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POLICY STATEMENT

Ritz Lutheran Villa is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its clients and visitors. To do this, the organization must recognize the diverse needs of all the organization’s clients and visitors by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As a provider of goods and services, Ritz Lutheran Villa is committed to ensuring its goods and services are provided in an accessible manner.

Ritz Lutheran Villa will promote accessibility through the development of policies, practices and procedures that consider people with disabilities. To do this, Ritz Lutheran Villa will make reasonable efforts to ensure the policies, practices and procedures address **dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.**

PRINCIPLES

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- i) That goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- ii) The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- iii) Persons with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, ‘**disability**’ is defined according to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as:

- i) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- ii) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- iii) learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols of spoken language,
- iv) a mental disorder; or,

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- v) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Work Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

For the purpose of this policy, a ‘service animal’ is defined as either:

- i) A “guide dog”, as defined in of the Blind Persons Rights’ Act, Section 1; or
- ii) A “service animal” for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - a. if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or,
 - b. if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

For the purpose of this policy, a ‘support person’ is defined as:

- i) Another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services

For the purpose of this policy, ‘staff’ is defined as:

- i) Employees, volunteers, agents and others, working for Ritz Lutheran Villa.

PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

1. COMMUNICATION

- i) Communicating with people with disabilities will be conducted in ways that take into consideration their disability.
- ii) Ritz Lutheran Villa will ensure that staff who communicate with customers and third parties are trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- iii) Ritz Lutheran Villa will offer a variety of communication methods for people to access its goods and services to allow individuals to select the method most accessible to them; e.g. telephone, email, mail, in person.

2. FORMATS OF DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION

- i) Upon request, Ritz Lutheran Villa will provide documents (e.g. forms, print materials, bills, etc.) or the information contained within the documents in formats that take into account a person’s disability.
- ii) The timeframe to the conversion process of the original document will vary depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of

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documents to be converted. Documents will be returned in a timely manner with consideration of these factors.

- iii) Should Section 1 documents contain information required by the customer sooner than the conversion will be ready; the information will be communicated in a way that is accessible to the customer.
- iv) Customers will not be charged fees for documents in alternative formats that exceed the fees charged for the document in its original state.

References: Appendix A: Request for Information and Assistance in an Alternate Format form.

3. ASSISTIVE DEVICES

- i) Ritz Lutheran Villa welcomes persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from services offered by the organization.
- ii) Should a person with a disability be unable to access the organization’s services through the use of their own personal assistive device, Ritz Lutheran Villa will ensure the following measures are taken:
 - a. Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual; and
 - b. Identify alternative services and how a person with a disability can access the services, either temporarily or on a permanent basis.
- iii) Further, the organization will ensure staff is trained on the use of assistive devices available for their customers at the location(s) in which they provide service.

References: Appendix B: Assistive Devices Instruction Manual

4. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS

Ritz Lutheran Villa is committed to:

- i) welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal
- ii) ensuring our staff and volunteers are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- iii) welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- iv) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter all areas of the premises with his/her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

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5. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

- i) We ensure all service areas will provide customers with appropriate notice of the event
- ii) There will be notice of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.
- iii) This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services if available.

References: Appendix C: Disruption of Services

6. TRAINING FOR STAFF

We will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training will be provided to all employees, volunteers and part time, seasonal and contract employees. This training will be provided as a condition of employment to all new staff and on an on-going basis for staff to ensure all staff stays current with any policy or procedural changes as it relates to the AODA.

Training may be available in accessible formats and in multiple formats. (i.e. in class sessions, presentations, brochures, etc.)

The training will include:

- i) The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard
- ii) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- iii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- iv) How to use the assistive devices available on the premises that may assist with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- v) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services provided by the organization
- vi) Current policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

7. FEEDBACK PROCESS

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The ultimate goal of this organization is to meet and surpass client/customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

- i) Feedback concerns regarding the way Ritz Lutheran Villa provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by contacting the Administrator.
- ii) A response back to the customer that the concern has been received will be provided within 5 business days.
- iii) Acknowledgement regarding the outcome will follow within 10 business days of receiving the concern.
- iv) Comments can be provided by email, verbally, in writing or in person by setting up an appointment.

References: Appendix D: Customer Feedback form

8. DOCUMENTATION AND REVIEW

- i) A copy of this document should be kept in electronic form and paper form for employee reference.
- ii) A copy of this document will be available to the public on the organization's website (www.ritzlutheranvilla.com), as well as available in alternative formats upon request.
- iii) Review and amendments of this document will be the responsibility of the Administrator of Ritz Lutheran Villa

9. MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of Ritz Lutheran Villa that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

10. QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS POLICY

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to the Administrator of Ritz Lutheran Villa.