



Beachcombers Academy & Little Oysters Child Care Accessibility Plan -DRAFT

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Accessibility Committee

Beachcombers is a member of the Associate Member Society of FISA, Federation of Independent School Associations, and is a member of the AMS Accessibility Committee.

Beachcombers Accessibility Sub-Committee

Beachcombers Academy & Little Oysters Child Care has an Accessibility Sub-Committee comprised of the Principal, Child Care Manager and President. Established March 2023.

Accessibility Planning

Accessibility planning is intended to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals in, or interacting with, the organization through the considerations of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

Framework Guiding Our Work

The Accessible BC Regulation, under the Accessible BC Act, came into force September, 2022. These regulations identify schools as accessible organizations and are required to have an Accessibility Committee, and Accessibility Plan, and a tool to receive feedback.

The goal of the act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and involve them in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to their full participation.

The Accessible BC Act outlines six principles that must be considered by the committee in the development, content, and form of the accessibility plan: inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

In addition to these principles, the committee will adopt three key objectives in the development of the plan as outlined in the Accessible BC Act: Guidance for the K-12 Sector:

1. Increase meaningful participation in school communities.
2. Develop standards for improved service delivery in areas such as education including critical infrastructure like entranceways, playgrounds, sidewalks, accessible transportation, and employment opportunities.
3. Harmonize with other jurisdictions.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided in the Accessible BC Act and the Developing Your First Accessibility Plan guide which was created as part of the Accessible Organization Project led by Disability Alliance BC.

Accessibility Plan: A plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization through the considerations of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

Adaptability: Disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change. Barriers Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes architectural, attitudinal, information, communications, policy or practice, and technological barriers. Types of barriers:

1. Learning Barrier: any barrier that limits or prevents learning, whether it is through inadequate engagement, representation of the content, or expression of ideas and communication.
2. Architectural and Physical Barrier: A barrier resulting from building design, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, size of doorways, lack of accessibility features and blocked paths of travel.
3. Attitudinal Barriers: A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.

4. Policy or Practice Barrier: Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participation in society or accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.

5. Resource Barrier: Barriers resulting from inadequate technology, funding, staff or tools.

Collaboration: Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play.

Disability: An inability to participate fully and equally in society due to the interaction of an impairment or a barrier.

Diversity: Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation religion, and lived experience inform the experiences of individuals.

Impairment: A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, which is permanent, temporary, or episodic.

Inclusion: All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

Self Determination: Empowering people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

Universal Design: The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”

Accessibility in Education: Policy & Planning

Accessibility is integrated into the following policies:

- Inclusive Education Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Care Inclusion Policy
- Strategic Plan: indigenous inclusion
- Food Policy

Accessibility in Education: Practice

Accessibility is included in education through the following programs and curriculum:

- Respect & Kindness Program
- Virtues Program
- Conflict-resolution teaching protocols (Child Care through grade 7)
- Indigenous and diverse cultures programming: ongoing integration in the curriculum; culture week (Child Care through grade 7)
- “We are all unique” teaching (Kindergarten through grade 7)
- Diversity programming: ongoing integration in the curriculum and guest presenters (examples: Paralympic athlete, First Nations Elders & presenters, Ukrainian Culture presenter, Asian New Year presenter, etc.)

Accessibility: Physical Location

Beachcombers Academy & Little Oysters Child Care is wheelchair accessible and meets Provincial and Federal building codes. Additional accessibility adaptations have been made for specific students both in the school building and playground; changes are ongoing based on student/community member needs in consultation with families, staff and occupational therapy assessors.

Beachcombers Academy & Little Oysters Child Care is a “nut-aware” school and supports a healthy environment for community members with anaphylactic allergies.

Beachcombers Academy & Little Oysters Child Care prioritizes healthy materials and practices in procurement and in building renovations. This includes low- or zero-VOC finishes, natural building materials, Green Guard Certified furniture, etc. Additionally a state-of-the-art ventilation system was installed in the school building for quality indoor air. A healthy environment and healthy indoor air provides accessibility for children and community members with breathing conditions and is healthy for all community members.

Accessibility: Physical Location Goals

The following “wish list” items were identified in 2023, with input from staff and community members, as accessible improvement goals, and are planned for future renovations:

- Upgraded wheelchair ramp with direct access to the main entry.
- Child-sized toilets in Child Care.
- Child-sized (lower) sinks in Child Care.

A lift to the planned second floor is a “wish list” item identified by community members and staff, but has been found to be unaffordable for upcoming planned renovations. Until such time as funding can be secured, and once the second floor is in use, a class flexibility plan will be adopted to allow classes to be situated on the ground floor for purposes of accessibility for community members as needed.

Community Consultation & Feedback

Administration meets annually with families of primary students with diverse abilities. Educational and physical adaptations are reviewed. This results in educational plans and may result in physical adaptations to the school facility.

Child Care engages with Comox Valley Childhood Development for assessment and recommendations for children with diverse needs, as required but normally annually.

Administration meets twice annually with staff for staff training/planning/evaluation week; accessibility considerations are integrated into planning and training.

Beachcombers Academy & Little Oysters Child Care welcomes community input. If you wish to participate in accessibility discussions, please contact the Administration Manager at admin.beachcombers@shaw.ca

Accessibility Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring is most effective when integrated with our routine practice. Ongoing monitoring takes place through annual meetings with families with diverse abilities; discussions in routine (normally monthly or bi-monthly) staff meetings; staff training/planning/evaluation weeks; and administration meetings.

Evaluation is done by the Beachcombers Sub-Committee, annually, and considers the following:

- Educational accessibility.
- School facility accessibility.
- Staff training needs.

Further Resources

- Accessible British Columbia Act: [Accessible British Columbia Act \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- Plain Language Summary of Act: [Accessibility legislation plain language summary - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- Timeline for Implementation: [British Columbia Implementation Timeline \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)