

Accessibility Committee - DRAFT Formation

Created by: Heather Evans, Secretary, Board of Directors, PEAK Montessori Academy and Claire O'Meara, Accessibility Committee Member

Created date: September 8, 2026

Amended: September 18, 2026

OVERVIEW

The Accessibility Plan outlines the measures PEAK Montessori Academy will take to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning environment. The plan is based on the principles from "Developing Your First Accessibility Plan", the Accessible British Columbia Act, and informed by feedback from staff, parents/guardians, and students conducted by the Accessibility Committee.

Our committee will uphold the following principles, as laid out in the "Developing Your First Accessibility Plan" document:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Universal design

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND INTENTION

a. About the Organization

PEAK Montessori Academy is an independent elementary school in Comox, BC — where curiosity leads to discovery and every student is empowered to reach their full potential.

At PEAK Montessori Academy, we nurture curiosity and a love of learning within a thoughtfully curated environment -- one that fosters independence, confidence, collaboration, and creative problem-solving.

Grounded in freedom with responsibility, peace education, and authentic Montessori practice, we cultivate integrity, self-discipline, and critical thinking while delivering the BC curriculum.

Through strong community relationships and a deep belief in every child's potential, we empower learners to navigate real-world challenges and make meaningful, lasting contributions to the world around them.

b. Our Accessibility Story

Our school is committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports the dignity, autonomy, and full participation of all community members. This plan aligns with the Accessible BC Act principles of adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion,

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self-determination, and universal design. We recognize that identifying and removing barriers is an ongoing responsibility essential to our school values.

As a newly formed independent elementary school, whose doors opened in September 2026, we are eager to establish and implement our accessibility standards. Our goal is to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where our students, staff, board, volunteers, community members, and other stakeholders know they have a voice in making our space one of celebrating difference.

We know that there is a lot to learn and that there will be much growth in the coming years. We look forward to having conversations that challenge, inspire, and encourage.

c. Message from Leadership

At PEAK Montessori Academy, we value inclusion of all people, regardless of race, religion, culture, background, ability, gender, and sexual orientation. Dr. Montessori spoke about educating children for peace. Peace begins with the individual. Love and acceptance for all human beings is fundamental to Montessori philosophy. We are one world, we are all connected. - Melissa Schwartz, Head of School.

d. Our Framework

The United Nations

In 2006, the United Nations (UN) led efforts to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2010, Canada ratified the CRPD and described the CRPD as follows:

“The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human right treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Parties to the Convention of the rights of Persons with Disabilities are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law.”

“According to the World Health Organization, 15% of the world’s population (an estimated 1.1 billion people) identify as having some form of disability. This represents the world’s largest minority, and the only minority group that any of us can become a member of at any time.” (Source: Easter Seals, Canada).

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Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

In Canada, the number of people living with disability increased from 2017 to 2022. The 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) showed that 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older, or 8.0 million people, had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities. By comparison, 22% of Canadians, or 6.2 million people, had one or more disabilities in 2017.

With that, mental health disabilities increased from 33% to 39%. “Among youth (aged 15 to 24 years) with disabilities, mental health-related (68%) was the most common type of disability in 2022, followed by learning (46%) and pain-related (34%).” (Source: StatsCan)

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA)

The ACA aims to create a barrier-free Canada for those living with disabilities by 2040.

“Findings show that 72% of people with disabilities reported that they experienced 1 or more of 27 types of barriers to accessibility because of their condition at least sometimes in the year preceding the survey.

There are a wide variety of barriers to accessibility that people with disabilities experience. Among the most commonly experienced barriers were those related to features inside or outside public spaces, such as entrances or exits and sidewalks (56%), followed by barriers related to communication (48%), barriers related to behaviours, misconceptions or assumptions (37%) and barriers related to online activities (17%)” (Source: StatsCan).

The ACA was developed to remove barriers in the following areas:

- Employment
- The built environment (buildings and public spaces)
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Communication other than ICT
- The procurement (buying and renting) of goods, services, and facilities
- The design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation (such as trains, planes, and buses that cross provincial or international borders).

It also included requirements for organizations, including the following:

- Publish and update accessibility plans.
- Set up a feedback process to receive comments on accessibility.
- Publish regular progress reports.
- Consult people with disabilities in the process.

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e. Territorial Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

f. Key Definitions

NOTE: AS PROVIDED IN THE “Developing Your First Accessibility Plan” document.

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. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for Organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

Diversity: Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the 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 seek to empower 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.” An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to interact with the Organization.

SECTION 2: THE GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The hope of this plan is to ensure we are actively pursuing the removal of barriers for students, staff, board members, volunteers, community members, and other stakeholders when it comes learning from, participating in, and experiencing what PEAK Montessori Academy offers.

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We actively explore accessibility as it relates to the following areas of our work:

- employment
- the built environment
- information and communications
- transportation
- health

a. Employment

- PEAK Montessori Academy posts all positions and actively recruits from a wide range of spaces including job boards, personal relationships, and other schools.
- We do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or ability. That said, we do have requirements for all staff as it pertains to educational standards as laid out by the BC Ministry of Education.
- We make professional development of staff a priority and encourage team members to seek out opportunities to further their education.

b. The Built Environment

- PEAK Montessori Academy is dedicated to creating a prepared environment that is a safe, warm, and inclusive space that is child-focused.
- Materials are easily accessible and encourage hands-on exploration.
- We actively seek spaces of learning, both in and outside the classroom, that encourage child-led learning.

c. Information and Communications

- We communicate with all stakeholders using clear language.
- Communications are delivered using a variety of modalities, including, but not limited to: newsletters, emails, text, paper documents, in-person meetings and events, phone, and online platforms for video calls.
- All information is delivered in a timely manner to allow for response and input when necessary.

d. Transportation

- A key priority is to ensure that our classroom is accessible to the entire community whether by foot, bike, car, or public transportation.
- We strive to maintain a welcoming space for all who may use various means of mobility - wheelchair, crutches, canes, and other assistive devices.

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e. Health

- The Montessori approach strongly focuses on the mind-body connection. We foster this through active learning, physical movement, and nervous system regulation. We ensure all learning occurs within a safe space, one that is open to differing perspectives on health, and what it means to each individual.
- Our mind-body connection extends to our education around food. Through our weekly fruit and vegetable program, children are invited to explore new tastes and textures at their own pace. We also encourage mindful mealtime routines.
- Staff are granted a flexible health spending plan that ensures they can access whatever care they need at any time including mental, dental, and physical to ensure overall health and wellness.

SECTION 3: ABOUT OUR COMMITTEE

a. Committee Design

Our committee is composed of one Board member and two parents of children currently enrolled.

b. Committee Statement:

Vision Statement:

To build a school without barriers, where access to learning sparks deep connection and ensures every individual feels a sense of place and belonging.

Mission:

Our mission is to build a school culture where diversity is celebrated and accessibility is the norm, continuously inviting community feedback to eliminate barriers to learning and connection.

Goals:

- A culture of inclusion: design learning experiences that celebrate diversity.*
- Individualized support: develop tailored plans so each student receives the support they need to succeed.*
- Remove barriers: remove physical, administrative, and academic barriers to learning and participation.*

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- d. *Connection: foster an environment of belonging, mental well-being and active community involvement.*

c. Recruitment

d. Committee Members and Background

SECTION 4: FEEDBACK AND AREAS OF FOCUS

We welcome continuous feedback regarding barriers encountered within our school community.

Our parents/caregivers and members of the public can report barriers or provide input on this plan through the following channels:

- Online Feedback Form: To be developed and posted no later than October 2026.
- Email: admin@peakmontessori.com
- Phone / Mail: [\(905\) 807-8201](tel:9058078201) | 1829 Beaufort Ave, Comox, BC V9M 1R9
- Process: Feedback is collected anonymously or with contact details, reviewed quarterly by the committee, and used to inform annual updates.

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SECTION 5: THREE-YEAR PLAN

Focus Area	Identified Barrier/Goal	Action Steps	Timeline/Lead
Feedback from the public	No online feedback form currently exists for the public to access. Goal: Public feedback link accessible via the website by end October 2026.	Create an accessibility feedback form secure link that can be accessed via the PEAK Montessori website. Form to be reviewed by members of the Accessibility Committee and school administration prior to posting.	Heather Evans / October 2026.
Recruitment for the Accessibility Committee.	Committee to include more members in order to create a more diverse and inclusive working group. Goal: Five (5) Committee members by the end of December 2026.	Reach out to parents/caregivers via communication channels to see who might be interested in serving on the Committee. Connect with members of the public who may be interested in serving on the Committee.	Claire O'Meara / September 2026.

SECTION 6: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REVIEW

This plan is a living document. The Accessibility Committee will meet three (3) times per school year to review progress on action items and assess new feedback. An annual progress report will be published on the school website, and a comprehensive overhaul of the plan will take place by September 2029 in compliance with provincial regulations.