



LAKESHORE
SCHOOL DIVISION

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Prepared by

Lakeshore School Division's Accessibility Steering Committee

In accordance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), 2013

This publication is available through the Lakeshore School Division website www.lakeshoresd.mb.ca.

Introduction:

The Lakeshore School Division School Board is committed to providing services to our students, parents/guardians, the public, and our staff that are free of barriers and biases. The Accessibility Plan is developed in accordance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), 2013. The legislation requires accessibility standards to be developed over the next several years. The standards will address barriers and set out requirements in five key areas of daily living.

1. Customer service standard
2. Employment
3. Information and communication
4. Built environments
5. Transportation

Objectives:

The Accessibility Plan will be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with the Accessibility Planning Committee and in consultation with persons with disabilities.

- Describes the processes by which Lakeshore School Division will **identify** barriers to Accessibility.
- Describes the measures Lakeshore School Division will take to **remove** barriers to Accessibility.
- Makes a commitment to **prevent** barriers to Accessibility
- Makes a commitment to **report on, review and update** this multi-year plan annually.

About Us:

- Lakeshore School Division is located approximately an hour north of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Lakeshore occupies 7000 square kilometers of Manitoba's Interlake Region. The Division serves 1000 students, employing over 230 regular staff in ten schools. The six communities that are served by Lakeshore School Division are Moosehorn, Ashern, Eriksdale, Lundar, Inwood, and Fisher Branch.
- As part of the school environment there is public access for events such as open houses, holiday concerts, parent teacher conferences, etc. The schools are an integral part of our community, with many public groups accessing school facilities after school, in the evenings, and on weekends.

Mission and Vision:

LAKESHORE IS... An Inspired Community of Learners

IN LAKESHORE...

- We put students first - always.
- We believe all children can learn and succeed.
- We educate the whole child.
- We help children feel safe.
- We have high expectations.
- We are small with big aspirations.
- We dream big dreams with our children and their parents.
- We take risks on the way to success.
- We build strong relationships.
- We embrace diversity.

Commitment Statement

The Lakeshore School Division School Board is committed to providing services to our students, parents/guardians, the public, and our staff that are free of barriers and biases. Lakeshore School Division strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and quality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. The commitment is to:

- Maintain an Accessibility Planning Committee
- Ensure, wherever practicable, that Board policies, regulations and procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility. The Accessibility Planning Committee will provide input re: accessibility issues, where appropriate, with regard to new policies, regulations and procedures and to those under review.
- Improve practices and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and members of the community. Consideration of barriers to accessibility and how to provide services by removing barriers that may exist. Barriers may include attitudinal barriers, informational and communication barriers, technological barriers, systemic barriers, and physical and architectural barriers.

Achievements

Lakeshore has much to celebrate in making the school Division more accessible including, but not limited to, current regulations and procedures that promote accessibility:

- Mission and Vision statement
- Safe Schools – Code of Conduct
- Safe Schools – Emergency Response Plans
- Safe Schools – Respect for Human Diversity
- Safety Inspections and Maintenance
- Transportation of Students
- Use of Certified Service Animals in Schools
- Access Assessment
- Off-Site Field Trips and Excursions

The Committee will build on existing strengths in accessibility to achieve compliance in all five standards as part of this multi-year plan.

Policy Statement:

Lakeshore School Division will develop and put into place measures, policies, regulations, procedures and practices that will help ensure barrier-free accessibility for seniors, people with disabilities and others with challenges to mobility, communication, understanding or health concerns.

ACTIONS

Review and Monitoring Process:

The Accessibility Planning Committee will meet annually to first identify the barriers and gaps in policies, regulation, procedures, and practices and to develop a solution focused strategy as a priority in our Accessibility Plan. Following its development, the Committee will review progress, evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of barrier removal and prevention strategies, and to plan for increased accessibility throughout the Division. On an annual basis the Committee will challenge themselves to continue to plan for improved accessibility in all five standards.

Accessibility Planning Committee:

| Lakeshore School Board Trustees | Lakeshore Senior Administrators | Lakeshore School Principals |
|---|---|---|
| Donald Thorkelson Teresa Johnson Allison Moman Marvin Coverdale Shaun Lindal Kelly Webb Tetiana Vasylieva | Darlene Willetts (Superintendent/CEO) Donald Nikkel (Superintendent of HR, Policy and Public Relations) Arlene Brandson Darknell (Secretary-Treasurer) Mark Parkes (Director of Operations & Infrastructure) | Alann Fraser (Alf Cuthbert School) Tracey Kinkead (Ashern Central School) Karen Carmichael (Ashern Early Years School) Jen Desjarlais (Eriksdale School) Lawrence Grzenda (Lundar Early Years School & Lundar High School) Tosh Kupchak (Inwood School) Amanda Garton (Fisher Branch Collegiate) Angela Caines (Fisher Branch Early Years School) Wayne Kochan (Broad Valley and Marble Ridge Colony Schools) |

Barrier Identification Methodology:

The accessibility working group will use the following barrier identification methodology:

- Ongoing reference to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, 2013.
- Brainstorm with the Planning Committee a list of known and suspected barriers to determine the extent of known and suspected barriers within the Division.
- Discussions with School Principals for information sharing and feedback around known and suspected barriers within the Division.
- Solicit suggestions from employees, volunteers, students and others outside the organization to improve accessibility. This will be done through the Division website, Facebook and consultations.
- Communication to stakeholders through newsletters, the School Division website, and Facebook.
- Provide a copy of the Accessibility plan that is developed with questions to invite feedback and a response mechanism.

Barrier Prevention and Removal

As we continue to create a more accessible School Division there will be an ongoing focus on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for Accessibility. This includes ensuring that barriers in each of the five accessibility standards are addressed in turn. The largest anticipated barrier for Lakeshore School Division is the fiscal cost of modifying facilities. Many of our buildings were constructed without consideration for the diverse needs of our students. Upgrading these facilities is costly, and in some circumstances would involve major retrofits that are beyond the means of our School Division. Despite these ongoing challenges, many upgrades have been made to facilities over the past years, and we anticipate that more action can be taken to reduce barriers that are imbedded in our Divisional infrastructure.

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service progress:

As of the fall of 2023, the following steps have been taken to comply with the standard.

- Meet the communication needs of clients.
The Division endeavours to utilize a variety of communication techniques in order to reach our students, parents/guardians and community members.
- Allow assistive devices.
The Division consistently makes accommodations, whenever reasonably possible, to allow for the use of assistive devices. On an as-needed basis, we have been upgrading our facilities to ensure that they are increasingly accessible.
- Welcome support persons.
Within Divisional guidelines, we welcome support personnel into our facilities to assist with individuals who may require aid.
- Allow people with service animals.
Within Divisional guidelines, we welcome service animals into our facilities.
- Review physical barriers to access.
On an ongoing basis, the Division has reviewed physical barriers to access and has made modifications to programming and/or facilities.
- Let customers know when accessible services aren't available.
The Division does not have a public point of access which provides details on which services are not available. We welcome individual inquiries about what we can offer.
- Invite customers to provide feedback.
Students, parents/guardians and community members are always encouraged to provide feedback, either through our official feedback procedure or through informal points of contact.
- Train staff on accessible customer service.
All Divisional staff have received training in accessible customer service and this training is mandatory for all new staff upon hire.

Accessibility Standard for Employment progress:

As of the fall of 2023, the following have steps been taken to comply with the standard.

- Gather workplace emergency response information.
- Create workplace emergency plans for employees who request assistance.
- Inform candidates that we offer reasonable accommodation during recruitment.
- On the job; accommodation for employees.
- Creation of an accommodation policy for individuals.
- Train supervisory staff.

Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication progress:

As of the fall of 2023, the following steps have been taken to comply with the standard.

- A new website was designed and launched with accessible access features that meet the WCAG 2.1 Level AA standard.
- Multiple formats of communication offered. For example, our school messenger system automatically sends out a text message, e-mail message, and audio phone call to share important information coming from our Schools and our Division.
- Other communication options are available as per individual request.
- Students, parents/guardians, and community members are always encouraged to provide feedback, either through our official feedback procedure, or through informal points of contact.
- Training for staff on the Information and Communication standard will be provided within the next two years.

Communication of the Accessibility Plan:

The plan will be available on our School Division website at www.lakeshoresd.mb.ca. We will work toward having the plan available in alternative formats. Questions, comments or feedback regarding Lakeshore's multi-year Accessibility Plan are welcomed. Please direct any questions or comments by email to nikkeld@lakeshoresd.mb.ca or by phone at 204-739-2101.