school year based on individual needs of the student with a disability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual school AODA transportation plans will be developed or reviewed for each student with a disability.</li> <li>○ Medical safety plans are also developed for students who are identified with medical conditions (e.g., Diabetes, anaphylaxis, Epilepsy, etc.).</li> </ul> </li> <li>● RCJTC can access medical information from Edsembli (RCCDSB's student information system).</li> <li>● RCJTC aims to provide flexibility in its communication regarding transportation services to RCCDSB families (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, emails, etc.).</li> <li>● Drivers are provided with detailed information regarding students with AODA transportation plans as well as students who have medical plans to ensure the safety of all riders and drivers.</li> <li>● Representation from our Accessibility Committee on the board's Learning Technologies Committee as well as involvement in the development of the board's website.</li> </ul>

**Emergency Procedures:** The Renfrew County Catholic DSB will provide, upon request, accessible emergency information to employees and students with disabilities.

## Procedures for Preventive and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

- Playgrounds are inspected weekly for visual items by the school custodian. If any components are found defective, a work order is submitted to eliminate the deficiencies.
- Playgrounds are also inspected monthly by the Plant Services Officers. The playground is checked by pushing and pulling on components/equipment to ensure they are not defective. If any defects are discovered, a work order is submitted to eliminate the deficiencies.
- Playgrounds are also inspected thoroughly, and an annual report is completed. A work order would be submitted for any defective items, which also includes the surfacing being either rototilled, adding more surfacing, or simply raking it to eliminate any holes.
- If any playgrounds require emergency maintenance, then the work order would be increased to high importance and the playground or area of concern would also be blocked off with signage.

## Procedures for Dealing with Temporary Disruptions

- As members of the public, people with disabilities may rely on certain facilities, services or systems in order to access the services of the schools or board office.
- Escalators and elevators, for example, are important to people with mobility disabilities because that may be the only way they can access the premises. Other systems and services designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities can include accessible washrooms, amplification systems, and scribing services.
- When those facilities or services are temporarily unavailable or if they are expected to be temporarily unavailable soon, a notice of disruption of services will be posted at the site and on the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's* website.

## Reviewing and Monitoring Process

- The Accessibility Working Group will meet a minimum once per year to discuss and address barriers with respect to accessibility.
- The Chair of the Accessibility Committee will meet as required with Management and Senior Administration to discuss and address items specific to the implementation of the requirements and standards outlined within the AODA.
- The Chair of the Accessibility Committee, in consultation with Plant Services, will seek input and recommendations from principals and vice-principals within the various schools to prioritize and designate areas for improvement.
- The Accessibility Plan will be updated at least once every three years.

## Presentation of the Plan

The Chair of the Accessibility Committee will share the 2024-2025 Accessibility Plan to the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's* Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) for recommendations and suggestions. After that time, the Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees. School principals will then be asked to share the Plan with their staff and school councils.

## Communication of the Plan

As a commitment to the *Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's* stewardship for the environment, our 2024-2025 Accessibility Plan will be made available to the public on the board's website. Paper copies of the plan are available upon request and in accessible formats. Please contact Clint Young, Superintendent of Education, regarding these requests. Questions and concerns can be directed to the board contact below.

### Clint Young

Superintendent of Education  
Renfrew County Catholic District School Board  
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Pembroke, ON | K8A 5P1  
613.735.1031  
[Clint.Young@rccdsb.ca](mailto:Clint.Young@rccdsb.ca)

## Appendix A: Where to Look for Barriers

### What is a barrier?

A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.

### Where to look for Barriers

#### Attitudinal Barriers:

- Not recognizing the diversity of disabilities, and the diversity of people who share any disability.
- Assuming that someone with one disability necessarily has others, too (e.g. believing that someone with a speech impairment must also have an intellectual disability).
- Searching for the single right answer about how to act with people with disabilities.
- Imposing "help" rather than offering it, thereby taking control away from the person.
- Choosing activities or meeting places that are inaccessible.
- Holding lower expectations of people with disabilities or giving work that's too easy.
- Not listening to people with disabilities.
- Lack of understanding or misinformation about a person's disability

#### Physical Barriers:

Furniture	Classroom design	Windows
Workstations	Planters	Chairs
Bathroom Hardware	Doors	Doorknobs
Locks	Security systems	Handrails
Drinking fountains	Seats, tables, counters	Telephones

**Architectural Barriers:**

Exterior Access to a building	Storage areas	Lighting
Athletic facilities	Entrances	Gymnasiums
Parking Areas	Drop-off zones	Washrooms
Hallways	Cafeterias	Learning Commons areas
Elevators	Carpets	Lobby areas
Stairs	Reception areas	Offices
Closets	Playgrounds	Walkways

**Information/Communication Barriers:**

Forms	Signage	Printed Information
Bulletin Boards	Training	Public announcements
Web-based resources	Manuals	Textbooks
Brochures	Novels	

**Technological Barriers:**

Computers	Websites	Keyboards
Monitors	Operating systems	Standard Software
Printers		

**Policy/Practice Barriers:**

Job Postings	Hiring practices	Testing procedures
Meetings	Community use of facilities	Protocols
Safety and Evacuation procedures	Regulations	By-laws
Promotions	Interviews	Procurement and purchasing
Training	Professional development	

## Appendix B: Suggested Reference Material/Resources

- **Accessibility in Ontario** - Learn about the laws and framework for making Ontario more accessible.
- **AccessForward** - Provides free training modules to meet the training requirement under Ontario's accessibility laws.
- **AODA 101** – Introduction to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- **AODA Alliance** - The AODA Alliance is a disability consumer advocacy group that works to support the full and effective implementation of accessibility standards in Ontario.
- **Learning for All** - A resource guide for educators that describes an integrated process of assessment and instruction, including planning tools that support all students' learning.
- **Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility | ontario.ca** - Making Ontario more accessible for everyone and promoting the benefits of age-diverse, accessible workplaces and communities where everyone can participate.
- **Policy on ableism and discrimination based on disability | Ontario Human Rights Commission**
- **Rick Hansen Foundation** - The Rick Hansen Foundation team has been raising awareness, changing attitudes, and breaking down barriers for people with disabilities with their programs and initiatives.
- **The Teachable Project** - A website devoted to educators to enable them to transform attitudes and build awareness by ensuring their classrooms and their schools are places where every student is included and feels welcome.

