



**Studio9 Independent School  
of the Arts Accessibility Plan  
September 1, 2023**

## Introduction

The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers of engagement. Studio9 is committed to removing barriers for all individuals, including those who identify as having diverse abilities. The following plan strives to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have equal access to education, employment, resources, and support.

## 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.

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|---------------------|---|
| 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.   |
| 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.” |

## Guiding Framework

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. Studio9 has also employed the following guidelines in creating the Accessibility Plan:

1. To increase meaningful participation within the school setting, amongst students and staff alike.
2. To improve/maintain critical infrastructure like entranceways, playgrounds, sidewalks for staff/students with diverse abilities.

## About Our Committee

In order to meet the committee requirements of the Act, Studio9 will be using the committee struck by the Associate Member Society of the FISABC, of which we are a member. On a local level, we invite all students, staff, and parents/guardians to provide their feedback using the feedback form (see below) for Studio9 to deal with all accessibility matters.

## Overview of the Plan

Studio9 is committed to ensuring all members of our school community are treated with dignity, given the opportunity for meaningful participation, and are provided equitable access to learning. The priorities outlined in this plan represent our commitment to:

1. Engage with staff, community members and people with disabilities in the development and review of our accessibility plan.
2. Ensure that our policies and procedures align with the principles of accessibility.

## Plan Priorities

Studio9 is committed to priorities that align with the principles of accessibility. The following priorities focus on information based on the lived experience of people with disabilities to better understand the scope of work required to reduce social, physical, sensory, and other barriers that prevent people from meaningful interactions in and with our school.

### Priority #1 – Accessibility Inventory

Through the development of a survey (see below), we will gather information to identify attitudinal, physical, communication, systemic, technology, and sensory barriers. This information will be used to develop strategies, action plans, and timelines to prevent and remove barriers that people with disabilities face when interacting in and with our school.

### Priority #2 - Policies and Practices Scan

Through information gathered via our survey, Studio9 will review existing policies and practices in order to:

1. understand to what extent current policies and practices align with the principles of accessibility,
2. identify gaps in staff training or knowledge on accessibility issues,
3. summarize and celebrate existing accessibility practices, and
4. inform actions for improvement.

## Feedback Mechanism

Studio9 has developed an online feedback form that includes a series of questions about the accessibility plan and the accessibility experiences that members of the school communities can complete. The link to access to the feedback form can be found at <https://forms.gle/aMX3ZCuzzceiGGgA7>.

## Monitoring

Progress of priorities will be reported on by administrative staff by the end of June of each school year through shared reporting.

## **Appendix: Definition and Types of Disabilities**

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.

### 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.

### 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.

## 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 one'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.

## Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Learning or cognitive disabilities can result in many different communication 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 use body language.

## Mental Health Disabilities

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

## 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.



## Deaf-Blind Disabilities

A person who is deafblind cannot see or hear to some extent. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deafblind 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.







