

# Guidelines for Accessible Information and Communication Standard

*May 2024*

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## STATEMENT

River East Transcona School Division (RETSO) is committed to the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and its accessibility standards.

RETSO is committed to complying with The Accessible Information and Communication Standard under *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

## DEFINITIONS

**Accessible communication** - means communication of information in a manner that is free from barriers that prevent or hinder a person from obtaining, using, or benefiting from the information.

**Accessible format** - includes large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Communication** - means the transfer of information between two or more persons or entities or any combination of them.

**Communication support** - includes captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

**Educational institution** – means:

- (a) an adult learning centre registered under *The Adult Learning Centres Act*;
- (b) the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology continued under *The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act*;
- (c) a private vocational institution as defined in section 1 of *The Private Vocational Institutions Act*;
- (d) a public school and an independent school as defined in section 1 of *The Education Administration Act*; and
- (e) a university or a college as defined in section 1 of *The Advanced Education Administration Act*.

**Educational material** – means:

- (a) textbooks;
- (b) supplementary learning resources, including reference books, workbooks and educational kits;
- (c) student records; and
- (d) class, lesson, workshop, or program
  - (i) descriptions,
  - (ii) availability,
  - (iii) scheduling, and
  - (iv) requirements.

**Information** - means data, facts or knowledge that is written, photographed, recorded, or stored in any manner.

**Large employer** - means an employer who:

- (a) in the case of a seasonal workplace, employs at least 50 employees to do work that is expected to continue for at least 90 days; and
- (b) in the case of any other workplace, employs at least 50 employees.

**Library** – means:

- (a) a municipal public library under *The Public Libraries Act*;
- (b) a regional library as defined in *The Public Libraries Act*;
- (c) a library operated by The City of Winnipeg; and
- (d) the library of an educational institution.

**Library resources** - means an item, material, recording or software that can be accessed, used, or borrowed at a library.

**WCAG 2.1 Level AA** - means the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level AA.

**Web content** - means information that is published on:

- (a) the Internet website of an organization listed under clause 2(a), (b) or (c); and
- (b) the intranet website of an organization listed in clause 2(a) or (b).

## REMOVING BARRIERS

**Informational and communication barriers** arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.

Information and Communication Barriers	Possible Solutions
Print that is too small to be read by a person with impaired vision.	Make everyday documents, such as signs and menus, easy to read by making sure the print is legible for most people.
A PowerPoint or slide deck used in a presentation is not accessible to employees with low vision or who have hearing loss.	Develop a template for slide decks using large fonts, high contrast colours, and clean layout. Provide a visual description of the slides when making a presentation.
Videos to promote a program or service are not accessible to employees with low vision or who have hearing loss.	Include captions when producing videos. When this is not possible, provide a text transcription of the video.
Brochures, guides, and advertisements that are not clear or easily understood.	Use plain language in written materials. Use symbols and pictures to help get your message across. Use sans serif fonts and avoid italics.
Complicated, busy, or confusing signs.	Keep signs clean and clear. Make information available in another form, such as a chart or pictogram.
Seating arrangements making it difficult for people who have hearing loss to fully participate in meetings	Arrange seating at a round table to facilitate lip reading. Use assistive listening or amplification devices as appropriate.

Marketing and communications materials are not inclusive	Ensure marketing and communications, including photos and testimonials, reflect diverse people with a range of abilities and ages.
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## ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

- 1. Web applications:** RETSD is required to meet [WCAG 2.1 level AA](#), at minimum. (Does not include mobile apps).
- 2. Website content:** Website content must meet [WCAG 2.1 level AA](#) guidelines which applies to any website content published on or after this standard comes into force. Older website content must be updated, if it is required to access information related to an organization's goods and services. This also applies to intranet networks for all public sector organizations.
- 3. Requesting accessible information:** RETSD must inform employees, students, applicants, and their parents or guardians that they can request information through a communication support or accessible format. The division needs to consult with the person making the request to identify a support or format that removes the barrier and provide it in a timely manner (ask what is needed). Can not charge the person making a request more than what would be charged to someone who didn't make a request.
- 4. Feedback process:** The division is required to create a process to receive and respond to feedback about accessible information and the communication process must be appropriate to the circumstances and suitable for people with disabilities. Documentation of the actions taken is required and are to be made available on request.
- 5. Organization training:** RETSD will need to provide training to any employee who communicates directly to the public or to another organization in Manitoba on behalf of the division (including employees, agents, and volunteers). For RETSD that includes educators, anyone who develops or maintains the organization's web content, a person who purchases or procures information technology or communication tools, or a person who develops or implements the organization's measures, policies, and practices respecting accessible communication. The Manitoba Accessibility Office offers accessibility training through its [Online Learning Portal](#).
- 6. Training content:** This content must include how to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessible communication; how to provide information through a communication support or accessible format; a review of The Human Rights Code, The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, and the Accessible Information and Communication Standard; must provide training to a person as soon as reasonably possible after that person is assigned the applicable duties; ongoing training needs to be provided whenever an organization updates or changes their accessible communication policies, measures, or practices.
- 7. Documentation:** The division is required to write down all policies, measures and practices related to accessible information and communication, including the content and timeframe for training. These documents must be available to the public.
- 8. Duty to notify:** RETSD must notify the following groups that educational materials are available via accessible format; employees, students, applicants and prospective applicants, parents, and guardians of students.

**By May 1, 2024:**

- We inform our employees, students, applicants, potential applicants and their parents and guardians that information and educational materials are available through a communication support or accessible format on request.
- We consult with the person requesting accessible information or educational materials to identify the support or format that would remove the barrier.
- We provide information, including educational materials, requested in alternate formats or through communication supports in a timely manner and do not impose a cost or fee that would not be imposed on a person who did not make a request.
- We provide comparable educational materials when a specific material cannot be provided, using the identified accessible format or support.
- We ensure web content that is required to access our goods and services, and all newly published web content, meets or exceeds WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines.
- We ensure that new and updated web applications meet or exceed WCAG 2.1 Level AA guidelines.
- We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our information, communication, and educational materials. We document the actions we take to respond to the feedback we receive, and we make that information available on request.
- We provide the required training on accessible information and communication to employees, agents, volunteers, educators, and any person who develops or maintains our web content, purchases, or procures information technology or communication tools, develops, or implements our accessible information and communication policies and practices, or provides information to the public or to other organizations in Manitoba.
- We keep a written record of accessibility and training policies, including a summary of our training materials and when our training is offered. We let the public know that our accessibility and training policies are available on request.