



NELSON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SOCIETY

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2026–2029

*Identifying, Preventing, and Removing Barriers
to Accessibility*



Prepared in accordance with the
Accessible British Columbia Act

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 About Our Society

Nelson Christian School Society (NCSS) operates three distinct learning divisions under the Society's Statement of Faith, Mission, and Bylaws, from our hub at 570 Johnstone Road in Nelson, B.C. Our divisions include:

1. Brick-and-mortar programs (K–9): Nelson Christian Community School in Nelson
2. Provincial Online Learning Program (K–12 and Adult): CHEK ABC, providing online and at-home learning across B.C., with central offices in Nelson
3. Preschool programs: Kootenay Preschools, located in Nelson, Balfour, and Creston

NCSS also offers extensive inclusive education adaptive and modified programs for learners with special education needs. These programs are administered through our centralized Inclusive Education department.

Nelson Christian School Society is a non-profit registered charity. The Society is led by an elected Board of Directors that oversees policy direction. Day-to-day operations are led by the Society's Superintendent, who hires principals, vice-principals, and program coordinators to run individual schools and programs. As a Society, NCSS serves over 500 learners and employs more than 75 staff members.

1.2 A Message from the Board/Superintendent

At Nelson Christian School Society (NCSS), we are committed to providing learning and working environments that support all learners and staff and promote equitable opportunities for our diverse communities. A key element of this commitment is the development of a Three-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan identifies system needs, priorities, and action steps, and draws on feedback from our school community and the work of the Accessibility Committee to enhance equitable access to programs, services, and facilities.

Our Accessibility Committee is a diverse and multidisciplinary team that meets regularly to identify priorities and support the development, implementation, and monitoring of actions highlighted in the Three-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan identifies measurable actions that support equal opportunity for persons with disabilities by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to access.

We recognize the importance of accessibility not only for persons with disabilities, but also for the benefit of the entire community. We are committed to continuous improvement in developing environments that support equity, belonging, and ease of access to services and facilities for all students, staff, families, and the larger school community.

1.3 Territorial Acknowledgement

Nelson Christian School Society (NCSS) is grateful to be located in beautiful Nelson, B.C., on the territory of the Ktunaxa, Syilx, and Sinixt peoples, and in a community that is home to Métis and

many diverse Indigenous persons. We respect their history, culture, stewardship, and voice, and commit to thoughtful consideration of these in our work.

1.4 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 persons with disabilities and other community members, to support the development, review, and implementation of an accessibility plan and feedback process.
- **Accessibility Plan:** A plan developed in consultation with an Accessibility Committee that identifies barriers and outlines actions to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers.
- **Barrier:** Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Types of barriers in the educational setting include:
 - **Learning Barrier:** Any barrier that limits or prevents learning, whether through inadequate engagement, representation of content, expression of ideas, or 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. Policy, practice, and procedures that prevent a student from accessing the curriculum and fully participating in the school community.
 - **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. For more information about disability, types of disability, and support strategies, refer to Appendix A: About Disability.
- **Impairment:** A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.

Section 2: Framework Guiding Our Work

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

2.1 Global Context – United Nations

In recent years, accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion have remained important priorities in schools, workplaces, and communities. At the international level, the United Nations has helped advance the rights of persons with disabilities through the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**. The CRPD was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on **December 13, 2006**, and later came into force on **May 3, 2008** (United Nations, n.d.; United Nations Treaty Collection, n.d.).

Canada ratified the CRPD on **March 11, 2010**, and the Convention entered into force for Canada on **April 12, 2010** (Government of Canada, n.d.). Canada also acceded to the **Optional Protocol** to the CRPD on **December 3, 2018**, which provides an additional process for individuals and organizations to bring disability-rights concerns to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Government of Canada, 2019).

The CRPD recognizes that persons with disabilities have the same dignity, rights, and freedoms as others. Its purpose is to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, while promoting respect for their inherent dignity (United Nations Human Rights Office, n.d.). These global commitments continue to guide accessibility planning by encouraging organizations to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that may limit full participation in education, employment, services, and community life.

2.2 Canadian Context and Legislation – Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Across Canada, the most recent national data shows that 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older, or approximately 8.0 million people, reported having one or more disabilities in 2022, an increase from 22% in 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2024). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects individuals from discrimination based on mental or physical disability, and the Employment Equity Act recognizes persons with disabilities as a designated group. The Accessible Canada Act, which came into force in 2019, aims to create a barrier-free Canada by January 1, 2040, by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in areas under federal jurisdiction, including employment, the built environment, communication, information and communication technologies, procurement, program and service delivery, and transportation (Government of Canada, 2022).

Guiding Principles

The Accessible Canada Act is guided by principles that affirm the value, dignity, and full participation of every person. In alignment with these principles, NCSS recognizes that:

1. Every person should be treated with dignity and respect.
2. Every person should have equitable opportunities to pursue the life, learning, work, and community participation they are able and wish to have.
3. Every person should be able to participate fully and equally in society, school life, programs, services, and community activities.
4. Every person should have meaningful choices and the freedom to make decisions for themselves, with support available when needed.
5. Policies, programs, services, and facilities should consider the diverse experiences of individuals, including the ways different barriers, disabilities, and forms of discrimination may overlap.
6. Persons with disabilities should be meaningfully included in the planning, development, and review of policies, programs, services, and accessibility practices.
7. Accessibility standards and practices should aim for the highest level of accessibility possible, with a commitment to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers over time.

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

The **Accessible British Columbia Act** became law on **June 17, 2021** to support a more accessible and inclusive province. The Act defines a barrier as anything that hinders the full and equal participation of a person with an impairment, including barriers created by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies ([Accessible British Columbia Act, 2021](#)).

Under the Act, prescribed organizations are required to establish an **accessibility committee**, develop and review an **accessibility plan** at least once every three years, and provide a **public feedback process** for comments about accessibility plans and barriers ([Accessible British Columbia Act, 2021](#)).

The **Accessible British Columbia Regulation** identifies which organizations must meet these requirements. Under the Regulation, **independent schools and school districts became prescribed organizations effective September 1, 2023** ([Accessible British Columbia Regulation, 2022](#)). Through this legislation, B.C. continues to involve people with disabilities in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers so they can participate more fully and equally in their communities.

2.4 Principles in the Accessible British Columbia Act

[Accessible British Columbia Act](#). The Accessible British Columbia Act includes principles that must be considered as organizations develop an accessibility plan. The definitions below are adapted from the Act and guide NCSS in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers so that students, staff, families, and community members can participate more fully and equitably.

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

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Inclusion: All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.
5. Self-Determination: Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.
6. 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 interact with the organization.

2.5 Our Commitment to Accessibility

At Nelson Christian School Society, accessibility means creating learning, working, and community environments where students, staff, families, volunteers, and community members are welcomed, respected, and able to participate with dignity and belonging. We recognize that barriers can take many forms, including physical, architectural, attitudinal, technological, informational, communication-related, policy-based, and practice-based barriers. We also understand that individuals may experience barriers in different and overlapping ways.

NCSS is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for individuals who learn, work, visit, or participate in our schools, programs, facilities, services, and communications. This commitment is guided by the principles of **inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.**

We recognize that accessibility planning is an ongoing responsibility that requires listening, reflection, practical action, and continuous improvement. To support this commitment, NCSS will:

1. Engage students, staff, families, community members, and persons with disabilities in the development and review of the Accessibility Plan.
2. Maintain an Accessibility Committee to help identify barriers, recommend priorities, and monitor progress.
3. Provide a public feedback process for accessibility-related concerns and reported barriers.
4. Review and update the Accessibility Plan at least once every three years, considering feedback received and consultation with the Accessibility Committee.
5. Review policies, procedures, programs, services, facilities, communications, and technologies through an accessibility lens.
6. Continue improving access to learning, school participation, employment, facilities, information, services, and support.

7. Promote awareness, training, and shared responsibility so accessibility becomes part of everyday planning and practice across NCSS.

2.6 Our Approach

At Nelson Christian School Society, our approach to accessibility is grounded in the belief that every member of our community should be treated with dignity, welcomed with respect, and supported to participate in learning, work, and school community life. Our work is guided by the principles identified in the **Accessible British Columbia Act**: inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design (Accessible British Columbia Act, 2021).

NCSS began its formal accessibility planning process in April 2023 by establishing an Accessibility Committee and identifying barriers within our school community. This process included recruiting committee members, reviewing physical and architectural accessibility, gathering feedback from stakeholders, discussing accessibility barriers, developing a feedback tool, setting priorities, and establishing a process for monitoring progress.

As we move into the next three-year plan, NCSS will continue to strengthen this approach by:

1. Consulting with the Accessibility Committee when developing and updating the Accessibility Plan.
2. Considering feedback received through the public accessibility feedback process.
3. Reviewing and updating the Accessibility Plan at least once every three years.
4. Identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in learning, facilities, communication, technology, policies, practices, programs, and services.
5. Engaging students, staff, families, persons with disabilities, and community members to better understand accessibility needs and priorities.
6. Providing training and awareness opportunities that support inclusive and accessible practices.
7. Monitoring progress and adjusting actions as needs, programs, technology, and community feedback change.

Through meaningful engagement, thoughtful planning, and practical action, NCSS aims to build on the progress of the first Accessibility Plan and continue creating learning and working environments that are accessible, inclusive, and supportive for all members of the school community.

Section 3: The Accessibility Committee

3.1 Purpose of the Accessibility Committee

Under the **Accessible British Columbia Act**, prescribed organizations must establish an Accessibility Committee to help identify barriers experienced by individuals in or interacting with the organization, and to advise on how those barriers may be removed and prevented (Accessible British Columbia Act, 2021).

At Nelson Christian School Society, the Accessibility Committee works collaboratively to support a more accessible and inclusive school community. The Committee helps identify barriers that may affect students, staff, families, volunteers, and community members, including barriers related to learning, facilities, communication, technology, policies, practices, services, and school participation.

The Committee also supports the development, review, and ongoing improvement of the Accessibility Plan by considering accessibility feedback, reflecting on the experiences of persons with disabilities, and recommending practical actions to the Superintendent and Board. In keeping with current B.C. accessibility guidance, the Committee helps NCCS review school practices and policies through an accessibility and inclusion lens, with the goal of improving full and equal participation for all members of the school community.

3.2 Recruitment to the Accessibility Committee

In accordance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the Accessibility Committee must, to the extent possible, be formed in a way that supports meaningful representation and reflects the principle of including people with lived experience in accessibility planning.

Committee membership should align with the following requirements:

- At least half of the members should be persons with disabilities, or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities;
- These members should reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia;
- At least one member should be an Indigenous person; and
- The committee should reflect the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

A call for applications was conducted to recruit members with diverse lived experiences, backgrounds, perspectives, and community connections, in alignment with the requirements of the Act. The Accessibility Committee was formally established in September 2023.

The Committee supports the organization in identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility. This work remains aligned with the Province’s updated **AccessibleBC Plan 2025–26 to 2027–28**, which continues to focus on accessibility, inclusion, and barrier removal across public sector organizations.

3.3 Accessibility Committee Membership

Committee Member	Position/Representation
Janice Vancaesele	INED Programs
Theresa Quismundo	HR Manager/ Accessibility Committee Chair
Tracy Ashley	CHEK ABC - Online Programs
Megan McMichael	Preschool Programs
Kevin Bernhardt	System Superintendent
Reed Stang	NCCS - Brick-and-Mortar Programs

NCSS recognizes that committee membership should continue to reflect the representation goals outlined in the Accessible British Columbia Act, to the extent possible. The Society will continue to seek participation from persons with disabilities, Indigenous persons, and individuals or organizations that support persons with disabilities as part of ongoing committee recruitment.

Section 4: Consultation Conducted

4.1 Barrier-Identification Methodologies

The Accessibility Committee used several methods to identify accessibility barriers and opportunities for improvement across Nelson Christian School Society.

Methodology	Description	Status/Timeline
Audit of Policies and Practices	Reviewed current policies, procedures, and practices through an accessibility and inclusion lens to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.	Ongoing during the 2026–2027 School Year
Accessibility Feedback Tool	Maintained an online feedback process for students, staff, families, outside professionals, and community members to report accessibility barriers or supports.	Completed
Accessibility Committee Review	Reviewed feedback, discussed identified barriers, and recommended priority areas for the Accessibility Plan.	Feedback reviewed by committee members when received
School Site Accessibility Assessment	Assessed school spaces using a structured accessibility lens, including physical, sensory, and social-emotional considerations.	Completed as part of 2023–2024 renovations (Johnstone Road)
Physical and Architectural Accessibility Audit	Reviewed facilities, entrances, washrooms, classrooms, common areas, signage, emergency access, and outdoor spaces for accessibility barriers.	Completed as part of 2023–2024 renovations (Johnstone Road)
Staff Consultation	Gathered staff input on accessibility, inclusion, learning supports, communication, training needs, and barriers affecting students, staff, and families.	Completed 2024–2025 and ongoing
Parent / Caregiver Consultation	Gathered parent and caregiver feedback regarding accessibility barriers, supports, communication, school participation, and services.	Completed 2024–2025 and ongoing
Review of Communication and Digital Access	Reviewed school communications, websites, forms, online learning tools, and digital resources for clarity, usability, and accessibility.	Ongoing over the 2026–2029 school years
Annual Review and Planning	Reviewed collected feedback, assessment results, and committee recommendations to update priorities and guide the next accessibility plan.	Annual reviews spring 2026–2029

Section 5: Accessibility Feedback Tool

At NCSS, we welcome feedback from students, staff, families, caregivers, volunteers, outside professionals, and community members about accessibility barriers or supports they experience

when accessing our schools, programs, buildings, information, services, or school community activities.

Feedback may be shared through several avenues, including:

1. Online accessibility feedback form
2. Community and school satisfaction surveys
3. Direct communication with school administration
4. Feedback shared with the Accessibility Committee, where appropriate
5. Consultation with students, parents/caregivers, staff, and community members during accessibility planning and review

Feedback may relate to barriers in learning, facilities, communication, technology, policies, practices, services, school participation, or other areas affecting full and equal access. NCSS will review feedback to identify patterns, inform priorities, guide practical improvements, and support the ongoing review of the Accessibility Plan.

In accordance with the **Accessible British Columbia Act**, feedback received will be considered when NCSS reviews and updates its Accessibility Plan, in consultation with the Accessibility Committee. The goal of this process is to help identify, remove, and prevent barriers and to strengthen accessibility, inclusion, and belonging across the NCSS community.

5.1 Report an Accessibility Barrier

Nelson Christian School Society provides an online Accessibility Feedback Tool for students, staff, families, caregivers, volunteers, outside professionals, and community members to share accessibility-related experiences. Feedback may include barriers encountered when accessing a school program, building, classroom, outdoor area, website, school information, service, support, communication, technology, policy, or school community activity.

The feedback tool may be completed anonymously or with contact information if the person wishes to be contacted. Where helpful, individuals may also upload supporting information such as photos, videos, voice recordings, or documents. If a student requires an accommodation or if the matter is urgent, families are encouraged to contact the school directly.

Feedback received through this tool will be reviewed to help NCSS identify patterns, understand accessibility needs, and guide practical improvements. It will also be considered when the Accessibility Committee reviews and updates the Accessibility Plan, in accordance with the **Accessible British Columbia Act**.

Suggested Accessibility Feedback Tool Questions

NCSS welcomes feedback about accessibility experiences in our schools, programs, services, facilities, communications, and community activities. Your feedback helps us identify, remove, and prevent barriers and improve accessibility for students, staff, families, and community members.

1. Date the barrier was experienced.

2. Location where the barrier was experienced:
 - Classroom
 - School building or common area
 - Outdoors, playground, or general property
 - Online learning platform, website, or digital tool
 - School communication, form, or information
 - Program, service, event, or activity
 - Other
3. What were you or someone else trying to access?
4. Please describe the accessibility barrier.
5. What type of barrier was experienced, if known?
 - Physical or architectural
 - Learning or instructional
 - Communication or information
 - Technology or digital access
 - Attitudinal or social
 - Policy, procedure, or practice
 - Sensory or environmental
 - Other / unsure
6. Do you have any suggestions that may help improve accessibility?
7. Would you like to attach a photo, video, voice recording, or document?
8. Do you wish to be contacted about your feedback? Yes / No.
9. Optional: Name and contact information.

Section 6: Accessibility Accomplishments and Barriers

6.1 Key Discussion Themes – Accessibility Accomplishments

Learning and Inclusive Education

Students with diverse needs and disabilities are included in regular classroom and online learning environments with appropriate accommodations, adaptations, and individualized supports. Teachers use a range of universal supports, including audiobooks, assistive technology, voice-to-text tools, visual schedules, flexible learning options, and accessible learning materials where needed.

Equity, Belonging, and Awareness

NCSS continues to promote respectful and inclusive school communities by sharing accessibility information with staff, students, and families. Anti-discrimination practices, inclusive language, and accessibility awareness help staff respond more effectively to equity, inclusion, and accessibility-related concerns.

Mental Health and Well-Being

NCSS recognizes that accessibility includes social, emotional, and mental health supports. Programs and staff training continue to support student and staff well-being, reduce stigma, and promote safe, caring, and supportive learning environments.

Accessibility Training and Staff Practice

Ongoing training supports staff awareness of accessibility responsibilities, inclusive education practices, student support needs, and ways to reduce barriers in learning and school participation. Future training may continue to focus on universal design, accessible communication, assistive technology, and recognizing physical, sensory, attitudinal, and systemic barriers.

Physical and Architectural Accessibility

Following the move to 570 Johnstone Road, accessibility was considered during facility renovations. Improvements included an accessible washroom, ramps, power door operators, fire safety lighting, lever-style door handles on most doors, and enhanced audible warning systems for fire and lockdown procedures. Continued review of classrooms, common areas, entrances, outdoor spaces, signage, and emergency access will help identify additional improvements.

Communication, Technology, and Digital Access

NCSS continues to recognize the importance of accessible communication and technology, especially across in-person, online, and distributed learning environments. This includes improving access to school information, websites, forms, online platforms, assistive tools, and plain-language communication.

Policy and Practice Review

NCSS will continue reviewing policies, procedures, and school practices through an accessibility and inclusion lens. This helps ensure that accessibility is not limited to physical spaces, but is also reflected in decision-making, communication, programs, services, and daily school operations.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Through the Accessibility Feedback Tool, surveys, consultation, and committee review, NCSS continues to gather information about barriers and helpful supports. Feedback will be used to identify trends, set priorities, and guide future accessibility actions in consultation with the Accessibility Committee, as required under the Accessible British Columbia Act.

Section 7: Summary of the NCSS Three-Year Accessibility Plan 2023–2026

The **Nelson Christian School Society Accessibility Plan 2023–2026** established NCSS's first formal three-year framework for identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for individuals with disabilities across its schools, programs, services, and community settings. The plan was guided by the principles of the **Accessible B.C. Act**, including adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design.

The plan focused on four main priority areas: **Learning, Physical and Architectural Accessibility, Policies and Practices, and Resources**. Under the Learning priority, NCSS aimed to improve access to both brick-and-mortar and online learning by identifying barriers related to technology, internet access, physical access, and learning accommodations. The plan also emphasized the use of assistive technology, plain-language communication, accessible learning

materials, flexible learning options, student engagement tracking, and staff training in inclusive practices and Universal Design for Learning.

The Physical and Architectural priority focused on improving the accessibility of NCSS facilities, particularly in relation to the new facility at **570 Johnstone Road**. Planned actions included ensuring renovations met accessibility requirements, reviewing learning spaces for physical, sensory, and cognitive barriers, using Universal Design principles, and considering adaptive equipment such as adjustable furniture, assistive listening devices, and specialized lighting.

The Policies and Practices priority addressed the need to align school procedures with accessibility principles. This included identifying staff training needs, developing accessibility training for current and new staff, creating emergency plans for students with mobility considerations, and reviewing school practices to determine where further improvements were needed.

The Resources priority focused on increasing awareness and use of assistive technology for students with disabilities. NCSS planned to conduct annual reviews of student technology needs and provide staff training on technology supports that could improve student access and participation.

The plan also included a monitoring and evaluation process, with the Accessibility Committee expected to meet quarterly to review progress, assess the effectiveness of implementation, prepare annual status updates, and continue consultation with persons with disabilities and other community members.

Overall, the 2023–2026 plan served as a foundational accessibility plan for NCSS. It helped establish key structures such as priority-setting, accessibility review, feedback processes, staff awareness, facility review, and ongoing monitoring. As NCSS prepares the next three-year plan, the previous plan provides a strong base, while also showing areas that may need clearer timelines, updated priorities, stronger feedback reporting, and more measurable outcomes.

Section 8: Our Three-Year Plan (2026–2029)

8.1 Overview

This Accessibility Plan outlines the measures Nelson Christian School Society will take to identify, remove, and prevent barriers and to promote inclusion for individuals with disabilities in our communities. The plan is based on the accessibility principles of adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design, as set out in the Accessible British Columbia Act.

8.2 Accessibility Priorities 2026–2029

For the 2026–2029 Accessibility Plan, Nelson Christian School Society will build on the work completed in the first three-year plan by focusing on priorities that reflect current accessibility legislation, school community needs, and provincial guidance. These priorities are intended to support NCSS in identifying,

removing, and preventing barriers for students, staff, families, volunteers, and community members who learn, work, visit, or participate in our schools and programs.

The 2026–2029 accessibility priorities are:

Objectives	Actions	Status/Timeline
Accessible Learning and Student Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and consult with families of students and staff who have accessibility needs 2. Provide opportunities for student voice when planning accessibility adaptations 3. In conjunction with the INED department, evaluate learning barriers that may affect program participation 4. Identify workplace or learning-related barriers that may affect staff success in their roles 	Fall 2026 and Ongoing
Communication, Information, and Digital Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the updated 2026–2029 Accessibility Plan is available to the public through NCSS websites 2. Update and improve our online Accessibility Forms 3. Monitor and address feedback via our Accessibility Forms 	Fall 2026 and Ongoing
Physical, Sensory, and Built Environment Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In consultation with program leaders and through stakeholder feedback, make adaptations to the physical environment as required 	Fall 2026 and Ongoing
Accessibility Culture, Awareness, and Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide staff with training as part of the Start-of-Year Professional Development every fall. 	2026-2029
Policies, Practices, Programs, and Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review NCSS policies to support alignment with the Accessible British Columbia Act 	2026-2027 school year
Feedback, Consultation, and Student/Family Voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to provide feedback opportunities for students and families 	2026 and Ongoing
Employment, Staff Supports, and Workplace Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to provide feedback opportunities for staff 	2026 and Ongoing

Section 9: Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Committee meets to review progress, evaluate the effectiveness of the plan's implementation, and plan for increased accessibility across NCSS schools and programs. The Committee will ensure the following steps are taken regarding the Three-Year Accessibility Plan:

1. Review and update the Three-Year Accessibility Plan on an ongoing basis in consultation with persons with disabilities and other relevant community members.

Section 10: How to Give Us Feedback

Nelson Christian School Society will update and post the most current Three-Year Accessibility Plan on the websites of its schools and programs. As the plan is an ongoing document, updates may be made as accessibility needs, feedback, and staff or student population changes are identified.

Questions, comments, or feedback regarding the Accessibility Plan may be directed to: Mr. Kevin Bernhardt, NCSS Superintendent at: superintendent@chekabc.ca or Mrs. Theresa Quismundo, HR Manager and Accessibility Board Chair at: hr@chekabc.ca

Section 11: Appendices

Appendix A: About Disability and Accessibility

Understanding Disability and Accessibility

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* recognizes that accessibility is not only about physical access to buildings. Accessibility also includes the ability of people to participate fully and equally in society, including in learning, employment, services, communication, technology, programs, and community life.

Under the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, a barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers may be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and may also be affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

This means that disability is best understood through the interaction between a person's impairment and the barriers they may encounter. A person may have a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or other impairment, but the disability experience is often created or made worse when environments, systems, attitudes, or practices are not accessible or inclusive.

NCSS recognizes that disabilities may be:

- visible or invisible;
- permanent, temporary, or episodic;
- physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, developmental, learning, communication-related, or mental-health related;
- experienced differently depending on the person, environment, and available supports; and
- shaped by overlapping factors such as age, culture, language, race, gender, economic circumstances, geography, family circumstances, and other lived experiences.

Accessibility planning therefore requires ongoing listening, reflection, practical action, and continuous improvement. It also requires meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and those who support them.

Guiding Principles

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* identifies principles that organizations must consider when developing accessibility plans. These principles guide NCSS's understanding of disability, accessibility, and barrier removal:

- **Inclusion**
All people, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in school, work, services, programs, and community life.
- **Adaptability**
Accessibility needs, technology, services, and community expectations change over time.

Accessibility planning should be flexible and responsive to new barriers, feedback, and opportunities for improvement.

- **Diversity**
Persons with disabilities are diverse and may experience barriers differently. Accessibility planning should recognize individual needs, lived experiences, and the ways different barriers may overlap.
- **Collaboration**
Accessibility is a shared responsibility. Students, staff, families, persons with disabilities, Indigenous persons, community members, and organizations all have a role in identifying, removing, and preventing barriers.
- **Self-Determination**
Persons with disabilities should be supported to make their own choices and participate in decisions that affect their learning, work, services, and community involvement.
- **Universal Design**
Programs, services, buildings, information, technology, and learning environments should be designed to be usable by as many people as possible, without the need for individual adaptation whenever possible.

Types of Accessibility Barriers

Accessibility barriers can take many forms. The following categories help NCSS identify and respond to barriers across its schools, programs, services, and community settings.

- **Physical and Architectural Barriers**
These barriers may include inaccessible entrances, washrooms, classrooms, playgrounds, parking areas, pathways, furniture, signage, lighting, acoustics, or emergency procedures.
- **Communication and Information Barriers**
These barriers may occur when information is difficult to understand, unavailable in accessible formats, not provided in plain language, or not accessible to people who use assistive technology, interpretation, captioning, or alternative communication methods.
- **Technology and Digital Barriers**
These barriers may include websites, forms, documents, online learning platforms, videos, software, or digital tools that are difficult to navigate, incompatible with assistive technology, or not designed with accessibility in mind.
- **Attitudinal Barriers**
These barriers arise from assumptions, stereotypes, stigma, lack of awareness, or discriminatory attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Attitudinal barriers can affect how people are included, supported, heard, and respected.
- **Policy, Practice, and Systemic Barriers**
These barriers may occur when rules, procedures, practices, eligibility criteria, schedules, or decision-making processes unintentionally exclude or disadvantage persons with disabilities.
- **Learning and Instructional Barriers**
These barriers may affect how students access curriculum, learning materials, assessments, classroom participation, technology, support services, or individualized learning opportunities.

- **Sensory and Environmental Barriers**

These barriers may include noise, lighting, crowded spaces, strong scents, visual distractions, temperature, or other environmental conditions that affect a person's ability to participate comfortably and safely.

Social and Emotional Barriers

These barriers may include bullying, exclusion, lack of belonging, anxiety, stigma, or environments where students, staff, or families do not feel safe, respected, or supported.

Respectful and Inclusive Interaction

NCSS is committed to creating respectful, welcoming, and accessible environments for students, staff, families, volunteers, and community members. The following practices support respectful interaction with persons with disabilities:

- Treat each person with dignity, respect, and patience.
- Speak directly to the person, not only to a support person, interpreter, intervener, or companion.
- Ask before offering assistance, and wait for permission before helping.
- Do not make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do.
- Respect personal space, mobility devices, assistive devices, communication tools, and service animals.
- Use plain, respectful, person-centred language.
- Provide information in accessible formats whenever possible.
- Allow extra time when needed for communication, movement, processing, or decision-making.
- Listen to the person's own description of what support is helpful.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality when discussing personal or accessibility-related needs.

Examples of Disability-Related Access Needs

The following examples are not intended to label or limit individuals. They are included to help staff and community members better understand the range of accessibility needs that may be present in a school environment.

People with Vision-Related Disabilities

Some individuals may be blind, have low vision, have reduced peripheral or central vision, or experience difficulty reading signs, screens, printed materials, or visual cues. Helpful practices may include identifying yourself, giving clear verbal directions, providing accessible documents, ensuring safe pathways, and not interacting with a guide dog while it is working.

People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Some individuals may use hearing aids, cochlear implants, sign language, captioning, written communication, lip reading, assistive listening devices, or interpreters. Helpful practices may include speaking clearly, facing the person, reducing background noise, using captions, checking for understanding, and addressing the person directly rather than the interpreter.

People with Physical or Mobility Disabilities

Some individuals may use wheelchairs, walkers, canes, braces, prosthetics, or other mobility supports. Others may have chronic pain, fatigue, arthritis, heart or lung conditions, or temporary injuries. Helpful practices may include keeping pathways clear, offering accessible seating, providing information about accessible entrances and washrooms, and asking before touching mobility equipment.

People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Some individuals may process information differently or benefit from clear instructions, repetition, visual supports, extra time, or step-by-step explanations. Helpful practices may include using plain language, giving one instruction at a time, checking for understanding respectfully, and avoiding assumptions about ability.

People with Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Some individuals may experience barriers with reading, writing, memory, organization, processing speed, attention, communication, or problem-solving. Helpful practices may include providing written and verbal instructions, using assistive technology, allowing extra time, offering flexible ways to demonstrate learning, and presenting information in more than one format.

People with Mental Health-Related Disabilities

Some individuals may experience anxiety, depression, trauma-related symptoms, emotional regulation challenges, or other mental health-related barriers. Helpful practices may include being calm, respectful, non-judgmental, maintaining privacy, offering choices where possible, and connecting the person with appropriate support when needed.

People with Speech, Language, or Communication Disabilities

Some individuals may communicate using speech, gestures, writing, communication boards, sign language, devices, or other communication systems. Helpful practices may include being patient, not interrupting, asking clarifying questions respectfully, allowing the person to finish, and using yes/no questions when helpful.

People Who Are Deafblind

Some individuals may have both vision and hearing loss and may use an intervener, tactile communication, assistive technology, or other supports. Helpful practices may include speaking directly to the person, following their preferred communication method, identifying yourself, and not touching the person or service animal without permission unless there is an emergency.

Commitment to Barrier Removal

NCSS recognizes that accessibility is an ongoing responsibility. Removing barriers is not limited to responding to individual accommodation requests; it also includes proactively reviewing programs, policies, facilities, communications, technology, and practices to prevent barriers before they occur.

Through its Accessibility Plan, Accessibility Committee, and feedback process, NCSS will continue to identify, remove, and prevent barriers so that students, staff, families, volunteers, and community members can participate more fully, safely, and equitably in the life of the Society.

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 Plan 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](#)
- [Special Education Technology BC \(SET BC\)](#)
- [Accessible Resource Centre - BC](#)
- [Standards Council of Canada](#)
- [B6521-95 Barrier-Free Design](#)
- [A Guide to Creating Accessible Play Spaces](#) (Rick Hansen Foundation)
- [Canadian National Institute for the Blind \(CNIB\)](#)
- [Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired](#) 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](#)

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Global Context - United Nations

- Government of Canada. (n.d.). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
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- Government of Canada. (2019). Canada accedes to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
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Canadian Context

- Accessible Canada Act, S.C. 2019, c. 10. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/>
- Canadian Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). About the Accessible Canada Act.
<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/individuals/accessibility/about-accessible-canada-act>
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<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/check/art15.html>
- Employment Equity Act, S.C. 1995, c. 44. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/>
- Government of Canada. (2022). Summary of the Accessible Canada Act.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada/act-summary.html>
- Statistics Canada. (2024). The disability rate in Canada increased in 2022.
<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/5980-disability-rate-canada-increased-2022>

B.C. Context and Legislation

- Accessible British Columbia Act, S.B.C. 2021, c. 19.
<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>
- Accessible British Columbia Regulation, B.C. Reg. 105/2022.
https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/105_2022