Rowntree Montessori Schools Inc. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2026-2031

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1. Purpose

Rowntree Montessori Schools Inc. (the “School”) is committed to providing educational services and facilities to persons with disabilities in a way that is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. The School’s goal is to provide all students, staff, volunteers, and visitors, including those with disabilities, with the same opportunity to access and use the School’s services. If a barrier to accessing the School’s services cannot be removed, the School will seek alternative ways to access educational facilities and services.

The School’s has now grown and in accordance with its growth, recognizes the importance of reaffirming its commitment to accessibility. The School is proud of its advancement in providing accessible educational services and support to staff, students, and visitors over the years. The School will be opening a brand new campus in Brampton, Ontario with advanced accessibility and updated facilities for all students and staff – a symbol of our commitment to our students.

The School trains every person as soon as practicable after being hired and has incorporated training in respect of the Accessibility Plan and any changes. The School maintains records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

2. The School's Goals

The School will support students, staff, families, and the community by working toward the following goals:

- **Goal 1 – Student Achievement:** Providing a rigorous and accessible academic program that prepares students for future success.

- **Goal 2 – Safety and Well-being:** Maintaining a physically and emotionally safe environment where every member of the school community has a genuine sense of belonging.
- **Goal 3 – Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring that all programs, services, and facilities are free from barriers and affirming of every student's identity, including persons with disabilities.
- **Goal 4 – Community Engagement:** Building meaningful partnerships with families, caregivers, and community stakeholders to support student success and accessibility.

3. Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The School is committed to fulfilling its requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the “AODA”).

To this end, the School works toward ongoing improvements in accessibility for its students, staff, volunteers, and members of the public who work in, use, or access the School's facilities and services. The School is committed to:

- Continuing to engage with relevant stakeholders and special interest groups who may be impacted by the accessibility plan;
- Making reasonable efforts to develop and ensure that the School's policies, procedures, and practices are consistent with the principles of inclusion, equality of opportunity, and respect for the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities; and
- Ensuring the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan ("the Plan") is available and posted on the School's website.

4. Purpose of the Plan

The Plan describes the measures that the School will take during the period of 2026-2031 to prevent, identify, and remove barriers for persons with disabilities who use, work in, or access the School's facilities and services.

5. Objectives of Plan

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Describe the process the School will use to prevent, identify, and remove barriers to accessibility;
- Outline the ongoing and future work that will be undertaken so that programs are implemented to meet the spirit and intent of the AODA, Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), and associated Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR);
- Ensure that barriers to staff, students, and visitors with accessibility and accommodation needs beyond the requirements of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and the AODA are addressed in compliance with additional relevant legislation such as the OHRC and the associated IASR.

6. Accessibility Terminology

Disability

The AODA adopts the broad definition of disability set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). Section 10(1) of the OHRC defines "disability" as:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness, including diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness

or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Barrier

A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, and a policy, procedure, or practice.

7. Accessibility Accomplishments

The School has made meaningful progress in advancing accessibility across its campuses. The following accomplishments reflect the School's commitment to removing barriers and improving experiences for all members of our school community. The Schools is also in process of establishing an AODA Committee.

1. Customer Service

- Developed an Accessible Customer Service Policy consistent with the AODA's Customer Service Standard.
- Trained all customer-facing staff on how to interact respectfully and effectively with persons with disabilities at time of hire.
- Established a process for persons with disabilities to request alternative formats or communication supports when accessing school services.
- Ensured that service animals and support persons are welcomed in all areas of the School that are open to the public.
- Implemented a process for notifying students, families, and the public of temporary disruptions to accessible services or facilities through electronic communication.

2. Information and Communications

- Reviewed the School's public-facing website to ensure content is accessible.
- Adopted simplified language in key communications to capture a wider range of reading and comprehension levels.
- Committed to providing, upon request, information and communications in accessible formats and with appropriate communication supports.
- Ensured that emergency procedures, safe evacuation plans, and public safety information are available in accessible formats.

3. Employment

- Incorporated accessibility and accommodation language into all job postings and recruitment materials, notifying applicants that accommodations are available upon request during the hiring process.
- All training, policies, resources, and accessibility information is housed in the School's intranet system.
- Provided orientation and onboarding materials in accessible formats upon request.

- Committed to developing individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, in consultation with the employee and relevant professionals.
- Reviewed return-to-work procedures to address the needs of employees who are absent due to a disability.

4. Procurement

- Reviewed current procurement practices to ensure vendors offer accessible services when necessary.
- Highlighted the need to incorporate accessibility criteria into the evaluation of vendor contracts and procurement decisions where goods or services may be used by persons with disabilities with staff and administrators.

5. Self-Service Kiosks

- The School does not currently have any self-serve kiosks.
- The School has committed to ensuring that any new self-service kiosks procured or deployed by the School incorporate accessibility features, including but not limited to audio output, tactile controls, adjustable height, and compatibility with assistive devices, where technically feasible.

6. Training

- All staff, volunteers, and persons involved in implementing the School's policies complete mandatory accessibility training at the time of hiring, which provides: an overview of the AODA and the requirements of its regulations; how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities; how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal, or support person; how to use equipment or devices available on the School's premises to assist persons with disabilities; and what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the School's goods or services.
- The School provides training in an accessible format as required and requested by the participant.
- The School’s administrators and HR personnel are trained on the duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- The School incorporates disability awareness and inclusive practices into staff professional development programming.
- Training is conducted by educators who understand the needs of students with disabilities.
- Committed to an annual review of the training material and policies.
- Reviewed documentation method of keeping track of training.

7. Design of Public Spaces

- Ensured that any renovations or new construction to areas of the School open to the public comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standard under the IASR and the Ontario Building Code.
- At least one older campus has an elevator.
- At least one older campus has an accessible entrance.
- Accommodation and transportation can be arranged for access to facilities with specific accommodation needs or for emergency maintenance issues.

8. Transportation

- Reviewed transportation arrangements for students and staff with disabilities to ensure accessible options are available.
- Ensured that students with disabilities who require accessible transportation, assistive devices, or support persons during transit are accommodated.
- Reviewed transportation procedures for students who use assistive walking devices, wheelchairs, or service animals.

8. 2026–2031 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Objectives

The following objectives guide The School's accessibility work for the period 2026–2031, organized by the standards established under the IASR.

Customer Service

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Maintain compliance with the Customer Service Standard	Review and update the Accessibility Policy annually	Annually	Administration / HR
Improve accessible customer service training	Training content for all new and existing staff is refreshed each year.	Annually	Administration / HR
Ensure feedback process is accessible and functional	Review and promote the Accessibility Feedback Form with staff, students, and the public	2026-2027	Administration
Respond to accessibility feedback in a timely manner	Develop and implement a feedback response protocol	2026	Administration

Information and Communications

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure website accessibility	Conduct a full WCAG 2.1 accessibility review of The School's website; remediate identified barriers	2026-2028	IT / Administration
Provide accessible formats upon request	Develop a process to convert communications into accessible formats (e.g., large print, electronic, audio)	2027-2029	Administration
Ensure emergency information is accessible	Review all emergency communications and safety information to ensure they are available in accessible formats	2026-2027	Administration / Facilities
Review digital learning tools for accessibility	Review current online learning platforms to ensure software upgrades remain accessible and compatible with assistive devices	2026–2030	IT / Administration

Employment

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Strengthen accessible recruitment practices	Ensure all job postings include notice that accommodations are available during the hiring process; train hiring managers	2026	HR

Develop and implement individualized accommodation plans	Establish a clear process for employees to request, develop, and update individual accommodation plans	2026–2027	HR
Review return-to-work procedures	Ensure return-to-work processes account for employees returning from disability-related absences	2026–2027	HR
Conduct accessibility audit of employment practices	Review and develop HR policies and procedures for accessibility barriers and accommodation under the OHRC and update as required	Ongoing	HR /Administration

Procurement

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Embed accessibility requirements in procurement processes	Review current procurement practices to ensure vendors offer accessible services	2027-2028	Administration
Develop accessibility criteria for vendor selection	Create a checklist of accessibility requirements to be used when evaluating vendors and suppliers	2026–2027	Administration
Train procurement staff on accessibility obligations	Provide training to all administrators involved in purchasing decisions	2026	Administration/ HR

Self-Service Kiosks

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Audit existing self-service kiosks	No current kiosks		
Establish accessibility requirements for future kiosk procurement	Develop procurement specifications requiring accessibility features in any new kiosks	2027-2031	Administration / IT
Provide alternative service options	Ensure persons who cannot use kiosks can access services through an accessible alternative, if ever required	2027-2031	Administration

Training

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Update mandatory AODA training for all staff and volunteers	Update new hire accessibility training modules and implement regular training	Ongoing	HR
Review accessibility training for teaching staff	Review current accessibility training for teachers to deliver accessible curriculum for students	Ongoing	Administration
Ensure training records are maintained	Develop an online system to track completion of mandatory accessibility training for all staff and volunteers	2026	HR

Provide duty-to-accommodate training for supervisors	Deliver training on legal responsibilities under the OHRC and AODA to all supervisors	Annually	HR

Design of Public Spaces

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure new and renovated spaces comply with IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard	Ensure new buildings and renovation projects are compliant with AODA requirements	2026 (ongoing)	Administration
Maintain accessible elements in good repair	Implement a preventative and emergency maintenance protocol for accessible features; establish malfunction notification procedures	Ongoing	Administration

Transportation

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop accessible transportation procedures	Ensure accommodations are made for the use and transportation of assistive devices, service animals, and/or support persons for any student who requires one due to a disability when required	Ongoing	Administration
Train transportation staff on accessible service delivery	Provide training to drivers and transportation coordinators on accessibility requirements and best practices or procure drivers trained in such	Ongoing	HR / Administration
Review and update transportation policies for accessibility compliance	Ensure all transportation-related policies and procedures comply with the AODA and OHRC	2026–2027	Administration / HR

9. Training

The School is committed to providing comprehensive and ongoing accessibility training to all staff, volunteers, and persons involved in developing the School's policies. The following training is provided:

a. Mandatory Accessibility Training

All staff, volunteers, and persons who participate in developing and implementing the School's policies must complete this training. The training provides:

- An overview of the AODA and the requirements of its regulations;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal, or a support person;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the School's goods or services.

b. Duty to Accommodate, Health and Safety and Human Rights Awareness

This training is being implemented to prepare leaders to support staff through effective workplace accommodations. It focuses on understanding legal responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code and Occupational Health and Safety Act. Leaders learn how to respond to accommodation requests, promote inclusive practices, and maintain a safe, accessible work environment.

c. Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Training

Training is being implemented on the recognition, prevention, and response to workplace violence and harassment, consistent with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Workplace violence and harassment can have devastating consequences for both workers and the work environment, affecting workplace communication, production, morale, and the general sense of personal well-being.

d. Inclusive Curriculum and Teaching Practices

Training for teaching staff on developing accessible and inclusive lesson plans, assessments, and learning environments that meet the needs of students with disabilities.

10. Communication of the Plan

The School's Plan will be posted on the School's public-facing website in an accessible format. The Plan will also be made available to the public in accessible formats upon request.

11. Review and Monitoring Process

The School will continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its barrier removal and prevention strategies. The School will ensure the following:

- The Plan will be reviewed and updated with a new plan before its expiration; and
- At least every five years, the Plan will be reviewed and updated.

12. Feedback Mechanisms

The School welcomes feedback on the Plan and on any accessibility concerns or suggestions from students, staff, families, volunteers, and members of the public. Feedback can be provided using the Accessibility Feedback Form (Appendix A). The form will be available on the School's website and at the School's main reception.

Feedback may also be submitted:

- **By email:** dschewske@rowntreemontessori.com
- **By mail:** 3 Sunforest Dr., Brampton, ON L6Z 2Z2
- **By phone:** 905-567-3553

All feedback will be reviewed by the Accessibility Committee and a response will be provided, where a return contact has been given, within a reasonable timeframe.

13. Appendices

Appendix A: Relevant Legislation and Standards

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA)
- *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (O. Reg. 191/11) (IASR)
- *Ontario Human Rights Code* (OHRC)
- *Ontario Building Code* (OBC)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA)
- *Education Act* (Ontario)

Appendix B: Accessibility Feedback Form

ROWNTREE MONTESSORI SCHOOLS INC. Accessibility Feedback Form
Your Name: _____
Your Role (e.g., student, parent/guardian, staff, visitor):
_____
Your Contact Information (optional): _____
Date: _____
Summary of Your Comments / Concerns / Suggestions:
Please return this completed form to:

Administration
3 Sunforest Dr.
Brampton, ON
L6Z 2Z2

By email: admin@rowntreemontessori.com
By phone: 905-790-3838

All feedback is reviewed by the Accessibility Committee. If you have provided contact information and requested a response, we will aim to respond within [15] business days.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11). The School is committed to reviewing and updating the Plan regularly to reflect our ongoing progress and evolving obligations.