

# **ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Friends of the Learning Disabled, Camp Kirk

## **1. FOREWORD**

Camp Kirk strives to provide equitable and accessible services to individuals with disabilities, regardless of whether camp is in- or out-of-session. In November 2011 an Accessibilities Committee was formed to address the ways in which we can accommodate and support the needs of individuals with disabilities seeking our services. As a result, the Camp Kirk Accessible Customer Service Plan was created to document the steps taken by our camp to ensure that our services and programming are accessible and equitable.

This policy will be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The Accessibility Committee will review this policy annually to ensure that our services continue to respect the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Camp Kirk strives to provide accessible and equitable services and programming:

- At our camp location, while camp is in-session
- Throughout our registration and application period while we are based out of our city office
- During periods when we are in the community making presentations, recruiting or attending conferences.

## **2. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

### **2.1 Application & Registration**

Although we are a specialized residential camp, we do not have the programming, facilities and staff training to support the needs of every child with an exceptionality. For this reason, Camp Kirk's application and registration process includes a number of steps to ensure that our interactions, programming and environment will be accessible and inclusive to every child who is eligible to attend camp. We strive to be upfront and open with families so that a child is not placed into a situation where we are unable to support their needs. If it becomes apparent during the application process that we will not be able to provide the appropriate care for a child, Camp Kirk tries to match the family with services that may be better equipped to support the needs of their child.

The following sections outlines actions taken by Camp Kirk to identify if, and how, we can accommodate and support the needs of a child:

- Our website, application package, and camp literature clearly outlines the level of support our camp is equipped to provide.

- Our application package prompts families to provide thorough information concerning their child's needs. We use this information to provide insight as to how we may accommodate specialized needs.
- A camp director conducts a home interview with each child and their family. During this interview, we have a discussion with the family to identify if our environment and programming will be beneficial for the child. Families are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their child's needs.

## **2.2 Environmental & Programming Limitations**

A thorough application and registration process allows Camp Kirk to ensure that every camper is able to be an active participant in camp life, without being limited by our environment or programming. Camp Kirk aims to be open and flexible to accommodate a child's needs when possible, but our programming and environment may not be equipped to do so in certain situations.

The following outlines our policies concerning assistive devices, support workers and service animals during the camping season:

**Assistive Devices:** The Camp Director will have a discussion with parents to determine if and how we may accommodate the use of a child's assistive device. If a camper has an assistive device, we will ensure that staff receive the necessary training specific to the apparatus. **Note:** Unfortunately, our campgrounds are rough and rocky and therefore we cannot be deemed wheelchair accessible. However, our main buildings have sloped access, and we, therefore, can accommodate individuals who are able to walk but have difficulty with steps.

**Support Workers:** Camp Kirk provides a high staff/camper ratio to support the unique needs of our campers. We would anticipate this level of supervision would be adequate to support our enrolled campers to be successful in our environment. If applying parents feel further support is required, Camp Kirk is open to discussing how alternative arrangements can be integrated within our program.

**Service Animals:** At the discretion of the Executive Director and/or Camp Director, certified service animals may be permitted to attend camp sessions if their owner can *independently* manage the health, safety and behaviour of the animal. If it becomes apparent that the owner does not have control of the animal's behaviour, the Executive Director and/or the Camp Director have the authority to ask the animal to leave the premises.

All service animals are welcome to visit the campsite and the city office.

## **2.3 Staff Training**

All Camp Kirk staff attends a 10-day pre-camp training session at the beginning of the summer.

During this period we equip our staff with the tools and knowledge to provide respectful and equitable care for each of our campers. Training includes:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act [2005], and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- Camp Kirk's plan related to the customer service standard
- Discussions, seminars and role-plays that address the various disabilities of the campers.
- Safe, effective and respectful ways to support individuals with disabilities
- Familiarizing staff to the various assistive devices that are used by our campers

Throughout the summer we have a number of staff meetings that help our staff problem solve effective ways to support the needs of our campers.

### **3. COMMUNICATION STANDARDS**

Camp Kirk makes information concerning our policies, practices and programming accessible through multiple mediums. We highlight to the public that they may receive information via:

- Electronic forms
- Printed material
- Phone conversations
- Face-to-face interactions
- Our website [which may be displayed in multiple font sizes & various contrasts]

When speaking to campers, families or potential employees, Camp Kirk aims to communicate with individuals in a manner that takes into account any physical, social and/or cognitive differences. If we are unable to communicate in a mode that is accessible to a client, we will do our best to locate services that will aid the process. We believe it important to meet new campers, families and employees face-to-face, and we take the measures to meet individuals in their homes or communities when possible.

### **4. EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS**

Camp Kirk provides an inclusive and nurturing work environment for staff members. For individuals with disabilities, we strive to provide them with the support they require to be active and successful members of our staff.

Examples of the type of extra support we provide includes:

- Delivering feedback in a mode that is effective for the individual i.e. providing written and verbal evaluations, providing concrete examples
- Scheduling extra one-on-one meetings to provide emotional support
- Taking time to discuss strategies and to provide extra feedback

#### **NOTE:**

We strive to maintain an open line of communication with potential and current staff members to ensure that they are capable, with the help of our specialized support system, to manage the high level of stress of working at the camp. For the safety of the individual and the rest of the camp, we cannot hire individuals when we believe the demands of the job may outweigh that individual's capacity to cope.

Our 3-step leadership program is our initiative to hire and support the ongoing employment of individuals with disabilities. Previous campers who have disabilities are invited to participate in our leadership program so that they may receive the coaching, strategies and extra support they need to be successful members of our staff. Participants are first Leaders-in-Training, Counselors-in-Training, and finally Junior Counselors. Over these 3 summers, the leadership program helps participants develop strategies manage and overcome challenges that negatively affect their job performance due to their disabilities.

## **5. FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Camp Kirk welcomes and appreciates feedback concerning the accessibility of our services. Individuals who wish to provide feedback on the way Camp Kirk provides service to people with disabilities can do so in the following ways:

- Email the camp <mailto:campkirk@campkirk.com>
- Phone the camp office 705 438 1353
- Schedule an appointment to talk to the Executive Director/Camp Director

All feedback will be directed to Erica Park-Coutts (Executive Director/Camp Director). We will ensure that feedback is responded to within 30 days of the date that it was issued.

Our website provides a link for people to provide feedback about the accessibility of our services. All the information provided above is outlined in this part of our website.