

Name of Policy	ACCESSIBILITY POLICY	
Effective Date	April 21, 2015	
Author/Lead (position only)	HR Manager	
Revision	1. Date:	1. Detail:
SMT Approval	1. Date: April 21, 2015	
Location (manual)	Human Resource Policy and Procedure Manual	
Applicable to (who)	All employees, volunteers, and to any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of PRI in accordance with the legislation	
Mode of Communication to above	Staff Orientation, online training, Staff meeting presentation, email distribution, posting on Public HR drive on internal IT system, and HR Manual.	
Legal and Other References	<p>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 1;</p> <p>Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07;</p> <p>Integrated Accessibility Standards, O. Reg. 191/11;</p> <p>Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19;</p> <p>Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c D.16;</p> <p>Guide Dogs, RRO 1990.</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy;</p> <p>Dispute Resolution Policy;</p> <p>Recruitment and Selection Policy</p>	
Review Date (annually)	April 2016	

Purpose

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other Pine River Institute (PRI) policies, standards, procedures, By-laws, and guidelines to comply with the standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11.* (the AODA).

Statement of Commitment

PRI is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA.

Guiding Principles

The provision of accessible customer service at PRI will be guided by the fundamental principles governing AODA.

Dignity

All people regardless of abilities will be treated as valued and respected as individuals.

Equal Opportunity

Persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to benefit from the services provided by Pine River Institute as other clients. We will take the individual needs of a person with a disability into account, even if doing so results in different treatment.

Independence

People with disabilities are free to choose the manner in which they communicate and to the extent possible we will attempt to adapt our services to their needs.

Integration

People with disabilities have access to the services provided by Pine River Institute. This principle includes looking at alternate measures in cases where full integration is not possible or desirable.

Definitions

Assistive Device: any device used by people with disabilities to help increase, maintain, or improve how a person with a disability can function. Examples of assistive devices include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids, oxygen tanks, and communication boards.

Disability: As defined in AODA and the *Human Rights Code*, disability includes the following:

- 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 co-ordination, 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 condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or

- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

Guide Dog: a dog trained as a guide for a blind person that also meets the conditions and qualifications prescribed by *Guide Dogs*, RRO 1990, Reg 58.

Service Animal: any animal accompanying a person with disability, so long as:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person: a person who accompanies a person with disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. A Support Person is not an employee of PRI who supports a student in the system.

Assistive Devices

Employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall accommodate the use of personal assistive devices including but not limited to, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters and Braille display boards. Assistive devices including, but not limited to, Assistive Listening Devices and FM Loop systems that are available for access to specific services and programs shall be kept in good working order and the public shall be informed of their availability.

Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, PRI will take into account the person's disability to ensure communication appropriate to the disability. Additionally, PRI will provide training on communication with people with disabilities.

Service Animals and Guide Dogs

Employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall accommodate the use of service animals by people with disabilities who are accessing PRI's services unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law, such as in food preparation areas as prohibited by Food Premises, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 562 under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7.

Service animals and guide dogs accompanying persons with disabilities are welcome on PRI's premises that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. For example, certain dog breeds may be excluded by the provincial *Dog Owners' Liability Act* or by municipal by-laws.

Additionally, there may be circumstances where allowing a service animal to accompany a person with a disability on PRI's premises might compromise the health and safety of another person. A common example would be allowing a guide dog near a person with a severe allergy to dogs. In such circumstances, PRI management will consider all relevant information to come up with a solution that meets the needs of both parties.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal accompanying a person with a disability is a service animal, PRI may require the person to produce a letter from a physician or a nurse to verify the animal's role.

Support Persons

Where a person with a disability accessing PRI's services is accompanied by a support person, PRI's employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and shall ensure that the person with a disability can access the support person while on the premises.

Support persons accompanying people with disabilities are welcome at all PRI's premises that are open to the public.

Generally, the presence of a support person will only be required in situations where there is a significant health and safety risk that cannot be mitigated by other means.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

PRI will promptly notify all clients about any disruptions to services or facilities for people with disabilities. This notice will be posted in a conspicuous place and will include information about the reason for the disruption and its anticipated length, as well as information on available alternative services or facilities.

The notice will be placed on website, bulletin boards, staff meetings and via email distribution

Establishment of Accessibility Plans and Policies

PRI shall have a multi-year Accessibility Plan. The plan will be posted on the PRI's website and shall be made available in an accessible format and with communication supports, upon request.

Progress on the plan will be provided annually. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once every five (5) years.

PRI maintains policies governing how PRI shall meet its requirements under the AODA, and PRI will provide policies in an accessible format, upon request.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Except as otherwise provided by the AODA, PRI shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons, in accordance with the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures.

This does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that PRI does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that information or communications are unconvertible, the department shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

- an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible;
- a summary of the unconvertible information or communications

Employee Training

PRI will train employees who deal with the public or other third parties on the provision of accessible customer service to people with disabilities, as well as all individuals who participate in the development of policies, practices, and procedures governing customer service. This includes individuals in the following positions: RYCs, Therapists, Drivers and kitchen and maintenance staff, managers, Admissions Director, Director of Communications Training will be provided to all new employees as part of the onboarding process and as an update for employees on any changes to policies or procedures when they occur.

Employee training will include the following elements:

- An overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the requirements of the customer service standard
- PRI's accessible customer service plan
- 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 on-site equipment and devices to provide accessible customer service for people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing PRI's goods and services

Training will also be provided following any changes to the accessible customer service plan.

Recruitment

PRI shall post information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Job applicants who are individually selected for an interview and/or testing shall be notified that accommodations for material to be used in the process are available, upon request. PRI shall consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability. Successful applicants shall be notified about PRI's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment

Employee Supports

PRI 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 disability. PRI will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment and provide updated information to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employee

Upon an employee's request, PRI shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

PRI will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

PRI will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability. In addition, this information shall be provided, with the employee's consent, to the person designated to provide assistance. The information shall undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when PRI reviews its general emergency response plan.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities, if requested. The plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communications supports. The plans shall also include the individualized workplace emergency response information.

Return to Work Process

PRI has in place a documented return to work process for employees returning to work due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations. This return to work process outlines the steps that PRI shall take to facilitate the return to work.

Performance Management and Career Development and Redeployment

PRI shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development, performance management and when considering redeployment

Feedback Process

PRI welcomes client feedback on our efforts to ensure accessible customer service to people with disabilities. We invite clients to speak to any of our employees or managers or to contact us by email or telephone.

All client feedback will be reviewed the Executive Director of Operations or the CEO and replies will be provided within 14 days.

Additionally, any complaints related to the provision of customer service for people with disabilities can be addressed by utilizing PRI's *Dispute Resolution Procedure*, which is available to clients and employees to ensure that disputes are managed as quickly and fairly as possible. A complete copy of the process is available upon request or can be found in the Human Resources Policy Manual and the Parent and Student Handbooks.

Policy Modifications

PR1 will modify or repeal any other policy that is inconsistent with this policy.