

HIGHROAD ACADEMY

School Accessibility Plan

2026 – 2029

Chilliwack, British Columbia

Building on 2023–2026 | Informed by Community Consultation & Committee Evaluation

Section 1: Introduction

About Our School Community

Highroad Academy is an independent, Christian school that has been in existence since 1978. We are located in the beautiful city of Chilliwack in the eastern Fraser Valley. The school serves around 500 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. At Highroad Academy, we believe that we have all been uniquely created by God and find our purpose in Him. We partner with families to offer a compassionate, Christ-centered, educational experience where we focus on the inside-out development of individuals who intentionally represent Jesus in our world.

Highroad Academy strives to meet the diverse needs of all students. We believe learning happens all the time and in a variety of settings. Highroad students have unlimited opportunities to pursue their passions and develop their skills. Whether they are working in the Highroad Garden, earning volunteer hours with our many community partners, gaining work experience, involved in athletics, theatre performance, music, or fine arts, our students develop a wide array of skills to prepare them for whatever path they choose in their future.

As a staff we lead, serve, and teach with great passion because we are confident in what God has called us to do. We work to cultivate that same passion in every one of our students. Our school team includes a principal, an assistant principal, three department coordinators, 32 teaching staff, and 222 support/non-teaching staff.

A Message from the Board/Administrator

At Highroad Academy, we are committed to providing a learning and working environment that supports all students and staff and provides equitable opportunities to support our diverse community. A key element to supporting our community is the development of a Three-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan identifies system needs, priorities, and action plans, and draws on feedback from our school community and the work of the Accessibility Committee to enhance equity of access to programming and our facilities.

Our Accessibility Committee is a diverse and multi-disciplinary team that meets regularly to affirm our commitment to identify priorities and develop and monitor action plans highlighted in the Three-Year Accessibility Plan. The 2026–2029 plan builds directly on the successes and unfinished work of the 2023–2026 plan, as evaluated by the Accessibility Committee. It reflects the voices of students, families, staff, and community members, and is guided by the principles of the Accessible B.C. Act.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for those with disabilities, but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to advancing the efforts of the Accessibility Committee to improve equity and ease of access to services, as well as access to our facilities. Through the actions in this Three-Year Accessibility Plan, we commit to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students, staff and the larger school community.

Territorial Acknowledgement

At Highroad Academy, we acknowledge that we are honoured to live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Stó:lō Coast Salish peoples.

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 hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person navigating needs or disabilities. Types of barriers in the educational setting:

- **Learning Barrier:** any barrier that limits or prevents learning, whether it is through inadequate engagement, representation of the content, or expression of ideas and communication.

- Architectural and Physical Barrier: A barrier resulting from building design, the area adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, the size of doorways, lack of accessibility features, blocked paths of travel, and so on.
- 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.
- Policy or Practice Barrier: Rules, regulations and protocols that prevent a person from performing their job satisfactorily or participating in society.
- Resource Barrier: Barriers resulting from inadequate technology, funding, staff, or tools.
- Temporal Barrier: Barriers that occur during a specific time, such as busy times of day or during special events.

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.

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

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work

The Highroad Academy School Accessibility Plan builds on global, national, provincial, and school-specific actions to promote and support accessibility.

Global Context – United Nations

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion within the workplace and within the larger community. The United Nations has been instrumental in leading the importance of disability as a global health issue. In 2006, the United Nations led efforts to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In 2010, Canada ratified the CRPD, which is an international human rights treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Parties to the CRPD are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law.

Canadian Context and Legislation – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada-wide, around one in five people had some form of disability in 2017. Nationally, Canadian accessibility legislation started in 1985 where disability was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and in 1986, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were included in the new federal Employment Equity Act. The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) came into force in 2019, with the overarching goal to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040. This act applies to federally regulated entities. The ACA was developed based on the following guiding principles:

- All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities.
- All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities.
- All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities.
- All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities.
- Laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons.
- PWDs must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures.
- The development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for PWDs.

B.C. Context and Legislation – Accessible B.C. Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act, enacted in June 2021, came into full regulatory 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 of the province.

The Accessible B.C. Act is guided by the following principles:

- **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. 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: An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who interact with the organization, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Our Commitment to Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the degree of ease with which people with disabilities can use and enjoy a device, service, or place. At Highroad Academy, we are committed to providing an environment that is accessible and practical for all members of our diverse community. We recognize the importance of conscious planning, design, and effort in ensuring that barriers are removed, and accessibility is increased.

Our school is committed to working collaboratively with the community to provide equitable treatment to people with disabilities in a way that respects their dignity. To achieve this goal, we have outlined the following commitments:

- Engage with staff, community members and people with disabilities in the development and review of its accessibility plan.
- Ensure that our school board policies and procedures align with the principles of accessibility.
- Improve access to facilities, policies, programs, practices, and services for students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and community members.
- Continually improve accessibility for people with disabilities in our school community.

Our Approach

At Highroad Academy, we believe that all members of our community have the right to be treated with dignity, given an opportunity to participate, and provided with access to learning and community. Our approach is grounded in the core provincial principles of accessibility, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination and universal design.

The 2026–2029 plan builds directly on the 2023–2026 plan, informed by a formal committee evaluation conducted in 2025–2026. The process for developing this plan included:

- Review and evaluation of the 2023–2026 Accessibility Plan by the Accessibility Committee
- Surveys to staff, parents/guardians, and students
- A School Physical Accessibility Audit update
- Review of feedback submitted through the school's online Accessibility Feedback Tool
- Identification of remaining barriers and new priority areas
- Development and prioritization of new and continuing action items

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee

Purpose of the 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. The Accessibility Committee also advises the school Administrator/Board on strategies to reduce social, physical, sensory and other barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of school community life.

Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee

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 PWDs.
- At least one member is an Indigenous person.
- Members reflect the diversity of persons in B.C.

Ongoing recruitment is conducted as needed to maintain diverse representation as outlined above. The Accessibility Committee was formally reconstituted for the 2026–2029 planning cycle in Spring 2026.

Accessibility Committee Membership

Committee Member	Position / Representation	Notes
Stuart Morris	Principal	
Julie Lade	Assistant Principal	
Pam Goosen	Elementary Department Coordinator	
Mariellen Wheaton	Diverse Abilities Coordinator	
Tim Jackson	City Life Campus Manager	
Armando Ferraro	City Life Church COO	
Carolyn Ediger	Diverse Abilities Teacher; Parent of child with accessibility needs	
Laura McIntyre	Educational Assistant	Métis ancestry
Rachel Fordham	Hearing Accessibility Expert	New addition 2026

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

The Accessibility Committee used the following barrier-identification and evaluation methods to inform the 2026–2029 plan:

Methodology	Description	Status
2023–2026 Plan Evaluation	The Accessibility Committee formally evaluated all goals and actions from the 2023–2026 plan using a structured rating tool (1–5 scale), identifying successes and gaps.	2025/2026
Audit of Policies and Practices	A review of current policies and practices that promote accessibility and inclusion was conducted by key staff members.	Spring 2026
Survey to Staff	An accessibility and inclusion survey was developed and distributed to staff.	Spring 2026
Survey to Parents/Guardians	An accessibility and inclusion survey was developed and distributed to parents/guardians.	Spring 2026
School Physical Accessibility Audit	An updated assessment of school physical accessibility was completed.	Spring 2026
Accessibility Feedback Tool	Ongoing feedback from the school website tool was reviewed and analyzed for new themes.	Ongoing
Accessibility Committee Deliberations	The Committee reviewed all input and collaboratively prioritized areas to target in the 2026–2029 plan.	Spring 2026

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool

Highroad Academy maintains an online feedback tool that allows students, staff and members of the school community to submit information about accessibility experiences. The tool is posted on the main page of the school website and includes options for anonymous submission and the ability to upload video, voice recordings or photos.

To report an accessibility barrier or share feedback, visit:

<https://www.highroadacademy.com/about/accessibility>

The feedback tool asks:

- Please provide the date the barrier or support was experienced.
- Please select the location where the barrier or support was experienced.
- What were you or someone you know trying to access?
- Accessibility barrier or support details (be as specific as possible).
- Do you have any recommendations for what would make it better?
- Attach files if you wish to provide additional information (e.g., video, voice recording, photos).
- Please provide your name and email or phone number if you would like to be contacted (optional).

Feedback may also be directed to: info@highroadacademy.com

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers

The following accomplishments and barriers reflect the outcomes of the 2023–2026 plan evaluation, ongoing feedback from the school community, and updated consultation conducted in 2025–2026. These inform the priorities and actions in the 2026–2029 plan.

Key Accomplishments from 2023–2026

Learning

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) supports identified, documented, and implemented schoolwide.
- IEPs and IEP meetings updated to reflect the needs of students and families.
- KLST testing and kindergarten assessments to identify early speech/language concerns.
- SLP, OT, and PT contracted to provide programming and support for identified students.
- Dedicated Learning Assistance support staff and a dedicated Special Needs teacher for Modified High School students.
- School psychologist contracted to complete Psych Ed assessments.
- Key universal supports successfully embedded in classrooms, including: movement breaks, explicit instructions, flexible seating, visual timers, positive praise, extra wait time, sensory tools, rubrics and scoring guides, and calculator access.

Attitudinal

- SEL training provided for all staff with emphasis on compassionate communities.
- Intentional discussion of unique student needs during staff meetings and PLCs.
- Regular communication between Diverse Abilities and teaching staff.

Resources

- Open Parachute SEL curriculum adopted school-wide.
- Annual attendance at the Crosscurrents Diverse Abilities Conference for all DA staff.
- Library of resources accessible to all staff; Chromebooks and iPads available.
- Staff assistive technology training completed; student access to assistive technology improved.

School Policies and Practices

- Compassionate community and restorative justice approach embedded in school culture.
- UDL training priorities identified; training modules developed for current and new staff.
- Students requiring emergency evacuation support identified; sensory considerations addressed in drill preparation.

Physical and Architectural Environment

- Elevator serviced semi-annually; Provincial Technical Safety inspection completed.
- Lift-equipped school shuttle available for field trips.
- Key fob and buzzed-entry access system installed.
- Sensory Room updated (Snoezelen concept); physiotherapy room and equipment in place.
- Q-rooms (quiet/calming spaces) established for students needing alternative learning environments.
- Automatic door opener installed on back door; front entrance accessibility improved.
- Ramps to outdoor portables; wheelchair access pathway created.
- Buddy benches introduced to improve social inclusion during play.
- Noise dampers added to chair legs; bell adjustments made to improve sound environment.
- Paths of travel maintained clear; staff and student awareness improved.

Barriers Identified – Informing the 2026–2029 Plan

Learning Barriers

- Lack of available trained support staff to meet the range of unique student needs.
- Need for more staff trained in mental health first aid.
- Limited learning assistance availability for high school students.
- Study skills and planner use goals were not formally evaluated; structured delivery remains inconsistent.
- Inconsistent implementation of universal supports across all classrooms.

Physical and Architectural Environment Barriers

- Sound field systems partially installed; classroom acoustic improvements incomplete.
- Playground accessibility formally assessed but budgeting and implementation not yet begun.
- Limited wheelchair access to the school garden (pathway includes a large step).
- Slick surfaces on ramps to portables during winter months.
- Inconsistent cooling in warmer months impacting learning in some classrooms.
- Wheelchair accessible door requires a staff member to unlock manually with the new FOB system.
- Limited wheelchair accessible washrooms and automatic door openers throughout the building.
- Lighting concerns in certain areas; limited sightlines to some work/therapy spaces.
- Noise from upper-level classrooms affecting lower-level learning spaces.

Attitudinal Barriers

- Attitudinal goals around ableism and disability lacked structured evaluation data.
- Gap between post-pandemic community needs and current staff training and equipping.
- Persistent misconceptions that behaviour reflects laziness or lack of motivation rather than communication.
- Staff feeling overwhelmed by the level and range of needs in classrooms.

Resource Barriers

- Staff confidence in using assistive technology (voice-to-text, text-to-voice, web readers) remains inconsistent.
- Lack of time to review and implement new resources.

School Policy and Practice Barriers

- Mental health crisis response protocols for students and staff are not formally documented.
- Systematic transition planning not consistently in place for all students with disabilities.
- Emergency evacuation goal was not fully implemented; requires re-integration into emergency planning policy.

Section 7: Our Three-Year Plan (2026–2029)

This Accessibility Plan outlines the measures Highroad Academy will take to remove and prevent barriers and to promote inclusion for individuals with disabilities in our school community. The plan is based on the Accessibility Principles of Adaptability, Collaboration, Diversity, Inclusion, Self-Determination, and Universal Design, as set out in the Accessible B.C. Act.

The 2026–2029 plan continues goals where strong progress was made, deepens work where progress was partial, and introduces new goals that emerged from evaluation and consultation. Each priority area below includes a brief summary of progress from 2023–2026 and new/continuing action items.

Priority #1: Learning

Highroad Academy will continue to strengthen access to learning for all students, building on the strong foundation of UDL implementation while addressing gaps in study skills instruction, high school learning support, and consistent application of universal supports.

Progress Snapshot from 2023–2026

Goal Area	2023–26 Rating	Carry-Forward Focus
Implement Universal Supports Schoolwide	4	Strong foundation; deepen student awareness and consistency
Improve Noise Regulation	3	Continue; embed more consistently across staff
Study Skills and Planner Use	Not rated	Formalize instruction; collect outcome data

Goals and Actions for 2026–2029

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Deepen and sustain UDL implementation schoolwide	- Review and refresh the UDL supports checklist annually with input from DA staff and classroom teachers - Increase student voice in identifying which supports work best for them - Develop a peer support model to normalize use of universal supports for all students - Ensure UDL is embedded in new staff onboarding and ongoing professional development - Collect annual data on which supports are in use and their perceived effectiveness	Ongoing
Improve consistency of noise regulation in classrooms and hallways	Develop a school-wide noise level protocol with visual cues (e.g., posted expectations, noise-o-meter)	2026/2027

	- Continue pre-correction reminders before hallway transitions as a schoolwide practice - Identify classrooms most affected by noise and prioritize acoustic improvements in those spaces - Review and monitor implementation consistency across all staff; include in PLC discussions	
Formalize study skills and executive functioning instruction	- Develop a structured, grade-appropriate study skills curriculum for elementary and secondary - Provide direct instruction in planner use, test preparation, and summarizing key ideas - Embed anxiety reduction strategies (e.g., breathing exercises, movement) before assessment periods - Collect data annually on student use of planners and self-reported organization skills	2026/2027
Improve learning support for high school students	- Review current Learning Assistance availability for grades 9–12 and identify gaps - Develop a plan to increase access to dedicated HS learning support - Investigate peer tutoring models and co-teaching options for high school students with diverse needs	2027/2028
Increase staff training in mental health first aid and disability-informed practice	- Identify target number of staff to be certified in Mental Health First Aid and develop training schedule - Offer at least one disability-awareness professional development session per year for all staff - Develop resource guides for staff on supporting students in mental health distress	2026/2027

Priority #2: Attitudinal

Highroad Academy will build on SEL foundations to more systematically address ableism and disability awareness, improve how staff understand behaviour as communication, and reduce the sense of overwhelm that can accompany high levels of need in classrooms.

Progress Snapshot from 2023–2026

Goal Area	2023–26 Rating	Carry-Forward Focus
Increase Understanding of Ableism and Disability	Under review	Develop structured curriculum integration and evaluation measures
Behaviour as communication	—	New goal based on identified barrier

Staff wellbeing and classroom overwhelm

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New goal based on identified barrier

Goals and Actions for 2026–2029

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Increase student and staff understanding of ableism and disability	• Integrate disability awareness content into literacy and social studies units at multiple grade levels • Invite adults with disabilities to speak with students as part of planned programming (minimum once per year) • Develop a resource list of disability-inclusive literature for each grade band • Create an annual Accessibility Awareness event or week for the school community • Track participation and gather student reflection data to measure changes in understanding	Ongoing from 2026
Strengthen staff understanding that behaviour is communication	• Provide professional development on behaviour-as-communication frameworks (e.g., collaborative proactive solutions, Ross Greene model) • Integrate behaviour interpretation frameworks into IEP meetings and case conference protocols • Include case study discussions during staff meetings and PLCs to build shared understanding	2026/2027
Support staff wellbeing and reduce classroom overwhelm	• Conduct an annual staff needs assessment related to workload and support for students with complex needs • Increase access to consultation with DA staff for classroom teachers experiencing high demand • Develop a tiered support model to better match the level of support to student need • Include staff wellbeing as a standing agenda item in DA and admin meetings	2027/2028

Priority #3: Physical and Architectural Environment

Highroad Academy will continue to improve the physical accessibility of the school environment, with a renewed focus on completing sound field installation, beginning playground improvements, and resolving ongoing wheelchair access issues.

Progress Snapshot from 2023–2026

Goal Area	2023–26 Rating	Carry-Forward Focus
Improve Hearing Accessibility	3 / 2 (sound fields)	Complete sound field installation; extend acoustic improvements
Increase Alternative Learning and Calming Spaces	3–4	Sustain Q-rooms; continue identifying needs
Keep Paths of Travel Accessible	4	Sustain current practice
Improve Entrance Accessibility	3	Continue door opener expansion
Improve Playground Accessibility	1 (budget/plan)	Begin formal planning and budgeting process
Emergency Evacuation Equipment	Not rated	Integrate into Policy & Practice (Priority 4)

Goals and Actions for 2026–2029

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Complete and sustain hearing accessibility improvements	- Complete installation of sound field systems in all remaining classrooms (prioritize lower-level classrooms affected by upper-floor noise) - Conduct an annual review of hearing accessibility with input from Rachel Fordham (hearing expert) and students with hearing needs - Expand chair leg noise dampers and other acoustic materials (e.g., wall panels, door seals) as budget allows - Assess bell sound levels and adjust or replace as needed to reduce startling for sensory-sensitive students	<i>2026/2027</i>
Sustain and expand alternative learning and calming spaces	- Conduct an annual review of Q-room usage and student needs - Identify additional spaces or scheduling changes that could increase access to quiet workspaces - Ensure all alternative spaces are documented and accessible to relevant staff	<i>Ongoing</i>
Sustain clear paths of travel	- Continue existing monitoring system; review effectiveness annually - Include paths-of-travel awareness in new staff and student orientation each year	<i>Ongoing</i>
Improve wheelchair and mobility access throughout the building	Source and install additional automatic door openers at key interior and exterior doors,	<i>2026–2028</i>

	prioritizing the main wheelchair-accessible entrance • Work with City Life Church to explore solutions for the FOB-locked accessible door (e.g., separate accessible entry system) • Assess and improve lighting in areas identified as problematic • Improve sightlines to work/therapy spaces where possible • Assess feasibility of accessible washroom additions or upgrades	
Improve playground accessibility and inclusion	• Establish a Playground Accessibility working group including staff, parents, and students • Develop a phased implementation plan and budget for playground improvements (surface replacement, accessible equipment, communication boards) • Apply for relevant grants (e.g., Rick Hansen Foundation, community funding) to support playground improvements • Replace mulch/gravel with rubberized mats in initial phase • Add accessible swings, picnic tables, and a communication board in subsequent phases	2027/2028 (Phase 1)
Improve accessibility of school garden	• Assess the pathway to the school garden and identify solutions to remove the large step barrier • Develop a plan and budget for a fully accessible garden pathway for wheelchair users • Explore raised garden bed options to allow participation by all students	2027/2028
Address winter safety on portable ramps	• Assess current anti-slip measures on all portable ramps • Install or improve anti-slip surfaces and/or handrails on ramps identified as hazardous in winter conditions • Develop a winter monitoring and treatment protocol for ramp safety	2026/2027

Priority #4: School Policy and Practice

Highroad Academy will strengthen accessibility policies and practices by formalizing mental health crisis response protocols, completing emergency planning for students with disabilities, and ensuring systematic transition planning is in place for all students.

Progress Snapshot from 2023–2026

Goal Area	2023–26 Rating	Carry-Forward Focus
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Increase Staff Training on UDL	4	Sustain and expand; improve new staff induction
Develop Emergency Plans for Students with Disabilities	4 (identified) / N/A (plans)	Complete individualized plans and conduct drills
Mental health crisis response policy	—	New goal based on identified barrier
Transition planning	—	New goal based on identified barrier

Goals and Actions for 2026–2029

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Sustain and deepen UDL training for all staff	- Continue annual professional development on UDL principles and implementation - Strengthen new staff induction to include a comprehensive UDL orientation module - Develop an internal mentorship or coaching model for UDL implementation - Track UDL practice through annual classroom observation or self-assessment	Ongoing
Complete emergency evacuation planning for students and staff with disabilities	- Develop individualized emergency evacuation plans for all identified students and staff - Provide staff training on individualized evacuation procedures, including transfers and lifts where required - Integrate evacuation plans into annual emergency drills, with sensory preparation (frontloading) for students with sensory challenges - Review and update all plans annually or when student/staff needs change	2026/2027
Develop and implement a mental health crisis response policy	- Form a working group (including DA staff, admin, and a mental health professional) to develop formal crisis response protocols - Develop a written policy for responding to students or staff experiencing a mental health crisis - Train all staff on the crisis response protocol; include in new staff onboarding - Review and update the policy annually in consultation with relevant professionals	2026/2027
Implement systematic transition planning for students with disabilities	Develop a transition planning framework covering key transitions: into school, between divisions, and into post-secondary or employment	2027/2028

	• Ensure all students with IEPs have a transition plan that is reviewed annually • Connect with community partners and post-secondary institutions to support smooth transitions • Document transition planning in a consistent format accessible to relevant staff and families	
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Priority #5: Resources

Highroad Academy will build on the strong foundation of assistive technology access established in 2023–2026 by deepening staff confidence, expanding technology options, and ensuring adequate staffing resources to meet student needs.

Progress Snapshot from 2023–2026

Goal Area	2023–26 Rating	Carry-Forward Focus
Increase Awareness of Assistive Technology	4	Deepen staff confidence; expand technology options
Adequate trained support staff	—	New/continuing barrier: staffing levels and training

Goals and Actions for 2026–2029

Objective	Actions	Timeline
Deepen staff confidence and competency in assistive technology	• Conduct an annual survey of staff confidence with assistive technology tools (voice-to-text, text-to-voice, web readers, AAC devices) • Provide targeted training to address identified gaps; include in professional development calendar • Develop a quick-reference guide for assistive technology features available on school devices • Identify and designate at least one assistive technology champion per division to support colleagues	2026/2027
Expand accessible technology resources for students	• Conduct annual class-level reviews of student technology needs • Identify and apply for funding to expand AAC devices, FM systems, and other assistive tools • Develop a lending library of assistive devices available to students on an as-needed basis	2026–2028

	• Ensure library resources include audiobooks, high-interest/low-vocabulary texts, and captioned media	
Strengthen staffing resources to meet diverse student needs	• Conduct an annual staffing needs review aligned with current student IEP requirements • Develop a training pathway for EAs and support staff that includes disability-specific skills (e.g., AAC, behaviour support, sensory needs) • Advocate for appropriate staffing levels through budget planning processes • Explore grant opportunities to fund additional support staff positions	Ongoing

Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Planning Committee meets three times per year to review progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and plan for increased accessibility throughout the school. The committee will ensure the following steps are taken regarding the Three-Year Accessibility Plan:

- Prepare an annual status report on the progress of the measures taken to implement the plan.
- Review and update the Three-Year Accessibility Plan every three years in consultation with persons with disabilities and other relevant community members.
- Use the Accessibility Committee Evaluation Tool to formally rate progress on each goal at the end of the plan cycle (2029).
- Track qualitative and quantitative evidence for each goal, including staff/student survey data, physical audit results, and training completion records.

New for 2026–2029: Goals that lacked formal evaluation data in the previous cycle (e.g., attitudinal goals, study skills) will have specific data collection methods identified at the outset to ensure measurability.

Section 9: How to Give Us Feedback

In addition to the public availability of the plan, Highroad Academy will continue to post an annual status report on the progress of the Three-Year Accessibility Plan on the school's website. Accessible formats of the plan will be made available upon request.

Questions, comments or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to:

- Email: info@highroadacademy.com
- Online: www.highroadacademy.com (accessibility feedback form)

Section 10: Appendices

Appendix A: About Disability

The Disability Continuum

Although there is no universally accepted meaning for the word “disability”, the Ontario Human Rights Code provides definitions of disability that form our guiding principles. Definitions of disability can be placed on a continuum. At one end, disability is explained in terms of medical conditions (medical model). At the opposite end, disability is explained in terms of the social and physical contexts in which it occurs (environmental model).

The medical model focuses on deficiencies, symptoms and treatments. The World Health Organization’s 1976 definition describes disability as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal. Medical model definitions promote the idea that disability is a deviation from the norm.

Many people with disabilities prefer to portray disability as commonplace, natural, and inevitable. As people age, they experience gradual declines in visual acuity, auditory sensitivity, range of motion, bodily strength and mental powers. Significant functional limitations affect almost half of people between the ages of 55 and 79, and over 70% of people over 80.

The environmental model explains disability in relation to social and physical contexts. In this view, it is the environment, not an individual’s medical condition, that creates disability. 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.

Types of Disability and Functional Limitations

There are many kinds of disabilities, including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. Disabilities can be visible or invisible. The following sections provide guidance for interacting respectfully and effectively with people with various types of disability.

Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities reduce one’s ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind; many have limited vision such as tunnel vision or lack of central vision. Suggestions for interaction:

- Identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Unless it is an emergency, only touch the person if you have been given permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
- Service animals are working — refrain from engaging with them.
- Be precise and clear when giving directions; identify landmarks and obstacles.
- Ensure you say good-bye prior to leaving the individual.
- Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Hard of Hearing and Deafness

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Assistive devices, sign language, notes or relay services may be used. Suggestions for interaction:

- Always ask how you can help. Do not shout.
- Attract the person’s attention before speaking (gentle touch or wave).
- Make sure you are in a well-lit area where the person can see your face.
- Look at and speak directly to the person, not their interpreter.
- Be clear and precise; repeat or rephrase if necessary.
- Be patient. The person’s first language may be ASL, not English.
- If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

Physical Disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities and not all require a wheelchair. Suggestions for interaction:

- Speak normally and directly to the person.
- People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
- Be patient and be sure you understand their needs.
- Unless it is an emergency, refrain from touching any assistive devices, including wheelchairs.
- Provide the person with information about accessible features of the immediate environment.

Intellectual Disabilities

People with intellectual or developmental disabilities may have difficulty doing many things most of us take for granted. Suggestions for interaction:

- Treat the person like anyone else — they may understand more than you think.
- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Give one piece of information at a time.
- Be polite and patient; speak directly to the person.

Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Learning or cognitive disabilities can interfere with a person's ability to receive, express or process information. Suggestions for interaction:

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Recognize that some people use augmentative communication systems.
- Speak normally and clearly, and directly to the person.
- Take some time — people with some kinds of disabilities may take longer to understand and respond.
- If you're working with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive.

Mental Health Disabilities

People with mental health disabilities look like anyone else. Be calm and professional and let the person tell you how you can best help. Suggestions for interaction:

- Treat people with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Be confident and reassuring and listen to the person's needs.
- If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them the best way to help.
- Take the person seriously, and work with them to meet their needs.

Speech and Language Disabilities

Some people have communication challenges due to cerebral palsy, hearing loss, or other conditions. Suggestions for interaction:

- Do not assume that a person with a speech disability has an intellectual disability.
- Allow the individual to finish their sentences themselves without interruption.
- If you are able, ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
- Take some time. Be patient and polite.

Deaf-Blind Disabilities

A person who is deafblind cannot see or hear to some extent and may be accompanied by an intervener. Suggestions for interaction:

- Make no assumptions about what a person can or cannot do.
- Speak directly to the person as you normally would, not to the intervener.
- Identify yourself to the intervener when you approach.
- Do not touch service animals — they are working.
- Unless it's an emergency, refrain from touching a deaf-blind person without permission.

Appendix B: Suggested References/Resources

Global, Canadian and Local Accessibility Context and Legislation

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Canada Ratifies the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation
- Accessible British Columbia Act
- BC Accessibility Legislation Plain Language Summary

Accessibility Planning Resources for Schools and School Boards

- BC Accessibility Hub
- Developing Your First Accessibility Plan: A Guide for BC Prescribed Organizations
- Creating an Accessibility Committee
- Universal Design – Centre for Excellence in Universal Design
- Special Education Technology BC (SET BC) – www.setbc.org
- Accessible Resource Centre – BC
- Standards Council of Canada: B6521-95 Barrier-Free Design
- A Guide to Creating Accessible Play Spaces (Rick Hansen Foundation)
- Novak Education UDL Courses – www.novakeducation.com

Disability-Specific Resources

- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (PRCVI)
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
- Canadian Hearing Services
- Provincial Outreach Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (POPDHH)
- Auditory Outreach Provincial Resource Program
- Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness
- Provincial Inclusion Outreach Program (Complex Needs)
- Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders
- Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
- Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
- Brain Injury Canada
- Spinal Cord Injury Canada
- Tourette Canada
- Kelty Mental Health (BC Children's Hospital)
- Gifted Children's Association of BC

- Specialist Association of Gifted Educators in BC