



Bioregional Education Association

Oak and Orca School

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Through the actions in this accessibility plan, we commit to continuous improvements in developing an environment that supports all students, staff, and the larger school community.



The Bioregional Education Association operates two Ministry of Education and Childcare certified schools under the Oak and Orca umbrella: a K-12 bricks and mortar school and a K-12 Online Learning School. Other programs including our nature-rich pre-primary and forest school were unfortunately suspended due to factors relating to the COVID 19 pandemic. We hope that these programs will be reinvigorated in the near future.

This accessibility plan is an extension of our strategic plan and will be reviewed and updated regularly by the leadership team in consultation with the Board of the Bioregional Education Association. This document expands upon our strategic planning to highlight commitments to continuously improving accessibility in all forms, considering inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, universal design, and universal design for learning.

If you would like to respond to our accessibility plan, share supports or barriers you have experienced at Oak and Orca, or have ideas you would like to share, we welcome constructive feedback by email to principal+ap@oakandorca.ca



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The Land Where We Learn

The unique landforms, ecology and cycle of the seasons of a region inform its language and culture, in turn influencing the technology, history, politics, and economy found there. Connecting deeply to the land one is on includes orienting to and appreciating these aspects of life and their interconnectedness. This orientation and appreciation must also include if not be predicated upon that of the Indigenous Peoples belonging to that land. We know that every place a member of our community lives is in fact indigenous land with a remarkable and unique relationship between the land and the Indigenous Peoples connected to it.

The physical site of Oak and Orca School is located in a garry oak ecosystem, in the watershed of what is now also called Bowker Creek. Both the land and waterways have been intimately and expertly managed by the lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, based on their profound and complex relationships with them. It is likely that the school's location was traditionally managed by lək'wəŋən women who maintained the grasslands ecosystem, harvesting and trading the sought after Camas as a staple food crop as well as other plants such as the Chocolate Lily.

Understanding the depth of connection between land, language and human culture is a necessary foundation for comprehending the devastation caused to Indigenous Peoples by colonisation. Our value of viewing this ongoing devastation through the lens of indigenous resilience, resistance and adaptability is balanced by our awareness of the significant and systemic harm done to Indigenous Peoples and the cost such resilience requires.

A bioregional perspective seeks to identify and appreciate the significant connections between nature-connection, regard for traditional ecological knowledge and practices, respect for indigenous land sovereignty, and continued orientation to the historic and continued effects of colonialism. Further, we recognize the complexities that result from the collectively inherited legacy of colonisation. We are transparent that we are not able to engage in free, informed, prior consent to occupy, work on and deeply love the territories the school, its employees and community members are on. Nonetheless we continue to strive to consciously navigate, resist, and heal our entanglement with colonialism.



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Foundation of Inclusivity

From its inception, accessibility has been clearly highlighted in Oak and Orca's mission and guiding principles. Being responsive to requests and feedback using collaborative problem solving and appreciative inquiry continues to be integral to our school. Consideration of the needs of our students, staff, and community members is paramount to every decision we make and always informs our planning for growth and change in both in-person and online learning contexts.

Examples of past successes include:

- Founding a school with a philosophy tailored to meet a diversity of needs
- Maintaining a high teacher:student ratio with small class sizes
- Creating an individualised and inclusive Online Learning program to support learners across the province wanting or needing to learn at home
- Developing a structured system of supported spaces offering student's access to varied learning opportunities depending on need
- Building an easeful online portal for highschool students to access their courses with universal design for learning and executive functioning supports in mind.
- Creating a high school curriculum based on universal design for learning that allows flexibility, personalisation, and adaptability to learner needs and offers executive functioning supports
- Furnishing many Online Learning students with diverse abilities and disabilities with a variety of supports to enable them to succeed to their full capacity
- Maintaining a compassionate and NVC-centric approach to conflict-resolution
- Accommodating students with mobility challenges and neurodiversity on our cycling field trips with the acquisition of specialty bicycles.



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Acknowledgement of Limitations

We acknowledge that our dedication to accessibility will not result in a school experience that works for all students/families/staff and their needs and values. Efforts are made to engage in all aspects of prioritising diversity as fully as possible. In our setting this includes:

- Welcoming diverse needs and expressions of those needs
- Identifying strategies that meet diverse needs
- Pursuing opportunities to harmonise differing strategies so they can co-exist
- Collaborating to overcome challenges and conflicts arising from differing strategies or perspectives
- Honouring the limitations inherent in navigating diverse needs and differing strategies

Limitations are both known, non-negotiable constraints and emergent constraints. Non-negotiable constraints include (and are not limited to):

- Compliance with our constitution, policies, bylaws, and educational values
- Limits to school resourcing and staff availability
- Physical location and buildings of our campus
- Requirements to remain active/engaged in our school programs

With the above in mind, accessibility at Oak and Orca necessarily includes compassionately supporting students and families to identify needs/values that are not met in our programs and, if needed, collaboratively brainstorming options that could better suit them.

All limitations are communicated with compassion and in accordance with our school values and policies.

Accessibility Committee

Our Accessibility Committee is that of the Associate Member Society of FISABC and is available to support our school with identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers. Internal oversight of this accessibility plan and actions surrounding it are primarily the responsibility of Oak and Orca's leadership team, but might also be undertaken by the board of the Bioregional Education Association, staff, and/or students, as appropriate.



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Accessibility Goals

Our strategic plan highlights 4 pillars, accompanied by goals and strategies, for building and maintaining a healthy and sustainable learning community. Accessibility has always been a part of what we consider to be healthy and sustainable. Our plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our community is integrated within these pillars, goals, and strategies, which incorporate the principles of Inclusion, Adaptability, Diversity, Collaboration, Self-Determination, Universal Design, and Universal Design for Learning.

In addition to the goals outlined on the following page, we are committed to:

- 1) Referring to this plan as we make progress.
- 2) Reviewing feedback received.
- 3) Ensuring this plan is reviewed regularly and updated at least every three years, taking any feedback received into consideration.
- 4) Considering input from our accessibility committee about identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility.



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LEADERSHIP

Supporting an inclusive environment for staff through collaborative problem solving and open-minded leadership.

- * Continue to mentor our staff to increase their knowledge and skills in supporting vulnerable students, indigenous students, and students with diverse abilities and disabilities
- * Use appreciative inquiry with staff and students; providing opportunities for self-/team-reflection, feedback, suggestions, and collaboration

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Continuing to integrate Universal Design for Learning into our programs, systems and strategies.

- * Continue to improve our annotated and searchable database of high quality learning opportunities and learning tools in order to improve student success
- * Create more efficient systems for developing and delivering models and tools to support all learners
- * Enhance meaningful, personal goal-setting for all students

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Needs-based collaborative problem solving processes to identify, prevent and remove barriers

- * Support learners with diverse abilities and disabilities to access tools and services within their community to support their assessed needs
- * Provide tools and resources to learners with diverse abilities and disabilities that authentically support their goals and challenges their edges
- * Capitalise and build strengths to set all learners on a path to lifelong learning
- * Ensure that students know how to take a “strengths and opportunities” approach to their own learning
- * Provide opportunities for students to move into a graduation program when they are ready

EQUITY AND HARMONY

Develop systems to determine barriers experienced by individuals involved in the organisation.

- * Provide opportunities for all learners to experience security, support and attachment in an environment where they are encouraged to explore their personal strengths and interests
- * Provide individualised pathways to graduation focusing on personal growth and interests
- * Identify and support students and families who face significant barriers
- * Support all students to understand the diversity, challenges, resilience, and capabilities of their peers with diverse abilities and disabilities



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