

MELROSE COMMUNITY CHURCH POLICY STATEMENT: PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Melrose Community Church (the “Church”) is committed to providing high quality service to all of its members, adherents and visitors, including people with disabilities. It is the Church’s objective to provide service in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities. This means that the Church will take steps to ensure that its services are provided in an accessible manner and, to the fullest extent possible, allow individuals with disabilities to access services in the same way as all other visitors.

1. Communicating with Individuals with Disabilities

The Church understands that how we communicate to our visitors is key. The Church is committed to communicating with individuals with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disabilities, and we will train our staff and volunteers who communicate with visitors accordingly.

We recognize that disabilities and any accommodations required by individuals with disabilities are not always obvious or apparent.

The Church is committed to being guided by the principles of respect, dignity and independence in interacting with all individuals, including individuals with disabilities.

Our commitment to communicating effectively with individuals with disabilities applies to all aspects of our communications with visitors (and potential visitors), including face to face interactions, telephone and electronic communications, and written documents.

2. Assistive Devices, Service Animals and Support Persons

The Church is committed to welcoming individuals with disabilities into our premises and ensuring that they can access our activities and services. Individuals who use assistive devices will be able to use and benefit from our activities and services. We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by visitors to access our services. If the Church maintains assistive devices that may be used by visitors, we will ensure our staff is trained with respect to their use.

Individuals with disabilities may enter the parts of our premises open to the public and other third parties, accompanied by a service animal, if the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. While visiting the Church, it is the responsibility of the person with a service animal to control the animal at all times. In the event that a staff member, volunteer or another visitor is allergic to animals, alternative arrangements will be negotiated.

The Church is similarly committed to welcoming individuals with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Individuals with disabilities accompanied by a support person may enter the parts of our premises open to the public and other third parties, and may have access to that support person at all times. As a church we do not charge fees for our regular meetings. For concerts, special meals or other events where a participation fee is charged to cover costs, there will be a discount for a support person. Consent from the person with a disability is required when communicating private issues related to the person with a disability, in the presence of a support person.

3. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

The Church will make reasonable effort to provide visitors with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of the facilities or services usually used by individuals with disabilities in accessing the Church's premises or goods and services. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of any alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be brought to the attention of individuals with disabilities in a manner reasonable in the circumstances, for example, by posting the notice in the Church's premises, on its website or in another manner.

We will not be able to give adequate notice in case of an emergency temporary disruption.

4. Feedback Process

The Church welcomes feedback including feedback about our service to individuals with disabilities. Feedback is both welcome and appreciated. We recognize that feedback can make the Church's service to its congregation and visitors better.

Feedback regarding the way the Church provides goods and services to visitors (and potential visitors) with disabilities can be made verbally, by email, by letter or otherwise.

All feedback should be directed to the Church's Accessibility Officer for consideration, by email or letter at the following addresses:

- Via email: Subject line - For the Accessibility Officer' Attention at melrosechurch@yahoo.ca

- Via letter :The Accessibility Officer
Melrose Community Church, 375 Melrose Avenue, Toronto, ON M5M 1Z6

Complaints and other feedback requiring a response will be addressed promptly and according to the Church's existing policies and procedures.

5. Training of Staff

The Church will ensure that employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on its behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of visitor services policies, practices and procedures, receive training in compliance with applicable laws, including the Ontario *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA").

Training will include, at minimum, the elements set out below.

- The purpose of AODA and the customer service standards enacted under AODA.

- How to interact and communicate with individuals with various types of disabilities.

- How to interact and communicate with individuals who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.

- How to use any assistive device or other equipment or material available at the Church that may help with the provision of goods and services to individuals with disabilities.
- What to do if an individual with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Church's goods or services.
- Information about the Church's policies, practices and procedures relating to visitor service for individuals with disabilities, including this policy.

6. Modification of Policy and Questions

- Melrose Community Church is committed to policies, programs and procedures which respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. This policy will be updated from time to time to ensure compliance with applicable laws and the Church's objective of providing high quality service to visitors with disabilities. Should you have any questions regarding this policy, please email them to the Church's Accessibility Officer, at melrosechurch@yahoo.ca or speak to one of our staff.

This policy will be available in accessible formats if requested.