



REGULATIONS

**SUBJECT: USE OF SERVICE DOGS BY STUDENTS, STAFF AND
COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

DEFINITIONS

Disability:

- (a) 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, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- (c) A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- (d) A mental disorder.
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

Service Dog:

A dog is a service dog for a person with a disability if:

- (a) It is readily apparent that the dog is a service dog for a person with a disability through its appearance (i.e. wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign that identifies it as a Service Dog or has an identification card from a service animal training school or from the Attorney General of Ontario) or by what it is doing (i.e. opening doors, retrieving items).
- (b) The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse practitioner confirming that the person requires the dog for reasons relating to the disability.

NOTE:

A service dog must be registered in Canada. They will generally have a black leather Special Skills Dog (SSD) harness and leash, and/or saddlebag or vest. They may be assigned to individuals with the following disabilities: Physical, Blind or Low Vision, Deaf/Hearing Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or a Seizure Disorder.

Accommodation:

A means to prevent or remove barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in activities and services. The use of specially trained service dogs is one strategy to accommodate the special needs of individuals with disabilities.

**1. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENT OVER 18 REQUESTING A SERVICE
DOG IN THE SCHOOL FOR A STUDENT**

- (a) The success of the implementation of a Service Dog into the school setting depends on clear communication, a well-informed school community, and careful planning. The information you provide will assist the Superintendent of Special Education and the School Principal in making the best possible decisions for your child and other students, as well as for the staff, volunteers, and visitors in the school. The information will be filed in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR).
- (b) Once the necessary information has been received, including the completion of a "Request for Service Dog Involvement with a Student" form, the Principal will consult with the Superintendent of Special Education prior to the admittance and implementation of the Service Dog within the school.
- (c) The information you provide will assist in the consideration of your request. It is important that you provide the information that addresses the safety of the students and staff. For example, the Superintendent of Special Education and the Principal need to know that the Service Dog has no history of nipping, biting or growling at children or adults, nor exhibits aggressive protective behaviours.
- (d) The principal will investigate if any student or member of the staff has severe medical or psychological reactions to dogs that may prevent or restrict the involvement of the Service Dog at the school.
- (e) If your request is approved, a series of planning steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the Service Dog into the school.
- (f) The use of a Service Dog is considered to be an accommodation to help your child learn and to develop the necessary skills to achieve success at school. If your child already has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), it will be reviewed at the School Based Team meeting. If one does not exist, one will be developed in consultation with you. The Principal or designate will invite you, and as applicable, your child's teacher, a representative from the Service Dog training centre, the Resource Teacher, Special Education Coordinator, and other staff as necessary to the School Based Team meeting to discuss your child's needs, the accommodations that are already in place for your child, and the additional assistance provided by a Service Dog.
- (g) The Principal, with your assistance, will develop a communication plan to inform students, staff, School Council, and community members as appropriate.
- (h) Your responsibilities include:
 - Completion of the "Request for Service Dog Involvement with a Student" form, which can be obtained from the Principal.
 - Transporting or walking the Service Dog to and from school, or facilitating the use of bus transportation.
 - Providing the required equipment and Service Dog care items.
 - Attending to the daily care of the Service Dog.
 - Assuming financial responsibility for the Service Dog's training, veterinary care, and other related costs.
 - Working co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success.
 - Assisting the Principal with the communication of relevant information to the school community.
 - Providing the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion.
 - Informing the Principal of all relevant information that may affect the students and staff.
- (i) The well-being of the Service Dog is also very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed, and your input as a trained handler is valuable. The Superintendent of Special Education and the Principal also need to know what other resources are available to facilitate the transition to school and the implementation of the plan. Strategies for becoming familiar with the building and the grounds, introduction to assemblies/concerts, recess, informing the staff about interacting with the Service Dog will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the dog as possible.

2. INFORMATION FOR STAFF REQUESTING SERVICE DOG INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

- (a) The success of the implementation of a Service Dog into the workplace depends on clear communication, a well-informed workplace and careful planning. The information you provide, via the Request for Service Dog Involvement with Staff form will assist the Supervisor in making the best possible decisions for you as well as your co-workers, students, volunteers, and visitors in the workplace. The information will be filed in your personnel file.
- (b) The information you provide will assist in the consideration of your request. It is important that you provide the information that addresses the safety of others. For example, the Supervisor needs to know that the Service Dog has no history of nipping, biting or growling, nor exhibits aggressive protective behaviours.
- (c) Once the necessary information has been received, the appropriate Superintendent will be consulted prior to the admittance and implementation of the Service Dog to the work site.
- (d) If your request is approved, a series of planning steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the Service Dog.
- (e) The Supervisor will investigate if anyone has severe medical or psychological reactions to dogs that may prevent or restrict the involvement of the Service Dog at the workplace.
- (f) The Supervisor, with your assistance, will develop a communication plan to inform students, staff members and community members as appropriate.
- (g) If approved, your responsibilities include:
 - Transporting the Service Dog to and from work.
 - Providing the required equipment and Service Dog care items.
 - Attending to the daily care of the Service Dog.
 - Assuming financial responsibility for the Service Dog's training, veterinary care, and other related costs.
 - Working co-operatively with the other staff to make this accommodation a success.
 - Assisting the Supervisor with the communication of relevant information to the work site.
 - Providing the Supervisor with required documentation in a timely fashion.
 - Informing the Supervisor of all relevant information that may affect others.
- (h) The well-being of the Service Dog is also very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed, and your input as a trained handler is valuable. The Supervisor also needs to know what other resources are available to facilitate the transition to the workplace and the implementation of the plan. Strategies for becoming familiar with the building and the grounds, and informing others about interacting with the Service Dog will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the dog as possible.

3. INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY MEMBER BRINGING A SERVICE DOG ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

- (a) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with his or her service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures and includes only those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access.
- (b) It is "readily apparent" that an animal is a service animal when it is obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign that identifies it as a service animal or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. It may also be readily apparent if a person is using the animal to assist him or her in doing things, such as opening doors or retrieving items.
- (c) A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed or handled (e.g. Kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g. school cafeteria or lunchroom).
- (d) Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to the exclusion of the service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is the Board's expectation that the situation would be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered – e.g. creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.

- (e) A service animal may be excluded if it is a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the Ontario *Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.
- (f) In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board will make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve them, e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff or volunteer) to guide them.
- (g) Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.
- (h) Where the person using the service animal regularly attends at the school or board facility, the principal or departmental manager may request to keep a copy of the letter on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a letter with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The principal or departmental manager shall preserve the confidentiality of the letter and information contained in the letter, and shall not use or disclose the letter or information except as provided for in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or as otherwise required by law.

Implementation Date: April 24, 2012
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Reference: Policy and Administrative Procedures
Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service