

Our Lady of the Assumption Accessibility Plan

Revised September 2026

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Section 1: Introduction

Territorial Acknowledgement

Our Lady of the Assumption School is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Kwikwetlem First Nation People. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship, and voice.

About Our School Community

Our Lady of the Assumption School is a Catholic Independent School and is part of the Catholic Independent Schools Vancouver Archdiocese "CISVA". The school is located in the municipality of Port Coquitlam and serves approximately 240 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7 and a staff of approximately 30 employees.

A Message from the Principal

At Our Lady of the Assumption 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 system needs, priorities, and action plans, and will draw on feedback from our school community and the work of the CISVA Accessibility Committee to enhance equity of access to programming and our facilities.

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 the Accessibility Committee to improve equity and ease of access to services, as well as access to our facilities. Through the actions in this Accessibility Plan, we commit to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students, staff, and the larger school community.

The OLA Accessibility Committee continues to look for individuals to serve as members. If you are interested, information is available on our school website.

Definitions

Term	Definition
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 hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment, including a physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal, information or communications barrier, or a barrier caused by a policy or practice.
Disability	The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and a barrier.
Impairment	A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.

Types of Barriers

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

- **Attitudinal Barrier:** A barrier arising from attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.
- **Communication Barrier:** A barrier arising from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with others, or receiving training.
- **Information Barrier:** A barrier arising from inadequate or incomprehensible signage or difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, equipment labels or screens.
- **Policy or Practice Barrier:** Rules, regulations, protocols or procedures that prevent a person from participating fully in employment, learning or the school community.
- **Technological Barrier:** A barrier resulting from technology, including lack of compatibility with or access to assistive technologies.
- **Temporal Barrier:** A barrier that occurs at a specific time, such as busy times of day or during special events.

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work

The Our Lady of the Assumption 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 the larger community. In 2006, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Canada ratified the CRPD in 2010. The Convention is an international human rights treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

Canadian Context and Legislation - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada-wide, around one in five people had some form of disability in 2017. Disability is protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Accessible Canada Act came into force in 2019, with the goal of a barrier-free Canada by 2040. It applies to federally regulated entities. Its principles emphasize dignity, equal opportunity, barrier-free participation, meaningful choice, recognition of diverse interactions with environments, involvement of persons with disabilities, and high accessibility standards.

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

The Accessible British Columbia Act was enacted in June 2021. The Accessible British Columbia Regulation came into force on September 1, 2022 and prescribes school districts and independent schools as organizations subject to the accessibility-planning requirements. These organizations were required to have an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a process for receiving public feedback on barriers and the accessibility plan by September 1, 2023.

The purpose of the Act is to support the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to the full and equal participation in society of persons with disabilities.

When developing and updating its accessibility plan, OLA School must consider the principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination and universal design. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years. In updating the plan, OLA School must consider feedback received through its feedback process and consult with its Accessibility Committee.

Principles in the Accessible B.C. Act

- **Adaptability:** Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology and attitudes change.
- **Collaboration:** Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play.

- Diversity: People with disabilities have varied backgrounds and lived experiences. Accessibility planning should recognize intersectionality and diversity within the disability community.
- Inclusion: All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.
- Self-Determination: Accessibility plans should empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.
- Universal Design: Environments should be designed so they can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people.

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 Our Lady of the Assumption 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 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 commit to:

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

Our Approach

At Our Lady of the Assumption 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 provincial principles of accessibility: adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination and universal design.

In June 2023, Our Lady of the Assumption, in conjunction with CISVA, began establishing an accessibility committee and identifying barriers. This process included:

- Calling for applications for members for the CISVA Accessibility Committee.
- Assessing the current physical and architectural accessibility of our school.
- Providing opportunities for school-community stakeholders to give feedback on issues, challenges and priorities. This process continues.
- Holding initial discussions to identify barriers to accessibility.
- Developing a school feedback tool.
- Prioritizing actions to be taken.
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation process.

In September 2026, OLA School transitioned from participating in the broader CISVA Accessibility Committee to establishing a local OLA School Accessibility Committee. The committee is intended to reflect a diverse cross-section of the school community, with representation from school administration, teaching staff, education assistants, maintenance staff, parents, and persons with disabilities or individuals who support them.

Working collaboratively with our Joint Health and Safety Committee, we continue to identify, review and address accessibility barriers within our school. We also seek ongoing feedback from our school community to inform decisions and continuous improvement of the Accessibility Plan.

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee

Purpose of the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible British Columbia Act, OLA School must establish an Accessibility Committee to assist the school in identifying barriers to individuals in or interacting with the school and advise the school on how to remove and prevent those barriers. The committee works collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community. It also advises the OLA school administration and Parish Education Committee (PEC) on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory and other barriers to full participation in school community life.

Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee

Under the Accessible British Columbia 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, or individuals who support or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities.
- The members described above reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia.
- At least one member is an Indigenous person.
- The committee reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

A call for applications to the OLA Accessibility Committee was conducted in September 2026 to recruit representatives as outlined above. The OLA Accessibility Committee was formally constituted in September 2026. Current members of the OLA Accessibility Committee are listed below.

Accessibility Committee Membership

Committee Member	Position / Representation
Rosaleen Heffernan	Principal of OLA; parent of child with disability
Michael Currie	PEC Member; Maintenance Coordinator
Sammi Pignatelli	OLA Teacher
Christina Evdokimenko	OLA Office Manager
Mark Mandrusiak	OLA Maintenance
Gerry Gibson	OLA Education Assistant

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

Barrier-identification methodologies

The OLA Accessibility Committee used or will use the following barrier-identification methods:

Methodology	Description	Status
Survey to Staff	An accessibility survey was developed and made available to staff.	September 2026
Survey to Parents/Guardians	An accessibility survey was developed and made available to students, parents and/or guardians.	September 2026
School Physical Accessibility Audit	Completed the Physical Accessibility Audit in September 2023.	Reviewed September 2026; New Audit September 2026
Accessibility Committee	The Accessibility Committee reviewed the Physical Accessibility Audit and collaborated to suggest priority areas for the Accessibility Plan.	October 2026

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool

Our Lady of the Assumption School developed a process for receiving public feedback on barriers and the Accessibility Plan, including a feedback form that students, staff and members of the school community can complete. The form is available through the school website. Information about the feedback process will be communicated to students, staff, parents and guardians. Feedback received will be considered when the Accessibility Plan is updated.

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers

Accessibility Accomplishments Identified

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

Learning

Several key universal supports are currently implemented in classrooms. Examples include Shape of the Day, Ready Do Done Visual, Working Clock, Preferential Seating, Reduction of Big Ideas that Students Focus On, Student Choice, Beginning at Students' Readiness, Brain Movement Breaks, Workload Reduction, Extra Processing Time and Visual Checklists.

The school continues its efforts toward inclusion and accessibility to learning from feedback received from stakeholders.

Physical and Architectural Environment

Our school conducted a Physical and Architectural Environment Audit to identify areas of physical accessibility and areas for improvement. Accomplishments included:

- Calming spaces and a Sensory Retreat Room to manage sensory overload.
- Playground accessibility improvements in summer 2024, including removal of one-foot playground framing and pea gravel and replacement with wheelchair-accessible rubber surfacing.
- Insertion of windows in back exit doors for increased visibility.
- Outdated lighting replaced; no longer forming a learning barrier.
- Addition of grab bars in wheelchair-accessible washrooms.
- Limited visual fields on security cameras improved
- Installation of a sun shade in the playground area in September 2026.

School Policy and Practice

- The school continues to assess student accommodation requirements on a case-by-case basis and uses relevant information to respond to each situation.
- The school recognizes the importance of the mental health and well-being of students and staff.
- Training programs are offered to staff to promote student mental health, personal well-being and reduction of stigma associated with mental illness.
- Ongoing Universal Design for Learning training supports accessibility to learning.

Accessibility Barriers Identified

Physical and Architectural Environment Barriers and Attitudinal Barriers

- Heating and cooling can sometimes be an issue, so the physical comfort of students may not be optimal for learning. [Ongoing repairs](#)

Resource Barriers

- Staff continue to learn about proper use of supports for physical or medical limitations. [Ongoing](#)

School Policy and Practice Barriers

- Further staff training to understand and better support different learning needs is welcomed and encouraged.

Section 7: Our Three-Year Plan (2026-2029)

Overview

This Accessibility Plan outlines measures OLA School will take to identify, remove and prevent barriers to learning and participation and promote the inclusion of 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 under the Accessible British Columbia Act.

Accessibility Priorities

Information about accessibility was gathered through the Physical and Environment Audit and continues to be gathered from staff, parents or guardians and students. Based on this information and the need to develop a long-term process, the initial priorities have been set. Priorities will be updated upon completion and from feedback received from members of the school community.

Priority #1: Physical Accessibility Audit of the School Facility

The school facility audit using the nine-page SCSBC audit checklist was reviewed in September 2026. The OLA Accessibility Committee will gather and summarize the information. This information will form the basis for prioritizing next steps to address accessibility needs in a three-year plan that culminates June 30, 2029. The plan will be posted on the school website and shared with CISVA as an OLA practice.

Priority #2: OLA Accessibility Committee

In 2026-2027, the OLA Accessibility Committee will continue its work and review and prioritize goals for the 2026-2029 plan. No provincial registration requirement for the committee has been identified.

Priority #3: Physical and Architectural Environment

OLA School will work to improve accessibility of the physical and architectural environment for all individuals, including those with disabilities. This will include items identified in the Physical Accessibility Audit.

Priority #4: Policy and Practice

Our Lady of the Assumption School will review and revise policies and practices to ensure they align with accessibility principles and address identified gaps in staff training or knowledge on accessibility issues.

Priority #5: Feedback Process

The OLA Accessibility Committee will maintain a process for receiving public feedback on barriers and the Accessibility Plan. Feedback received will be considered when the plan is updated and will help guide future plans.

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Committee meets two times yearly, or as required, as an OLA practice to review progress, evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and plan for increased accessibility. The committee will:

- Prepare an annual status report on progress implementing the plan. This is an OLA accountability practice and will be reported to the PEC; it is not identified as a specific requirement of the Accessible British Columbia Act.
- Review and update the Three-Year Accessibility Plan at least once every three years. When updating the plan, OLA School will consider feedback received through its feedback process and consult with the Accessibility Committee.

Section 9: How to Give Us Feedback about the Plan

Our Lady of the Assumption School will make the Accessibility Plan publicly available on the school website. Questions, comments or feedback about barriers or the Accessibility Plan may be directed to the OLA Accessibility Committee through the feedback form available on the school website. Feedback received will be considered when the plan is updated.

Upon request, OLA School will provide this Accessibility Plan in an accessible format, at no charge, within a reasonable period. Requests may be directed to the school office.

Section 10: Appendices

Appendix A: About Disability

The Disability Continuum

Definitions of disability can be placed on a continuum. At one end, disability is explained in terms of medical conditions. At the opposite end, disability is explained in terms of the social and physical contexts in which it occurs. The environmental model emphasizes that people with disabilities are capable individuals and that barriers in built and human environments can create disability. Barriers can be reduced through changes to design, tools, policies, plans, processes, awareness and attitudes.

There are many kinds of disabilities, including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. Disabilities can be visible or invisible, permanent, temporary or episodic. Respectful interaction begins by speaking directly to the person, avoiding assumptions, asking before helping, respecting assistive devices and service animals, allowing adequate time, and using the person's preferred way of communicating.

Interaction Guidance Retained from the Baseline

Visual Disabilities

- Identify yourself and speak directly to the person.
- Offer assistance and wait for permission before guiding.
- Give precise verbal directions and do not distract service animals.

Deafness and Hard of Hearing

- Ask how you can help and do not shout.
- Face the person in a well-lit area and keep your face visible.
- Address the person rather than an interpreter and use another communication method if preferred.

Physical Disabilities

- Speak directly to the person.
- Ask before helping or touching mobility devices.
- Provide information about accessible features and allow adequate time.

Intellectual Disabilities

- Use plain language and one piece of information at a time.
- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Speak directly to the person and confirm understanding respectfully.

Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

- Be patient and communicate in a way that works for the person.
- Use clear language and provide information in alternate formats where helpful.
- Be encouraging and supportive.

Mental Health Disabilities

- Treat the person with respect and consideration.
- Listen and ask how best to help.
- Take the person and their needs seriously.

Speech and Language Disabilities

- Do not assume a speech disability indicates an intellectual disability.
- Allow the person to finish without interruption.
- If you do not understand, ask the person to repeat or use another method.

Deaf-Blind Disabilities

- Make no assumptions about what the person can or cannot do.
- Speak directly to the person and follow their preferred communication method.
- Do not touch the person or a service animal without permission.

Appendix B: Suggested References and Resources

- Accessible British Columbia Act [SBC 2021] c. 19 - BC Laws.
- Accessible British Columbia Regulation, B.C. Reg. 105/2022 - BC Laws.
- Accessibility legislation requirements for organizations - Province of British Columbia.
- British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation.
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- BC Accessibility Hub and accessibility planning resources for schools.
- Rick Hansen Foundation accessibility resources.
- Accessible Resource Centre - BC and BC provincial resource programs.