Penticton
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Jesus. Others. Yourself.

Accessibility Plan

2023-2026

June 22, 2023

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Section 1: Introduction

About Our School Community

Penticton Christian School (PCS) is a Christ-centered, multi-denominational, multi-ethnical independent school that serves approximately 62 students from Penticton, Summerland, Okanagan Falls, and other surrounding areas. The school operates one campus and offers education from K to grade 12.

Penticton Christian School offers British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care prescribed curricula, including music and drama. The school also offers a Bible studies program, including courses counting toward graduation (BA Bible 10A, 11A, and 12A). A strong special/inclusive education program is provided by PCS for students with special/inclusive educational needs.

Our leadership team includes a Principal and a Principal's Designate. PCS has a teaching staff of five (including both the Principal and Principal's Designate), 10 special education assistants (both full-time and part-time), and two office staff members (both full-time and part-time).

Penticton Christian School elects a Board of six directors who establish policies and direction of Penticton Christian School. Board meetings typically occur once per month. Two annual general meetings are held in fall and spring of each school year, on school property.

A Message from the PCS Principal

At Penticton Christian School, we are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all students and staff and provides equitable opportunities to support our diverse community. A key element to supporting our community is the development of a Three-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan identifies school needs, priorities, and action plans, and draws on feedback from our school community and the work of the PCS Accessibility Committee to enhance equity of access to programming and the school's facilities.

The PCS Accessibility Committee is a diverse and multi-disciplinary team that meets regularly to affirm our commitment to identify priorities and develop and monitor action plans highlighted in the Three-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan identifies measurable actions across the pillars of the Accessibility Act, thereby supporting equal

opportunity for persons with disabilities by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers of access.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for those with disabilities, but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to advancing the efforts of PCS the Accessibility Committee to improve equity and ease of access to services, as well as access to our facilities. Through the actions in this Three-Year Accessibility Plan, PCS commits to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students, staff, and the larger school community.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Penticton Christian School is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan People. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship, and voice.

Definitions

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

Accessibility Committee: An official group formed by one or more organizations in collaboration with people with disabilities, to create an accessibility plan and feedback mechanism.

Accessibility Plan: A plan developed by an Accessibility Committee that identifies challenges and solutions for addressing accessibility barriers.

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. **Architectural Barrier**: A barrier resulting from building design, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, the size of doorways, and so on.

2. **Attitudinal Barrier**: A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.

3. **Communication Barrier**: A barrier that arises from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists or other staff, and receiving training.

4. **Information Barrier**: A barrier that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, and so on.

5. **Policy or Practice Barrier**: Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society. Policy,

practice, and procedures that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.

6. **Technological Barrier**: Barriers resulting from computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, including the lack of assistive technologies.

Disability: The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and barrier. (For more information about disability and types of disability and support, refer to Appendix A: Disabilities.)

Impairment: A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive *limitation*, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work

The Penticton Christian School Accessibility Plan builds on global, national, provincial, and school specific actions to promote and support accessibility.

Global Context – United Nations

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion within the workplace and within the larger community. The United Nations has been instrumental in leading the importance of disability as a global health issue. In 2006, the United Nations led efforts to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2010, Canada ratified the CRPD and described the CPRD as follows:

> "The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human right treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Parties to the Convention of the rights of Persons with Disabilities are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law."

Canadian Context and Legislation– Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada-wide, around one in five people had some form of disability in 2017. Nationally, Canadian accessibility legislation started in 1985 where disability was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in 1986, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were included in the new federal Employment Equity Act. The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) came into force in 2019, with the overarching goal to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. This act applies to federally regulated entities. The ACA has seven focus areas, and was developed based on the following guiding principles:

1. All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities.
2. All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities.

3. All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.
4. All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities.
5. Laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons.
6. PWDs must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures.
7. The development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for PWDs.

B.C. Context and Legislation - Accessible B.C. Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act, enacted in June 2021, and initially the accessibility planning requirements only applied to provincial government organizations.

The Accessible British Columbia Regulation, under the Accessible British Columbia Act, came into force on September 1, 2022. These regulations identify schools as accessible organizations, and school districts and independent schools will be required to have an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility by September 1, 2023:

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 in the life of the province.

Principles in the Accessible B.C. Act

The Accessible B.C. Act includes a list of principles that must be considered as organizations develop an accessibility plan. The definitions are adapted from the foundational document, BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation.

1. **Adaptability**: Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

2. **Collaboration**: Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for Organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

3. **Diversity**: Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.

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

5. **Self-Determination**: Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

6. **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." An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who interact with the Organization.

Our Commitment to Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the degree of ease with which people with disabilities can use and enjoy something such as a device, service, or place. At Penticton Christian School, we are committed to providing an environment that is accessible and practical for all members of our diverse community. We recognize the importance of conscious planning, design, and effort in ensuring that barriers are removed and accessibility is increased.

Our school is committed to working collaboratively with the community to provide equitable treatment to people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity. To achieve this goal, we have outlined the following commitments:

- Engage with staff, community members and people with disabilities in the development and review of its accessibility plan.
- Ensure that our school board policies and procedures align with the principles of accessibility.
- Improve access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and community members.
- Continually improve accessibility for people with disabilities in our school community.

Our Approach

At Penticton Christian School, we believe that all members of our community have the right to be treated with dignity, given an opportunity to participate, and provided with access to learning and community. Our approach is grounded in the core provincial principles of accessibility, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design.

In April 2023, we began the process of establishing an accessibility committee and identifying barriers to accessibility in our school community. This process involved:

- The creation of the PCS Accessibility Committee, followed by/including the calling for applications for members of the PCS Accessibility Committee.

- Assessing the current physical and architectural accessibility of our school.
- Conducting surveys and interviews to understand the issues, challenges, and priorities of stakeholders within our school community.
- Holding key discussions to identify barriers to accessibility.
- Developing a school feedback tool.
- Prioritization of actions to be taken.
- Establishing a monitoring and evaluation process.

Our approach is designed to recognize the gaps and opportunities to improve accessibility in our school community. By engaging in thoughtful planning, meaningful engagement, training, and direct action, we aim to deliver lasting accessibility improvements for all members of our school community.

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee

Purpose of the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, organizations must establish an Accessibility Committee to assist with identifying and preventing barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. The purpose of the accessibility committee is to work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community. The Accessibility Committee also advises the school Principal/Board of Directors on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory, and other barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of school community life.

Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, the selection of accessibility committee members must, to the extent possible, align with the following goals:
- At least half the members are persons with disabilities (PWD), or individuals who support or are from organizations that support PWDs;
- At least one member is an Indigenous person; and
- Members reflect the diversity of persons in B.C.

A callout for applications to the PCS Accessibility Committee was conducted in April and May 2023 to recruit a diverse representation as outlined above **(to be repeated in September 2023)**. The PCS Accessibility Committee was formally constituted in May and June 2023. Current members of the PCS Accessibility Committee are listed below.

PCS Accessibility Committee Membership

Committee Member	Position/Representation
Mr. Karl Boehmer (as of April 28, 2023)	PCS Principal
Mr. Erik Pedersen (as of April 28, 2023)	PCS Facilities Committee Chairperson; Grandfather of a Student with Inclusive Needs
Mrs. Denise Chudyk (as of April 28, 2023)	PCS Special Education Assistant and MyEdBC Clerk
Mrs. Annette Coetzee (as of May 17, 2023)	PCS Teacher; Mother of Children with Inclusive Needs

Meetings

- An initial meeting was held on May 2, 2023, between Mrs. Chudyk, Mr. Pedersen, and Mr. Boehmer, to introduce and review the requirements of the Accessible B.C. Act. The initial draft of this plan (May 2) was reviewed, and a timeline outlining follow-up steps/actions was agreed upon (see page 14 of this plan).

- Next meeting (including additional members of the PCS Accessibility Committee): June 19, 2023 – attended by Mrs. Coetzee, Mrs. Chudyk, Mr. Pedersen, and Mr. Boehmer. The third draft of this plan was reviewed; the "Universal Supports" checklist was reviewed.

- **September 2023 meeting: TBD.**

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

Barrier Identification Methodologies

The PCS Accessibility Committee used the following barrier-identification methods:

Methodology	Description	Status
Audit of policies and practices	A review of current policies and practices that promote accessibility and inclusion was conducted by the school's Principal.	May-June 2023 - completed
Survey to Staff	An accessibility and inclusion survey was developed and distributed to staff.	May 17, 2023 - completed
Survey to Parents/Guardians	An accessibility and inclusion survey was developed and distributed to parents/guardians.	May 26, 2023 – completed; **Sep. 2023 (new families only)**
School Physical Accessibility Audit	An Assessment of School Physical Accessibility Checklist was adopted and completed. An audit team was identified; the team conducted the School Physical Accessibility Audit.	June 9, 2023 - completed
Accessibility Feedback Tool	A feedback tool has been developed and will be posted to the school website. Information about the tool will be shared with school stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, outside professionals, and parents/guardians).	**September 2023**
PCS Accessibility Committee	The PCS Accessibility Committee will *continue* to review the input and feedback from the surveys, assessment/audit, and feedback tool. The Committee has collaborated to suggest priority areas to target in the PCS Accessibility Plan. ***This will be shared with the Principal and the Board, who will consider giving the final approval of priority areas for the plan**	June - **October 2023**

	(August to September 2023).	

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool

Penticton Christian School developed a paper/an online feedback tool that included a series of questions about accessibility experiences that students, staff, and members of the school community could complete. The tool was provided in paper format as well as posted to the main page of the school website and an information announcement about the tool was provided to students, staff, and parents/guardians. Feedback could be anonymous, or people could add their name and contact information if they wished to be contacted. There was also an option for people to upload a video, voice recording, or photo(s).

The following is the content of the paper format/online Accessibility Feedback Tool.

Report an Accessibility Barrier

At Penticton Christian School, we want to learn about specific barriers that people face when they are trying to:

- Access a school program, building, or school information.
- Receive a service or support.

Your responses to the questions below will be reviewed by the Penticton Christian School Accessibility Committee for their consideration. This information can be submitted anonymously, or you can provide your contact details at the bottom of this form if you wish to be contacted.

1. Please provide the date the barrier was experienced.
2. Please select the location the barrier was experienced.
3. What were you or someone you know trying to access?
4. Accessibility Barrier Details (be as specific as possible).
5. Do you have any recommendations for what would make it better?

6. Attach files if you wish to provide additional information (e.g., video, voice recording, and/or photos).

7. Please provide your name and email or phone number if you would like to be contacted. (optional)

Thank you for providing your valuable feedback! You will be contacted shortly if you provided your contact details.

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers

Key Discussion Themes–Accessibility *Accomplishments* Identified

The guiding principles of inclusive practice inform Penticton Christian School programs, policies, practices, and services to reduce and minimize barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. We strive to create an environment that is accessible and to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility.

There are a number of initiatives at Penticton Christian School to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The following is a synopsis of some of the major achievements noted in the feedback:

Information and Communication

1. The sharing of information on the accessibility act with school staff, students, and parents/guardians – on an ongoing basis.
2. The school supports student and staff requests for accessible (library) resources such as audio books, high interest/low vocabulary books, and closed-captioned videos.

School Policies and Practices

1. Adaptations for Students:
   - The school continues to assess student accommodation requirements on a case-by-case basis and uses all relevant information to respond to each scenario.
   - The school has established practices and procedures by which

adaptations are available throughout the school. For instance, the provision of alternate materials at a student's level, the use of cooperative learning, and the use of small group instruction/peer tutoring.

2. The school operates, supports, and greatly values its highly successful and enriching *Special/Inclusive Education Program*.

3. Mental Health and Well-being Supports
   - The school recognizes the importance of mental health and well-being of its students and staff, especially as the world has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects. Initiatives have taken place to assess and improve the mental health and well-being of students and staff members to ensure support and positive outcomes.
   - Training and awareness programs are provided to staff members to promote student mental health and improve personal mental health and well-being and reduce stigma associated with mental illness.

4. Accessibility Awareness Training
   - Ongoing training continues to be provided to staff members and students (to support accessibility awareness, obligations, and inclusive environments).

Attitudes

1. Attitudes reflect a caring, loving, and supportive learning and working environment for all.
2. Positive praise and rapport.
3. Consistent, structured classroom routines contribute to a stable learning environment, allowing students to feel safe and confident about their daily experiences.

Technology

1. The school secures the technology required by its students to support them in achieving their educational goals.

Physical and Architectural Environment

1. The school has conducted a Physical and Architectural Environment Audit ("School Physical Accessibility Audit", June 9, 2023).
2. Penticton Christian School will invest in upgrades to existing facilities to new standards that support accessible school communities and as per the results of the Physical and Architectural Environment Audit (see above).

Key Discussion Themes– Accessibility *Barriers* Identified

Information and Communication Barriers

- School website – may need re-organization.
- School communication – available in different formats?
- Communication regarding homework.

School Policy and Practice Barriers

- ^Emergency evacuation protocols, individual emergency evacuation/safety plans, and evacuation equipment are not in place for students with physical disabilities.
- The provision of immediate/frequent feedback can be improved upon (teacher/staff to student).

Attitudinal Barriers

- A few students identified that they felt misunderstood by staff members who may have made assumptions that they were lazy or uncooperative or lacked motivation.
- A student is "a student with a learning disability" (not/vs. a student is "a slow learner").

Technology Barriers

- Teachers and students are not familiar with the accessibility features on

school laptops/computers such as voice to text, text to voice, web readers, and other features.

- Lack of closed captioning use (use needs to increase).

Physical and Architectural Environment Barriers

- Lack of clearly identified disabled parking spots near main entrance.
- Lack of a curb ramp from the parking spot/lot onto the sidewalk.
- Lack of designated accessible parking spaces in general.
- Some existing paving is not flush; it has cracks and gaps that could trap the wheels of a wheelchair, walker, or stroller.
- Columns/structural posts – lack of marking at two heights for vision considerations.
- Mats are not securely attached to minimize tripping hazards.
- The location of the emergency (fire escape) stairs is not clearly identifiable with a sign, i.e. lack of a sign.
- ^Lack of emergency evacuation equipment at the top of each stairway (plans based on student specific needs).
- Existence of objects protruding more than 0.1 meters from the walls in the hallways.
- Lack of an accessible drinking water unit available with one tap at a height of 0.4 metres from the floor.
- Drinking water unit taps – lack of lever type handles.
- On the pull side of doors, next to the handle, there is not at least 0.46 metres (18 inches) of clear wall space (so that a person using a wheelchair can get near to the open door).
- Reception area – lack of signs designed and located to convey information to visitors with vision considerations and wheelchair users with lower eye levels (e.g. "Reception" sign).
- Signs – do not consist of Braille, text, and pictograms/visuals, i.e. lack of one or more of all three components.

- Shower facilities – lack of grab rail, seat.
- Washroom doors – lack of automatic or push-button opener.
- Lack of a ceiling track lift for students weighing over 35 lbs. that require a lift for transfers.
- Lack of a height adjustable change table for students requiring assistance with personal care.
- The lower edges of black or white boards are more than 0.5 metres from the floor.
- The playground is not level.
- The playground surface is not accessible for wheelchair users.
- The playground does not have a paved pathway with a minimum width of 1.8 metres (which can be used as a track by wheelchair/crutch/walker users).
- ^Lack of **visual** emergency alarms in all areas.
- ^Lack of vertical escapes from upper to lower floor via an EVAC chair or in a fire-protected lift with an independent power supply; lack of staff training in using this equipment.
- ^Lack of a suitable refuge area for people unable to leave the building (e.g. stairwell behind fire safe doors).
- Many classrooms have noise issues that make it difficult for some students due to auditory sensitivities.
- Most classrooms do not have sound fields to support students with hearing impairments or attention issues.
- The need for additional alternative learning spaces for students with diverse needs and disabilities is great.

Section 7: Penticton Christian School Three-Year Plan 2023-2026

Overview

This Accessibility Plan outlines the measures Penticton Christian School will take to remove and prevent barriers and to promote inclusion for individuals with disabilities in our school community. The plan is based on the Accessibility Principles of Adaptability, Collaboration, Diversity, Inclusion, Self-Determination, and Universal Design, as set out in the Accessible B.C. Act.

Accessibility Priorities*

Based on the feedback gathered from staff members, parents/guardians, and students, and the Physical and Architectural Environment Audit, the PCS Accessibility Committee has identified the following areas as the top priority for improving accessibility in the school community. ***This will be shared with the Principal and the Board, who will consider giving the final approval of priority areas for the plan (August to September 2023).** [Note: The timeline is tentative and subject to Principal and Board of Directors approval in August-September 2023; it may be adjusted over time based on available funding and changing priorities for the school community.]

Priority #1: Information and Communication

Penticton Christian School will enhance the accessibility of information and communication for all individuals, including those with disabilities, through the following actions:

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Develop and implement a clear and easy-to-navigate school website.	• Conduct a school website audit • Create a website improvement plan	Fall 2023.
Have prayers, lessons, and announcements on a screen or in books/on posters.	• Provide visuals	2023-2024.
Ensure that all communication to staff, students, and parents/guardians is written in plain language and is available in alternate formats upon request.	• Survey parents/guardians to determine their preferred method of communication and format • Develop guidelines and examples for communication to all stakeholders	Spring 2024.
Improve the number and type of accessible format resources for students with disabilities.	• The school (librarian) provides accessible book and website suggestions for class units of study	2023-2026.
	• Subject area teachers and inclusive educators develop unit study menus of simplified alternate resources for students with disabilities	2023-2026.
Increase training in the use of accessible format materials.	• Provide staff training on the various types of accessible materials available and how to use them	Fall 2023.
	• The school (librarian) and homeroom teachers train all students on the use of accessible book and website formats	Spring 2024.

Develop a consistent method for teachers to convey information about homework.	• Write homework instructions in a consistent place on the board in every classroom • Use a consistent format for outlining the instructions for assignments • Convey homework assignments digitally (accessible to students, parents/guardians, and inclusive education staff)	Spring 2024.

Priority #2: Physical and Architectural Environment

Penticton Christian School will improve the accessibility of the physical and architectural environment for all individuals, including those with disabilities through the following actions:

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Develop a standard for both vision and hearing impairment related accessibility issues (including sound and light sensitivities).	• Provide sound fields in all classrooms to support students with hearing impairments and attention issues	TBD.
	• Assess noise issues and determine solutions in classrooms and other areas of the school	Fall 2023.
Establish clearly identified disabled parking spots near main entrance; build a curb ramp from the parking spot/lot onto the sidewalk (; create designated accessible parking spaces in general).	• Action item	Fall 2023.
Ensure existing paving is flush; eliminate cracks and gaps that could trap the wheels of a wheelchair, walker, or stroller.	• Action item	Spring 2023.

Identify the location of the *emergency (fire escape) stairs* with a sign; install a light by the middle landing (outside).	• Action item	Fall 2023.
Ensure that signs consist of Braille, text, <u>and</u> pictograms/visuals; install a "Reception" sign accordingly and at lower eye level.	• Action item	Fall 2023.
^Make available **visual** emergency alarms in all areas.	• Action item	2024-2025.
Shower facilities – lack of grab rail(s) and seat(s).	• Action item	Fall 2024.
Washroom doors – lack of automatic or push-button opener.	• Action item	Fall 2024.
Columns/structural posts – lack of marking at two heights for vision considerations.	• Action item	Fall 2024.
Mats – not securely attached to minimize tripping hazards.	• Action item	Fall 2023.
^Lack of emergency evacuation equipment at the top of each stairway (plans based on student specific needs); lack of vertical escapes from upper to lower floor via an EVAC chair or in a fire-protected lift with an independent power	• Action item	2025-2026.

supply; lack of staff training in using this equipment.		
^Lack of a suitable refuge area for people unable to leave the building (e.g. stairwell behind fire safe doors).	• Action item	2025-2026.
Existence of objects protruding more than 0.1 meters from the walls in the hallways.	• Action item	2023-2024.
On the pull side of doors, next to the handle, there is not at least 0.46 metres (18 inches) of clear wall space (so that a person using a wheelchair can get near to the open door).	• Action item	Fall 2024.
Lack of a ceiling track lift for students weighing over 35 lbs. that require a lift for transfers.	• Action item	TBD.
Lack of a height adjustable change table for students requiring assistance with personal care.	• Action item	TBD.
The lower edges of black or white boards are more than 0.5 metres from the floor.	• Action item	TBD.
The playground surface is not accessible for wheelchair users; the playground does not have a paved pathway with a minimum width of 1.8 metres (which can	• Action item	2024-2025.

be used as a track by wheelchair/crutch/walker users); the playground is not level; the playground is not fully fenced.		
Lack of an accessible *drinking water unit* available with one tap at a height of 0.4 metres from the floor; lack of lever type handles.	• Action item	Fall 2024.
A/C needed for the entire upstairs floor.	• Action item	2023-2026.
Lights – too bright/flicker.	• Replace (with dimmable lights?)	2023-2024.
Storage lacking.	• Increase storage availability	2023-2024.
Intercom is not loud enough in all spaces.	• Adjust volume	2023-2024.
Provide (additional) alternative learning spaces for students with diverse needs and disabilities.	• Determine the current needs of students who may require alternate learning spaces from time to time	Fall 2023.
	• Conduct an audit of current alternate learning spaces that can meet the identified needs	Fall 2023.

	• Create a plan and budget for the provision of additional alternative learning spaces or accommodations to address the needs identified	Fall 2023.

Priority #3: School Policy and Practice

Penticton Christian School will review and revise policies and practices to ensure they align with the principles of accessibility, and to address any identified gaps in staff training or knowledge on accessibility issues.

Objectives	**Actions**	**Timeline**
Summarize and celebrate current accessibility practices within the school.	• Review school accessibility and inclusion practices	May-June 2023. Completed.
	• Provide information to staff about current accessibility practices within the school and examples	2023-2024.
Identify areas needed for further staff training on accessibility issues.	• Develop priorities for staff accessibility training and develop or identify training modules for staff	2023-2024.
	• Develop an implementation plan to provide the accessibility training needed for current staff and new staff induction	2024-2025.
^Develop Emergency Plans for people with disabilities.	• Develop evacuation procedures for students with mobility considerations, (acquire EVAC chairs,) provide staff training, and practice the plans in emergency drills	Fall 2023 (if applicable).

Improve transition planning for students with diverse needs and disabilities.	• Develop a transition planning process for all students (with developmental disabilities) in grades 9 and 12 • Develop a transition planning process for all students transitioning to a new classroom	Fall 2023.

Priority #4: Technology

Penticton Christian School will increase awareness and training on assistive technology for students with disabilities.

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Increase awareness of specific assistive technology needs for students with disabilities.	• Conduct class reviews of technology needs for students (e.g. movement resources, better quality sound reducing earmuffs)	Fall 2023.
	• Provide training for staff on the various technology needs of students	Fall 2023.
Provide access and training for the various technology tools needed.	• Professional development for staff	Fall 2023.

Priority #5: Attitudinal

Penticton Christian School will monitor and correct assumptions about students with disabilities.

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Increase awareness of realities and limitations of physical disabilities.	• Learn about the realities and limitations of disabilities as they pertain to PCS students	2023-2026.
	• Embrace a spirit of "helpfulness and understanding" at all times • Encourage "lunch groups" and "organized play"	Ongoing.
Higher expectations for students to be quiet during instructional time.	• Improve upon teachers' classroom management skills	Ongoing.
Increase awareness of inclusive practices.	• Learn about inclusive practices	Ongoing.

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

The PCS Accessibility Committee meets four times per year (September, December, March, and June) to **a.** review progress/evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and **b.** plan for increased accessibility throughout the school. The committee will ensure the following steps are taken regarding the PCS Three-Year Accessibility Plan:

1. Prepare an annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan.

2. Review and update the Three-Year Accessibility Plan every three years in consultation with persons with disabilities and other relevant community members.

Section 9: How to Provide Feedback

In addition to the public availability of the plan, Penticton Christian School will continue to post an annual status report on the progress of the Three-Year Accessibility Plan on the school's website, www.pentictonchristianschool.com. Accessible formats of the plan will be made available upon request. Questions, comments, and/or feedback regarding the PCS Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

Mr. Karl Boehmer, Principal (phone: 250-493-5233 and/or e-mail: kboehmer@pentictonchristianschool.ca) or to any other PCS Accessibility Committee member.

Section 10: Appendices

Appendix A: About Disability

The Disability Continuum

While there is no universally accepted meaning for the word "disability", the Ontario Human Rights Code provides definitions of disability that form our guiding principles. Definitions of disability can be placed on a continuum. At one end, disability is explained in terms of medical conditions (medical model). At the opposite end,disability is explained in terms of the social and physical contexts in which it occurs (environmental model).

The medical model focuses on deficiencies, symptoms, and treatments. The World Health Organization's (WHO) 1976 definition for disability, for example, is "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." Medical model definitions promote the idea that disability is a deviation from the norm.

Many people with disabilities are troubled by definitions that regard disability as abnormal, preferring instead to portray disability as commonplace, natural, and in fact, inevitable. As people age, they experience gradual declines in visual acuity, auditory sensitivity, range of motion, bodily strength and mental powers. Significant functional limitations affect almost half of people between the ages of 55 and 79, and over 70% of people over 80 (World Health Organization (WHO) report titled "Ageing and health", 2015). Beyond middle age, disability is the norm.

The environmental model explains disability in relation to social and physical contexts. In this view, the environment, not an individual's medical condition, causes disability. For example, during an electrical blackout, a person who is completely blind can effortlessly navigate around the home, hammer nails, and, if a Braille user, read a novel.

A sighted person would be unable to perform these tasks easily, if at all. In this example, the environment disables the sighted person.

The environmental model emphasizes that people with disabilities are capable

individuals, and it is the barriers in the built and human environments, not their medical conditions, that create disability. Disability occurs when the world is designed only for a certain way of living, without considering the natural variation among human beings. Barriers are created by humans, and modifying how we live, the tools we use, and our understanding of the proper way to do things can eliminate or minimize design problems that cause barriers. Systematic barriers can be eliminated by modifying policies, plans, and processes. Attitudes that cause barriers can be addressed through disability awareness, respect, and positive interactions with people with disabilities.

Types of Disability and Functional Limitations

A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively challenging to perform everyday tasks such as operating a keyboard, reading a sign, differentiating colours, distinguishing sounds, climbing stairs, grasping small items, remembering words, or doing arithmetic.

There are many kinds of disabilities, including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. Disabilities can be visible or invisible.

Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities reduce one's ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Some have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light. Impaired vision can restrict a person's ability to read signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a visual disability. Others may use a guide dog or white cane.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with visual disabilities:
- Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Unless it is an emergency, only touch the person if you have been given permission.
- If you offer assistance, wait until you receive permission.

- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.

- Service animals are working and have to pay attention at all times. Refrain from engaging with the animal.

- If you're giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you're approaching a door or an obstacle, say so. Don't just assume the individual can't see you.

- When entering a room, show the individual to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.

- Identify landmarks or other details to orient the person to the environment around them.

- Ensure you say good-bye prior to leaving the individual.

- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Hard of Hearing and Deafness

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees. People who are hard of hearing may require assistive devices when communicating. While some people may use sign language, notes or hearing aids when communicating, others may also use email, pagers, TTY telephone service or Bell Canada Relay Service.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Always ask how you can help. Don't shout.

- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".

- Attract the person's attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.

- Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where the person can see your face.

- Look at and speak directly to the person. Address the person, not their interpreter.

- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.

- Keep your face clearly visible when speaking.

- Be clear and precise when giving directions and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
- Service animals are working and have to pay attention at all times.Refrainfrom engaging with the animal.
- Any personal (e.g. financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing
- Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf is different because their first language may not be English. It maybe American Sign Language(ASL).
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities and not all require a wheelchair. For example, people who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions, or amputations may also have difficulty moving, standing or sitting. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with physical disabilities:

- Speak normally and directly to the person rather than someone who is with them.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Be patient and be sure you understand their needs.
- Unless it is an emergency, refrain from touching any assistive devices, including wheelchairs.
- Provide the person with information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).

Intellectual Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. These disabilities can mildly or profoundly limit a person's ability to learn. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or body language.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with intellectual disabilities:

- As much as possible, treat the person with an intellectual disability like anyone else. They may understand more than you think, and they will appreciate you treating them with respect
- Don't assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Make sure the person understands what you've said.
- If you can't understand what's being said, ask again.
- Give one piece of information at a time.
- Be polite and patient.
- Speak directly to the person, not to someone who is with the person.

Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Learning or cognitive disabilities can result in a host of different communications difficulties for people. They can be subtle, as in having difficulty reading, or more pronounced, but they can interfere with the person's ability to receive, express or process information. You may not be able to know that someone has one of these disabilities unless you are told, or you notice the way people act, ask questions or body language.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with learning or cognitive disabilities:

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

- Recognize that some people with communication difficulties use augmentative communication systems such as Signed English and Picture Exchange System.

- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best help.

- Speak normally and clearly, and directly to the person.

- Take some time — people with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.

- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.

- If you're dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging, and supportive.

- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".

- Be courteous and patient and the person will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

Mental Health Disabilities

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. You won't know that the person has a mental health disability unless you're informed of it. But if someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling their symptoms or is in a crisis, you may need to help out. Be calm and professional and let the person tell you how you can best help.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with mental health disabilities:

- Treat people with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.

- Be confident, reassuring, and listen to persons with a mental health disability and their needs.

- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to

help.

- Take the person with a mental health disability seriously, and work with them to meet their needs.

Speech and Language Disabilities

Some people have communication challenges. It could be the result of cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or not being able to express oneself or understand written or spoken language. Some people who have severe difficulties may use communication boards, sign language, or other assistive devices.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people with speech and language disabilities:

- Just because a person has one disability doesn't mean they have another. For example, if a person has difficulty speaking, make no assumption they have an intellectual disability as well.
- If you don't understand, ask the person to repeat the information.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Take some time. Be patient and polite and give the person whatever time they need to get their point across.
- Allow the individual to finish their sentences themselves without interruption.
- Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

Deaf-Blind Disabilities

A person who is deaf-blind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an intervener, a professional who helps with communicating. Interveners are trained in special sign language that involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling, and may guide and interpret for their client.

Here are some suggestions to help you interact with people who are deaf-blind:

- Make no assumptions about what a person can or cannot do. Some deaf-blind people have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
- Avoid referring to the disability or using phrases like "handicapped".
- A deaf-blind person is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
- Speak directly to the person, as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach the person who is deaf-blind.
- Don't touch service animals–they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Unless it's an emergency, refrain from touching a deaf-blind person without permission.

Appendix B: Suggested References/Resources

Global, Canadian and Local Accessibility Context and Legislation

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Canada Ratifies the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation

Accessible British Columbia Act

BC AccessibilityLegislation Plan Language Summary

Accessibility Planning Resources for Schools and School Boards:

BC Accessibility Hub

Developing Your First Accessibility Plan: A Guide for BC Prescribed Organizations

Creating an Accessibility Committee

Universal Design

Special Education Technology BC (SET BC)

Accessible Resource Centre - BC

Standards Council of Canada

B6521-95 Barrier-Free Design

A Guide to Creating Accessible Play Spaces (Rick Hansen Foundation)

CanadianNationalInstitutefortheBlind(CNIB)

Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Canadian Hearing Services

Provincial Outreach Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (POPDHH)

Auditory Outreach Provincial Resource Program

Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness

Provincial Inclusion Outreach Program (Complex Needs)

Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders

Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

MultipleSclerosisSocietyofCanada

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Brain Injury Canada

Spinal Cord Injury Canada

Tourette Canada

Kelty Mental Health (BC Children's Hospital)

Gifted Children's Association of BC

Specialist Association of Gifted Educators in BC

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