



GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Overview and Guiding Principles: At Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy, we are committed to fostering an equitable and inclusive environment in which all members of our community can thrive. Guided by the principles of the Accessible BC Act is adaptability, collaboration, diversity, inclusion, self-determination, and universal design, we strive to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that may impede full participation for anyone accessing our programs, services, or physical spaces. This Accessibility Plan outlines the steps we will take to support meaningful access and continual progress toward increased accessibility for students, staff, families, and visitors in our school community.

About Our School: Founded in September 2003, Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy is located within the Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre, a vibrant hub of community life and spiritual learning. The school began with a Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten program alongside a combined Grade One/Two classroom, with a clear focus on providing a nurturing and enriching environment from the very start. Over the years, AZIA has grown into a full Junior Kindergarten to Grade 7 institution, continuously strengthening its academic programs in alignment with the BC curriculum. We take pride in offering a rich academic and spiritual experience that is deeply rooted in Shia Islamic principles, inspiring our students to excel academically, embrace their Islamic identity, and contribute positively to both the community and the wider society.

Rationale - Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy is a Muslim community committed to the goal of being an inclusive community of learners. In our commitment to students who require learning support, we feel the value and dignity of the human person does not arise from the physical or mental qualities, from efficiency, productivity, or speed in one's actions. It comes rather from the fundamental fact that everyone is created by God, and our commitment is rooted in the fact that we are all God's servants.

Policy: AZIA is committed to the education of the whole child in the spiritual, emotional/social, intellectual, artistic/aesthetic and physical realms.

Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion at Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy: For the 2025 to 2026 school year, we have 210 students supported by 12 staff and faculty members. The faculty, staff, and student demographics are celebrated by diversity, including but not limited to faculty, staff, and students from Afghanistan, Africa, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Latin America, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. We have faculty, staff, and students who are from diverse religious backgrounds including Catholic, Christian, Shia and Sunni.

We currently have six students who have an established Individualized Education Plan at Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy ranging from students with a designation from Categories D (Chronic Health Impairment – Diabetes), F (Deaf or Hard of Hearing needs), and G (autism spectrum disorder).



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Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy's Territorial Acknowledgement:

The below Territorial Acknowledgement is framed and posted in every classroom at Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy. It is read and shared with our student population at each morning assembly and at every school community event.

The poster features a blue header with the Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy logo on the left and right, and the Arabic text "بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ" in the center. Below the header, the Arabic text "... إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ" is displayed. Underneath, an English translation reads: "...The earth belongs indeed to Allah, and He makes it an inheritance for whom He wills of His servants. The final outcome is in favour of the God-revering, pious." (Quran 7:128). The background of the poster shows a stylized landscape with mountains and a sun or moon. At the bottom, a dark blue box contains the text: "The land which the Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy is located on and in which we work, study and worship is from the unceded traditional territories of the Tsawwassen, Kwantlen and Musqueam Coast Salish Peoples." Below this, a green banner with white text reads "EDUCATION is ACTION".



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Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy's Accessibility Committee:

To date, identifying key members of the AZIA School Community as committee members has been completed.

AZIA Accessibility Committee:

Vice-Principal	Virtue El-Aleyrt
Facility Manager	Mohamed Hassan Alidina
Office Administrator	Femida Jagani
Faculty Lead	Sakina Wali-Merali
Board Member	Zahra Kazemi

AZIA will work with FISA as an AMS member to ascertain what steps along the process have been taken to date. Furthermore, efforts to establish connections, assess current/prior progress to date, and identify a community champion/s through our Board Member: Zahra Kazemi (Board member since 2018).

The Purpose of the AZIA Accessibility Committee:

- Raise awareness about accessibility and inclusion
- Set internal accessibility standards
- Identify barriers to individuals in or interacting with AZIA and increase accessibility within the school/mosque
- Remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with AZIA and provide support, information, and education related to accessibility and inclusion
- Recognize and actively participate in the yearly National AccessAbility Week (NOTE: This year's AccessAbility Week will take place from May 24th to the 30th. Although we are still pending the theme for this school year, last year's theme was "Breaking Barriers Together: Paving the way for an inclusive future".)

The Structure of the AZIA Accessibility Committee:

To align with our local FISA Association, AZIA has taken essential steps by establishing the following:

- Mandatory Rules
- Compliance Strategies

The Plan of the AZIA Accessibility Committee:

The plan of the AZIA Accessibility Committee is to provide understanding and providing practical and meaningful access.



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There are many different definitions of disability. Disability refers to any impairment or functional limitation, including physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory. These limitations may be permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature.

Did You Know?

There are many kinds of disabilities, and they are often categorized in different ways. Common categories used to describe the experience of disability include:



Seeing (vision)



Hearing



Mobility



Flexibility



Dexterity



Pain



Learning



Developmental



Mental Health



Memory



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After conducting ongoing scans of the AZIA school community, the Accessibility Committee will:

Goal	Plan	Update
Common Building Element including vehicular Access – evaluating and removing barriers when considering how does one get to school at AZIA. Do our families drive, walk, take transit, or walk?	AZIA will provide school bus services to remote locations so that students who reside outside of Richmond and surroundings area may still attend school.	<p>For the 2025 to 2026 school year, AZIA has four school busses for Surrey, Coquitlam/New Westminster, Burnaby, and Richmond and Vancouver locations. Routes have been provided and updated to ensure students arrive on time for school while limiting the bus travel time as much as possible.</p> <p>AZIA has been mindful of the location of accessible parking spaces.</p> <p>AZIA is situated close to a transit stop. This includes directions to the accessible building entrance from the transit stop.</p> <p>AZIA has a designated passenger drop-off zone.</p> <p>Directional and identification signs are being used.</p> <p>Clearly marked pedestrian pathways to help delineate the staff, faculty, and students from vehicular routes</p>
Common Building Element including a review of paths of travel, corridors, and hallways	<p>Paths of travel should be easy to navigate, safe for all users, free of obstacles, well-illuminated, easy to find, and well-integrated with stairs or elevator.</p> <p>AZIA needs to implement tactile attention indicators at the top of the stairs to alert</p>	<p>AZIA has a primary and intermediate designated areas all leading to four different staircases which are clearly marked including one elevator leading to the upper and lower levels of the school building. This then leads all users either to outside or to</p>

Commented [AA1]: All signage at the Centre and the school includes Braille

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	<p>people who are blind or have low vision that they are approaching a change in level.</p>	<p>the mosque area of the building. AZIA has nosings installed with high tonal contrast at the edges of steps to help define and increase the visibility of each step.</p> <p>All signage at the mosque/Centre includes braille.</p>
<p>Common Building Element including a review of the staircases in the school.</p>	<p>Stairs are inherently dangerous. AZIA will ensure that tread depth and riser height are consistent to prevent tripping and falls.</p>	<p>Implemented consistent tread depth and riser height in the construction of the staircases throughout the school building.</p> <p>In addition, handrails are on both sides of the staircases.</p>
<p>Doors and Doorways</p>	<p>AZIA will review all doors and doorways which should include appropriate door handles that can be used with a closed fist and do not require tight pinching, grasping, and twisting of the wrist, are easier to operate by people with limited manual dexterity.</p> <p>AZIA needs to implement push lock on classroom doors.</p>	<p>Review in progress.</p>
<p>Washrooms</p>	<p>Review providing accessible stall doors that open inward make it difficult to get into the stall.</p> <p>Review no-touch features including automatic toilets and hand dryers while providing alternatives for students who are neurodiverse and may have</p>	<p>AZIA offers both automatic hand dryers and paper towels.</p>



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	adverse responses to loud accessories such as automatic toilets and hand dryers.	
AZIA school building and emergency systems	<p>All IEP students at AZIA should have an emergency evacuation plan that has clear information made available to all faculty and staff.</p> <p>AZIA will review the possibility of implementing visual fire alarms throughout the school building, especially where a someone is likely to be alone.</p> <p>AZIA will review attaining an evacuation chair for someone with no or limited mobility to make their way down a stairwell in case of an emergency. Staff and faculty would have to be trained on how to use the evacuation chair.</p>	<p>The AZIA evacuation plan is included in the student support plan. Copies are on-hand in the classroom evacuation folder, TOC binders, and teacher's day plans.</p> <p>Natural lighting has been implemented with skylights for staff, faculty, and students with sensitivities providing a more comfortable environment for all.</p>
Making AZIA workspace flexible and adaptable	<p>Review design layout of classroom space, meeting rooms, kitchens, and lunchrooms, storage, and other amenities</p> <p>Provide quiet rooms, spaces for prayer outside of the mosque, as well as sensory relief and respite.</p>	<p>AZIA offers space to pray for all staff outside of the mosque.</p> <p>AZIA provides space for sensory relief and respite.</p> <p>Each classroom teacher has been supplied with tools, toys, and other resources specifically designed to help students who process stimuli differently to regulate their sensory experiences and improve their emotional well-being.</p>
Ensuring that parents whose first language is not English are supported	Use of translation and translator services for everyday school communications and events	AZIA uses ClassDojo and MySchool to communicate with parents. ClassDojo has a feature included in this



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		program for parents to translate the communications in their own language.
To effectively use ASL (American Sign Language) as a means of classroom management.	Actively use ASL for each classroom at every grade level to reinforce consistent use to communicate among hearing and hard of hearing faculty, staff and students.	AZIA is using ASL as an effective means of classroom management. This includes visuals of the alphabet using ASL in primary classrooms. ASL signs for hello/goodbye, washroom, yes, no, wait, I need help, and I'm sorry are being used from grades KG to 7 for all hearing and hard of hearing students.
Student-led workshops	AZIA will provide opportunities for students with diabetes or hard of hearing designations to research diabetes and hearing loss to encourage self-awareness. The same students using events such as World Diabetes Day (November 14 th) and World Hearing Day (March 3 rd) to present to their peers to bring about greater awareness of diabetes and hearing loss.	In the past two years, AZIA has provided such an opportunity for our students to complete presentations to their peers and other classes. This was well-received by the student community and by the students facilitating the presentations.
Effective use of the school gardening grounds and orchard	Ensure that AZIA applies for garden grants and then effectively using the funds to plant and harvest fruit and vegetables with integrated lessons in the classroom learning and hands-on experience. Sharing the harvest among the student and staff population.	AZIA has applied for a garden grant alongside effective use of the gardens and the orchard.
Strengthening AZIA's affiliation with organizations such as the Muslim Food Bank, HumanKind, Aspire Counselling, and CISNA	Actively address class disparities to ensure that families who cannot afford food, uniforms, and any school-related expenses are supported.	AZIA is providing food hampers and donations, especially during the Holy Month of Ramadan where charity is an integral focus of the Islamic month.



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		<p>Counselling services are arranged through AZIA with Aspire Counselling.</p> <p>Students and families who require support with healthy and nutritional snacks and lunches.</p>
Implement using programs such as Open Parachute or Second Step to reinforce inclusive education for all staff, faculty, and students.		
Not reinvent. We will rather establish if other Muslim communities in the province or across the nation already have a committee and/or plans in place.	AZIA to connect with other Muslim school communities to review, plan, and collaborate where possible.	As of 2025, AZIA is affiliated with WISE International Organization who is focussed on advancing Islamic education, promoting unity and cultural exchange, tackling global education challenges, and sharing innovative teaching methodologies. This is year-round with planned summits, workshops, and sharing of resources.
Establish champions throughout the student community.	AZIA will elect a Student Council each school year.	AZIA has an elected Student Council body that speaks on behalf of the students to meet challenges that require addressing including sustainable development, accessibility, and inclusion.
Provide a way for the public to provide feedback on the AZIA Accessibility Plan	Update AZIA website	

Reference:	Approved: School Board
	Date Approved: August 2023
Cross-reference:	Date(s) Revised: September 2025