**1st DRAFT October 2024**

**Yaqan Nukiy School**

**Accessibility Plan**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Our leadership team and staff are very committed to providing a positive educational environment that fosters each child’s learning in an accessible and inclusive environment.

**Definitions**

Accessibility: The state of having programs, services and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers.

Accessibility Committee: An official group formed by one or more organizations in collaboration with people with disabilities, to create an accessibility plan and feedback mechanism.

Accessibility Plan: A plan developed by an Accessibility Committee that identifies challenges and solutions for addressing accessibility barriers.

 Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. This includes physical/environmental, attitudinal, information, communications, policy or practice, and technological barriers.

Types of barriers:

 **a) Physical/Environmental Barrier**: A barrier resulting from building design, smells/sounds, lighting, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, the size of doorways, and so on.

**b) Attitudinal Barrier:** A barrier that arises from the attitudes of staff, students and the school community, including discriminatory behaviours and a lack of disability awareness.

**c) Communication Barrier**: A barrier that arises from difficulties receiving information in person, by telephone or online, interacting with teachers, peers, receptionists or other staff, and receiving training.

**d) Information Barrier:** A barrier that arises from inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties reading brochures, forms, manuals, websites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, and so on.

**e) Policy or Practice Barrier:** Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society. Policy, practice, and procedures that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.

 **f) Technological Barrier**: Barriers resulting from computers, photocopiers, telephones, including the lack of assistive technologies.

**Disability**: The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction between an impairment and a barrier. (For more information about disability and types of disability and support, refer to Appendix A: Disabilities.)

**Impairment:** A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

**Guiding Framework**

Guiding Framework the Accessible British Columbia Regulation, under the Accessible British Columbia Act, came into force on September 1, 2022. These regulations identify schools as accessible organizations, and school districts and independent schools are required to have an Accessibility Committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility. The goal of the act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and involve them in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to their full participation in the life within the province.

 Principles in the Accessible B.C. Act:

The Accessible B.C. Act includes a list of principles that must be considered as organizations develop an accessibility plan. The Definitions are adapted from the foundational document BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation.

a) Adaptability: Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

 b) Collaboration: Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create 12 opportunities for Organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

 c) 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.

d) Inclusion: All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

 e) Self-Determination: Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

f) 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.”

**Accessibility Committee**

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, organizations must establish an Accessibility Committee to assist with identifying and preventing barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. The purpose of the accessibility committee is to work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities while encompassing the whole community. Accessibility Committee Members: Under the Accessible B.C. Act, the selection of accessibility committee members must, to the extent possible, align with the following goals:

• At least half the members are persons with disabilities (PWD), or individuals who support or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities.

• At least one member is Indigenous; and

• Members reflect the diversity of persons in B.C. and Lower Kootenay Band

A priority for the upcoming school year will be to grow the committee to meet the goals outlined above.

**Barrier Identification**

To determine the barriers to accessibility that currently exist within the school community, the committee may choose to use some of the following barrier identification methodologies:

• Audit of policies and practices

 • Survey to staff

• Survey to parents/guardians

• Survey to students

 • Physical Accessibility Audit

 • Survey of local community and Elders

Monitoring

Our current priorities outline how we will go about gathering data related to accessibility and barriers within the community in order to develop meaningful, and achievable goals. Our Accessibility Committee will meet biannually this year, with the intention to have an inventory completed, and goals identified by June 2025.