

**SERVICE ANIMALS IN DISTRICT FACILITIES**

This policy serves to address the use of service animals by students within schools and on school grounds. As established and defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its accompanying regulations, individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to bring their service animals in school buildings and upon school grounds in accordance with this policy:

**SERVICE ANIMAL:**

Any animal that is specifically trained to do or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the student's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to: 1) assisting individuals who are blind or who have low vision with navigation and other tasks, 2) alerting individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to the presence of people or sounds, 3) providing non-violent protection or rescue work, 4) pulling a wheelchair, 5) assisting an individual during a seizure, 6) alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, 7) retrieving items such as medicine or telephone, 8) providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and 9) helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or task for the purpose of this definition.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has also specifically defined a miniature horse as an animal that can serve as a service animal, so long as the miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability.

**A. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PERMISSIBLE INQUIRIES:**

1. The Director of Pupil Services will be obligated to ask the following when it is not obvious as to the role of the animal:
  - a. Whether the service animal is required because of disability and the nature and extent of that disability;
  - b. What task or work the animal is trained to perform;
  - c. In the case that the handler is not also the user of the animal, documentation of the handler's affiliation with a recognized organization and verification or background check is required of all adults working on school property.
2. If the service animal is still in training, proof of liability insurance policy must be provided, and access by the service animal permitted if appropriate under State Law.
3. A service animal in training will normally be required to be tethered and to wear an identifying cape or vest. The District does not permit District employees or students who

are service animal trainers to be accompanied by the service animals they are training on school premises during their work hours or during the regular school day. The District reserves the right to request that any non-disabled service animal trainer provide evidence of credentials that have been issued by an agency or organization for training service animals that are sufficient to indicate that the animal in question is being trained to be a service animal.

4. The school shall not provide staff support to care for or control a service animal, but may provide support to a student using a service animal as needed in a particular instance (i.e., accompanying a young student who takes a service animal outside to relieve itself).
5. The owner or handler of the service animal shall be responsible for:
  - a. Supervision and care of the animals including, feeding, exercising, clean-up, and stain removal;
  - b. Restraint of the animal at all times;
  - c. Damages to the school building, property, and vehicles caused by the animal;
  - d. Injuries to students, employees, volunteers, and visitors caused by the service animal;
  - e. Keeping the service animal on a harness, leash or tether (unless this prevents the service animal from performing his/her work or task).
  - f. Proof of liability/personal injury insurance.

#### B. REMOVING AND/OR EXCLUDING A STUDENT'S SERVICE ANIMAL

1. The Director of Pupil Services may ask that an individual or trainer with a service animal remove the service animal from the school and/or school grounds and also may refuse a request to have a service animal with them if:
  - a. The service animal is out of control and the service animal's handler does not take effective action to control him/her;
  - b. The service animal is not housebroken;
  - c. The service animal poses a direct threat to the safety of the individuals at school or the safe operation of the school in a manner that cannot be eliminated by modifications;
  - d. The presences of the service animal will require a fundamental alteration or cause significant disruption to the program or any activities in the school;
  - e. The service animal is sick, infested with parasites, has an infection of the skin mouth or eyes, or otherwise presents a threat to the public health.

The decision to remove or prohibit a service animal from district schools is not intended to interfere with the rights of a student or parent and may be appealed to the District Administrator.

#### C. SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR SERVICE ANIMALS

Upon approval, the Director of Pupil Services or designee shall arrange to:

1. Determine which staff and students may be allergic or fearful of canine or equine service animals and provide accommodations that meet the needs of all staff and students.
2. Familiarize the service animal with the school prior to the actual start date;

3. Familiarize the staff and students who may have contact with the service animal on their role and behavioral expectations for the presence of a service animal;
4. Establish a plan for the service animal to urinate and defecate during all times the service animal will be on school grounds or at a school activity;
5. Establish an evacuation plan for the service animal and practice this plan during all evacuation drills;
6. Determine an appropriate rest time and place for the service animal;
7. Determine alternative plans if the service animal is not available to the student.

**D. ELIGIBILITY OF A SERVICE ANIMAL FOR TRANSPORTATION**

Service animals are permitted to ride on a school bus pursuant to this policy and the approval of the Director of Finance and Operations in charge of transportation. It is the responsibility of the Director of Finance and Operations to make the bus company or personnel aware of the potential presence of a service animal on the bus. The service animal user or his/her parents must provide information to the bus driver and bus assistant regarding commands needed for daily interaction and emergency evacuation. The service animal must enter the bus on the steps and not on a lift, unless the student uses the lift to enter and exit the bus. While the bus is in motion, the service animal must remain positioned at the student or handler's feet. It will be the determination of the Director of Finance and Operations if the service animal should be secured on the bus by a tether or leash.

The service animal may be excluded from the bus if:

1. The student or handler is unable to control the service animal's behavior, which poses a threat to the health or safety of others or the service animal;
2. The service animal urinates or defecates on the bus;
3. The service animal is unable to remain positioned by the student or handler's feet during transit.

The decision to remove the service animal from the bus may be appealed to the District Administrator. If the service animal is not allowed on the bus, the student shall continue to transport the service animal. If the student is removed from the bus, the service animal may still attend school with the student if there are no violations incurred at the school as described in Section C of this policy.

**E. SERVICE ANIMALS FOR PARENTS, VENDORS, VISITORS, AND OTHERS**

Individuals with disabilities who are accompanied by their service animals are permitted access to all areas of the District's facilities where members of the public, as participants in services, programs or activities, as vendors, or as invitees, are permitted to go. Individuals who access any area of the District's facilities with their service animals should follow the building's standard visitor registration procedures and are encouraged to notify the building administrator, in advance, that their service animal will accompany them during their visit.

An individual with a disability who attends a school event will be permitted to be accompanied by his/her service animal in accordance with this policy.

Legal Ref: 106.52; 118.07(4); 121.02(1)(i); 252.21; 254.56 WSS

Cross Ref: Policy 459, Animals on School Premises; Policy 342.1, Programs for Students with Disabilities; Policy 411, Equal Educational Opportunities; Rule 411, Student Discrimination Complaint Procedures; Exhibit (1) 411, Notice of Student Non-discrimination Policy, Exhibit (2), Student Discrimination Complaint Form

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Reviewed: