

Sail Nova Scotia: Inclusion & Access Policy

Introduction

In accordance with our Strategic Plan; Sail Nova Scotia has developed an inclusion and access policy in order to equitably provide services for the diverse needs and requirements of our members, staff, and participants.

Through the Inclusion & Access Policy and supporting practices, we aim to increase participation, quality of programs, events and opportunities and ensure that our staff and clubs feel supported and prepared to provide meaningful inclusive experiences and environments for ALL to enjoy the sport of sailing.

Sail Nova Scotia defines inclusion as the process of including and representing people of all diversities and backgrounds, regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, physical abilities or socioeconomic class. Sail Nova Scotia is committed to creating and promoting inclusion across all programs and services that we offer.

The process of inclusion we are committed to providing focuses on three areas,

1. Access
2. Participation
3. Support

Policy Goals

The Inclusion & Access Policy outlines Sail Nova Scotia's approach to ensuring inclusive environments and equitable opportunities for all members and participants of Sail Nova Scotia and those interested in the surrounding community.

Access:

- Community members utilizing our programs and services have equitable and appropriate access to programs and services, regardless of ability, race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or country of origin.
- Community and organizational members are informed of events and programs within a timely and appropriate manner, on a consistent basis and in a way that the knowledge is readily accessible to all.
- Community members utilizing our facilities have access and/or knowledge of the environmental and physical supports provided within the organization and existing properties. Assistance with knowledge of supports will be provided in a timely manner if not posted for the public.

Participation:

- Appropriate and meaningful opportunities for participation will be provided.
- Participation will be representative of the diverse needs and groups that make up the organization and surrounding community.
- Safety of all involved will be the top priority when decisions regarding participation are being made.

Support:

- Site staff, community partners and stakeholders engage in the support of all community members and promote inclusive behaviors in sailing and recreation facilities and in public spaces throughout the community.
- Sail Nova Scotia establishes and maintains an organizational infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.
- Sail Nova Scotia will continuously measure and improve inclusive practices.
- Sail Nova Scotia will keep in contact with inclusive partners and programs within the community. Ex. Sail Able, Women's sailing programs, youth sailing teams, etc.
- Sail Nova Scotia will be honest about the support and resources that can be provided and will not promise support that is out of the realm of resources available or that will put members, staff, or the community at risk. This is at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- If additional resources are requested by staff, members, or the community, requests will be taken seriously and go through the proper channels.

This policy applies to all Sail Nova Scotia Board members, Staff, contract staff, and volunteers.

Staff Training

Sail Nova Scotia staff will regularly participate in trainings grounded in effective training models using evidence-based content. Training will be comprehensive (covers multiple topics), based on credible research and delivered by qualified personnel. All new staff members will be quickly oriented to inclusive policies and practices. Training will be delivered to continually support participants, members and staff with knowledge of emerging research, trends and best practices within the sailing and recreation industry.

Collaboration with staff and members lead to identification of the training needs specific to Sail Nova Scotia staff, members, and participants. A comprehensive Sail Nova Scotia Inclusion, Access & Diversity training module will be developed for the specific goals and Strategic Plan of the organization and will include;

1. Mental health support for youth and adults in a recreation setting.
2. Behavioral and cognitive health support for youth and adults in a recreation setting.
3. Inclusion, access, and diversity in the workplace and recreation education.
4. Risk management in recreation and sailing environments and its relation to inclusion and access.
5. Additional trainings can be provided when needed/requested and/or assessed by the board/management (or the inclusion specialist upon request).

*Additional training can be in the form of specialized courses with outside providers or by an inclusion specialist following assessment and development.

- The training modules will be delivered to the head coaches by the inclusion specialist and then will be delivered to the junior coaches and coaches in training by the head coaches.
- Training modules are available for all members and participants and can additionally be delivered via workshop if members are interested or if management feels necessary.
- Sail Nova Scotia recognizes that staff training needs are not a stagnant process and will be assessing the needs of training yearly.
- An effort will be made to inform staff of continuing educational and specialized training opportunities that are available in the community or online.

New Procedures and Protocols

The needs of our member clubs and sailing schools and participants are continually evolving. In our effort to provide adequate and updated support, we have composed a list of our inclusive processes, supports we provide, and expanding opportunities for members, staff, and participants in the community.

New Initiatives and Opportunities

We encourage staff and members to bring forth club and sailing initiatives that encompass inclusive processes and expand the opportunities for those in our community that may be underrepresented or require additional/adapted supports.

Physical Supports and Adapted Equipment

In partnership and alliance with Sail Able, it is part of our mission to provide opportunities for sailors of all physical abilities. We have supports and resources within our clubs and summer programs for use by members and program participants. If you or someone you are registering requires physical support or adaptations, please contact the Sail Nova Scotia Executive Director and we will assist and inform of the supports and resources available.

Registration Process and Support Requests

A new registration process has been added either directly on the general registration form or with the request of additional support. (This process is unique to the club/program you are registering through). This process has been added to proactively provide supports to all participants, with summer programs especially in mind. We are asking parents and guardians to identify relevant and known support needs to plan for the equitable use of resources and teaching methods and our risk management procedures.

Safety of all involved is at the forefront of our planning procedures. If known needs of a participant are not identified during registration, we may have to pause the participation of said individual until (and only when) the resources can be gathered to meet the needs, we have resolved any safety issues, and staff feel safe and comfortable to continue. The safety of our staff, participants, and general public will be the main priority in any given situation. Any incident will be documented with a proper incident/safety report.

Identification of Support

During the participant registration, there will be an area to identify support needs of individuals. Identification of support needs is given at the participants discretion and is highly encouraged as a proactive measure. We aim to provide safe and meaningful opportunities and with prior knowledge of known needs or support requirements that are currently in place in similar environments, recreation settings, or on a day to day basis, we will use the information to do so. If you do not wish to identify during registration, you may choose to speak with a staff or manager in person. Information will be treated confidentially and will be used solely to proactively plan for safe and equitable participation of everyone involved.

1:1 Support

We encourage individuals of varying needs and abilities to participate in our programs. We currently do not have the resources to provide 1:1 support for registrants, but with registration and identification of support needs, we will work with you and attempt to resolve a solution for the request. Participants are welcomed and encouraged to provide their own 1:1 support with required paperwork and when acknowledged during the registration process.

*1:1 support cannot currently be promised.

Questions to ask when considering if support is required:

“Support” refers to and is inclusive of; physical support, behavioral support, emotional support, personal care support, etc.

1. Does the individual have supports at school, home, other recreation programs, etc. (ex. Learning center at school, behavioral plan, use of assistive devices, etc.)
2. Is extra help required at home for basic or personal care?
3. Is there an existing physical, medical, cognitive, behavioral and/or developmental disability that could affect the safety and enjoyment of the participant and/or other participants?

*Sail Nova Scotia does not do toileting, personal care, catheterization, tube feeding, or any related medical procedures, but does welcome those who may need assistance with such and is providing their own care personnel.

**Check with your program or camp regarding the medicine administration policy.

Organizational Support

Sail Nova Scotia and staff will put in place organizational supports that create a social environment (including positive relationships among staff, youth, families and community) that encourages all to be inclusive. This includes:

Staff

Demonstrating an attitude of inclusion, including nondiscriminatory language and actions

Determining and addressing any potential unintended outcomes of activities, programs or facilities to ensure that they do not limit participation or cause worse outcomes based on ability, age, sexual orientation, identity, religion or country of origin

Providing educational materials about inclusive opportunities and resources to all constituents at community events

Sharing and discussing practices during community meetings

Demonstrating the ability to promote and provide programs or opportunities to marginalized or underrepresented groups within the sailing community

Agency

Developing an open dialogue and/or community resources that support inclusive behaviors in the community

Assessing agency hiring practices to ensure staff is representative of the diverse community and is an equal-opportunity employer

Maintain a positive relationship with Sail Able and additional partners/groups providing inclusive opportunities within the sailing community

Develop processes and procedures for staff that are consistent and maintained (documentation, incident reports, emergency information binders, etc.)

Communications

Providing positive messages about diversity and inclusion through written and verbal messaging, posters, pictures and books

Provide staff and members professional resources regarding access and inclusion

Ensure the staff, community and members are aware of new and regular inclusive sailing opportunities through Sail Nova Scotia, Sail Able, and surrounding events

Maintain communication with members and board members regarding inclusive practices and procedures and ensure any problems that arise are dealt with openly, consistently and according to organizational processes

Environmental Support

Sail Nova Scotia will establish environmental supports and practices that promote inclusion for all community members. Examples of environmental supports include:

- Program adaptation for inclusion, depending on the individual needs and abilities of participants
- Trained staff support throughout the program
- Accessible restrooms and change facilities
- Accessible buildings and club facilities

Continuous Measurement and Improvement

Sail Nova Scotia will work to continuously improve our equity and inclusion efforts, measuring the effectiveness of this policy through staff and community qualitative and quantitative feedback through meetings, community engagement events, public forums, surveys; and monitoring economic and health indicators. Sail Nova Scotia will establish a communications plan for reporting on progress. The report will be available at our Annual General Meeting.

Sail Nova Scotia will monitor the following indicators to track progress of inclusive efforts:

- Does our association communicate a vision that values the participation of all people as members of the community?
- Does our association's improvement plan include inclusive practices with action steps to support implementation?
- Is there adequate, regularly scheduled, ongoing planning time for agency staff to collaborate on inclusive programs and events?
- Does our association engage the whole community by providing multiple opportunities and modes for participating?
- Are there professional development opportunities for staff regarding inclusive strategies and supports and are staff supported and encouraged to continue their education?
- Are community members from targeted populations engaged in programming, utilizing facilities and taking part in future planning conversations?

Long-term indicators:

- Are there improvements in health (physical, social, mental) outcomes across targeted populations?
- Are there increasing numbers of participation levels?
- Are there increased opportunities for participation in the form of groups, programs, teams, that have not been traditionally offered within the organization?
- Are coaches and program staff increasing their knowledge through continuing education opportunities and applying the knowledge to provide additional opportunities or improve existing opportunities?

- Are there improvements in relationships with interested community groups and partners?
- Are there consistent processes taking place to discuss and improve organizational practices regarding inclusion, access and diversity?
- Are there increased numbers of physically accessible clubs and sailing equipment?
- Are there decreases in preventable incidents and an increase in proactive risk management measures (as discussed in the training modules)?

Policy Development

Seward's Therapeutic Recreation Services in partnership with Sail Nova Scotia has developed this inclusive policy following the recommendations and in reference of the following documents and resources;

1. Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (Bill 59)
2. The Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81)
3. The Americans with Disabilities Act
4. The 7 Principles of Universal Design

Resources

Sail Nova Scotia recognizes that this document is an ever-growing resource and aims to keep it updated on a yearly basis. For more on inclusion, access, and equity, we encourage staff and community members to visit the Sail Nova Scotia website or contact Jessica Seward, CTRS, owner of Seward's Therapeutic Recreation Services.

Approved by the Sail NS Board, January 12, 2021