

Curriculum Services

Service Animals in Schools

Guidelines for Use of A Service Animal on School Property or At School Functions

Requests: A person who wants to be accompanied by his/her service animal must make a prior written request of the school's principal if the service animal will come into a school. A person who wants to be accompanied by his/her service animal must make a prior written request of the superintendent for all other locations. These requests must be renewed annually.

A. **Students:** Use of a service animal by a qualified student with a disability will be permitted in school when it is determined that the student's disability requires such use in order to have equal access to the instructional program, school services and/or school activities or when the student's IEP or 504 team determines that the student requires the use of a service animal to receive a free appropriate public education. All other requirements of this Policy apply. Parents or animal handlers who may be present in school for the purpose of assisting a student with his/her service animal will be required to submit to a sex offender registry and criminal background check. In addition, parents and handlers must comply with all standards of conduct that apply to school employees and volunteers.

B. **Employees:** Use of a service animal by a qualified employee with a disability will be permitted when such use is necessary to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his/her job or to enjoy benefits of employment comparable to those similarly situated non-disabled employees. All other requirements of this Policy apply.

Vaccinations: The service animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal.

Health: The service animal must be in good health. The owner or handler of the animal must submit each school year to the school principal and/or superintendent documentation from a licensed veterinarian the following: a current veterinary health certificate; and proof of the service animal's current vaccinations and immunizations.

Control: A service animal must be under the control of its handler at all times. A service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control through voice, signals or other effective means.

Supervision and Care of Service Animals: The owner or handler of a service animal is responsible for the supervision and care of the animal, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up. The District is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. The District shall not be responsible for the training, feeding, grooming or care of any service animal permitted to attend school or a school function under this Policy.

Damages: The owner or handler of a service animal is solely responsible for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the animal and must provide proper proof of liability insurance to cover such damages.

Other Requirements: The District may impose additional conditions on the presence of a service animal, depending on the circumstances.

Removal of Service Animals from School Property

District administrators may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from District buildings, property, vehicles or activities if:

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it;
2. The animal is not housebroken;
3. The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
4. The student, employee or handler fails to appropriately care for the animal, including feeding, exercising, taking outside for performance of excretory functions, and cleaning up;
5. The presence of the animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the educational process, school activities or the instruction program;
6. The parents/guardian or employee fails to provide the required documentation;
7. The animal fails to consistently perform the function(s)/service(s) for which it has been trained and brought to school; or
8. The presence of the animal would require a fundamental alteration to any school program.

If the District properly excludes a service animal under this Policy, the District will provide the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

Admission of Service Animals to Public Events

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals while on District property for events or activities that are open to the general public. This right of access does not extend to the schools generally or to other activities that are not open to the general public.

School administrators may inquire of the owner or handler of an animal whether the animal is required because of a disability and the specific tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but shall not ask questions about an individual's disability.

The District shall not require an owner or handler of a service animal to pay an extra charge for the animal to attend events for which a fee is charged, but the individual is liable for any damage done to the premises or facilities by such an animal.

District administrators may revoke or exclude the service animal if the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, the use of the animal would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others, or would substantially interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of the event or activity by others.

Professional Therapy Dogs

An animal that is used to provide a supportive or therapeutic service for a student does not meet the definition of a Service Animal which is permitted for use by students, employees, and patrons of the District consistent with this Policy. However, the District may employ the use of such dogs to work with staff to provide certain types of support for its students.

Such dogs are not for the personal use of District students or employees and will be utilized at the discretion of District administration and counselors for their intended purpose.

Grievance Procedure

Any individual with a service animal who is aggrieved by a decision to exclude, limit or remove a service animal may appeal that decision in accordance with applicable Board Regulation 2130.