

1.0 PURPOSE

The use of a specially trained service animal is one strategy to accommodate the special needs of some students. This procedure provides specific direction to school administrators regarding the admittance and implementation of guide dogs, autism service dogs, hearing dogs and other certified working dogs and service animals in the school environment.

2.0 REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 Education Act**
- 2.2 Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001**
- 2.3 Ontario Human Rights Code**
- 2.4 Blind Person's Rights Act (2007)**
- 2.5 Individual Education Plan, A Resource Guide (2004)**

3.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.0 SERVICE ANIMAL:

An animal that provides support relating to a student's disability to assist that student in meaningfully accessing education.

3.1 GUIDE DOGS:

Guide dogs are highly trained working animals that help provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people with vision loss.

3.2 HEARING DOGS:

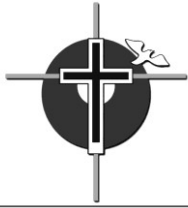
A hearing dog is a type of assistance dog specially selected and trained to assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired by alerting their handler to important sounds, such as doorbells, smoke alarms, ringing telephones, or alarm clocks. They may also work outside of the home, alerting to such sounds as sirens, forklifts and a person calling the handler's name.

3.3 SERVICE DOG:

A service dog is a type of assistance dog specially trained to help people who have disabilities other than visual or hearing impairment, or to assist with medical responses (for example, assist people with epilepsy).

3.4 AUTISM SERVICE DOG:

Autism service dogs are a specially trained Labrador or Golden Retriever, trained by National Service Dogs who increase safety levels and alleviate bolting behaviours



common in children with autism by acting as an anchor when tethered to the child. An autism service dog is a certified guide dog that is recognized as a working dog and strict guidelines apply for the access, handling and interaction with these dogs.

3.5 THERAPY OR COMPANION DOGS:

A therapy dog visits people in nursing homes and hospitals to bring love and companionship into their daily routine.

3.6 READING DOGS:

A reading dog is trained by St. John's Ambulance to provide a settled companion for the child's uninterrupted, uncorrected reading.

3.7 ACCREDITATION FOR GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMAL and GUIDE DOGS:

Guide dogs and service animals must be certified and registered in Canada. The Special Skills Dog (SSD) or National Service Dog (NSD) will have a distinctive harness and leash and/or saddlebag and vest.

Training schools for any type of service animal, guide or working dog in Ontario must be members and accredited by either:

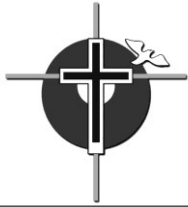
- a) **The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF):** Members' purpose is to serve the visually impaired and blind people from around the world by training and providing Guide Dogs;
- b) **Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI):** ADI is a coalition of not-for-profit organizations that train and place Assistance Dogs.

Please note that on-line accreditation/certification will **not** be recognized.

4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

4.1 GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS AND COMPANION/THERAPY/READING DOGS

4.1.1 For the purpose of this procedure, the term service animal includes guide dogs, service dogs, hearing dogs, autism service dogs. Service animals are considered to be an accommodation that is required to allow a student to access the Ontario Curriculum. Service animals must graduate from a recognized training centre and have supporting documentation that defines their role. A certified service animal is a working animal and there are strict guidelines for access, handling



and interaction with these animals. A certified service animal is allowed full public access in Canada and is trained to perform the skills required to meet the needs of the student with whom it has been partnered.

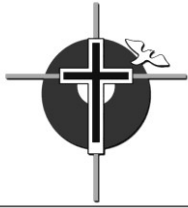
- 4.1.2** Companion dogs or therapy dogs include dogs that provide comfort and friendship to students who may have emotional, self-esteem or social problems or are used for therapeutic purposes. Companion dogs are not considered to be an accommodation as they are not required to allow the student to access the Ontario Curriculum.

4.2 LEGISLATION

- 4.2.1** Ontario Law (Blind Persons Act 2007) requires that a specially trained Guide Dog be allowed to accompany a blind person to all public venues and transportation carriers. The Ontario Human Rights Act extends these rights to persons who are deaf/hard of hearing as well as persons who are disabled.
- 4.2.2** The Ontario Human Rights Act provides a protective provision to ensure the rights of persons who have a "physical or mental disability or related characteristics or circumstances, including reliance on a dog guide or other animal assistance, a wheelchair or any other remedial appliance or device."

4.3 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.3.1** When a school is approached with the request for a service animal to accompany a student, the school must first determine whether the student requires this accommodation.
- 4.3.2** Decisions regarding the admittance procedure and implementation of guide dogs and service animals into the school environment are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All circumstances of a particular case, including the individual needs of the student being assisted by the service animal, and the needs of other students and staff will be considered. Where necessary, the rights and needs of one person may have to be balanced against the rights and needs of another.
- 4.3.3** Plans for entry of a service animal will be developed after extensive consultation. The Principal must consult with the Principal of Special Education, the Superintendent of Special Education and the Superintendent of the school.



4.3.4 If the request is approved, it will be recorded in the IEP. If the request is denied, the family will receive a written response.

4.4 PROCEDURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

4.4.1 To ensure the approval of the service animal, Parents/Guardians should approach the school regarding the needs of their child and the potential use of a service animal.

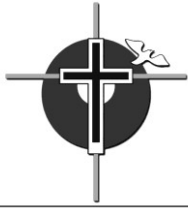
4.4.2 Parents/Guardians are to make a request in writing to the school (Appendix B) and will receive a copy of the information form (Appendix A) outlining the use of guide dogs and service animals in CDSBEO schools.

4.4.3 Parents/Guardians will provide the Principal with the following:

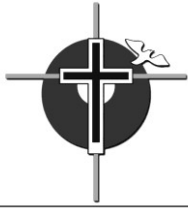
- a) A letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons confirming the diagnosis of exceptionality, as well as a recommendation for the use of a service animal;
- b) A letter from the National Guide dogs Training Centre or equivalent registered organization (such as Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada or the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guide Programs) stating that a Certified Guide dog or service animal has been placed with the child and the date of formal Certified Service Animals Team Recognition; (Please note that on-line accreditation/certifications will not be recognized.)
- c) The service animal's vaccination record (updates to be provided yearly by the family at the beginning of each school year).
- d) Records of re-training and updating, if available;
- e) Any applicable municipal licensing for the service animal;
- f) Information about needs, training, liability insurance, handling, etc.

4.4.4 The Principal will consult with the Superintendent of the school, Superintendent of Special Education and the District Principal of Special Education prior to planning the implementation process.

4.4.5 The Superintendent of Special Education may contact the (accredited or certified) training centre for the service animal to discuss placement in the classroom and training and support if necessary.

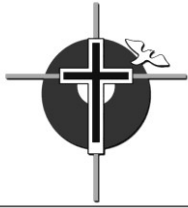


- 4.4.6** The Principal will check ONSIS and other records to ensure that no other student has an anaphylactic allergy to the service animal in question and consult the CDSBEO Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedure if an allergy exists. Accommodations may need to be made with all families involved if a serious allergy exists and the application may be denied.
- 4.4.7** The Principal will schedule a case conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s), a representative from the service animal training school, the classroom teacher(s), the SERT, the special education consultant for the school and the educational assistant(s) who work with the student. The purpose of the case conference is to review the IEP description of the student's needs, any IPRC recommendations and the required accommodations including type of service that the service animal will provide. The service provided by the animal must be consistent with the needs or recommendations of the IEP and/or IPRC process.
- 4.4.8** The Principal will advise the parent that all costs related to the provision of the service animal are the financial responsibility of the parent.
- 4.4.9** Discussions will also include other information such as safety (allergies, staff or students with asthma, fear of dogs etc), cultural sensitivity, the potential impact of the animal on the school community, handling routines and responsibilities, guidelines for staff and students, other student issues, transportation to school etc. A Management Plan for the Care of the Service Animal (Appendix C) will be developed.
- 4.4.10** An information and input session must be held for members of the school community and Catholic School Council to attend. Information regarding the use of guide dogs and service animals in the school will be shared and Catholic School Council and others will be invited to provide feedback or relevant information. Information will be part of the registration package to inform new members of the school community.
- 4.4.11** All school staff members, teaching and non-teaching, must be informed early in the process of the request to have a service animal in the school and their input will be considered as part of the implementation process.
- 4.4.12** Plans for transportation must be considered. Under section 6.0 of the Board's Transportation Policy and Procedure, guide dogs and service animals are allowed access to transportation services; however the Principal will first check



that no riders on the bus have severe allergies, fears or other issues. This may mean checking with other schools or the Consortium Partners regarding their students who ride the same bus route. A clear plan outlining where the guide dog or service animal will be seated, how students on the bus will be trained regarding appropriate interaction with the service animal and how occasional/replacement drivers will be notified should be developed. The Principal will work with the transportation consortium and copies of documentation will be submitted to the Superintendent of Business or designate.

- 4.4.13** Personal care of the animal must be established (who is the handler, who accompanies the animal outside, who picks up after the animal, etc.)
- 4.4.14** A transition plan for introducing the dog to the school environment will be made. Consistent routines must be established, and student and community notification plans put in place. Rules and protocols (such as handling and touching the animal, etc. must be clearly communicated to students) via an assembly or other in-school training.
- 4.4.15** Information will go home to the school community regarding the arrival of the service animal in the school either via social media, newsletter or letter home once a firm plan is developed.
- 4.4.16** A copy of the parent request and the medical diagnosis will be retained in the documentation section of the OSR.
- 4.4.17** Signs must be placed on the main entrance doors of the school to inform visitors of the animal's presence. (Certified Training Agency will often provide these signs).
- 4.4.18** An appropriate fire and emergency exit plan must be developed for the student and service animal.
- 4.4.19** The Administrative Checklist for the implementation of the service animal into the school environment must be completed and placed in the documentation file of the OSR. (Appendix D)
- 4.4.20** A transition plan should be established and implemented pertaining to changes in staffing as they occur or at the start of each school year.



4.5 TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.5.1** Guide dogs and service animals and their handlers received specialized training to work together and consequently the animal should provide minimal risk or impact to others.
- 4.5.2** It is the responsibility of the animal's owner and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) to:
- a) Walk the animal to/from school or facilitate the use of the bus/loading onto the bus;
 - b) Provide the required equipment and animal care items;
 - c) Assume financial responsibility for the animal's training, veterinary care, and other related costs;
 - d) Work cooperatively with school staff to make this accommodation a success and assist the Principal with communicating information to the school community;
 - e) Provide the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion;
 - f) Inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect the students and staff.
- 4.5.3** Many organizations will not place a service animal with a person who does not have the ability to work as the primary caregiver for the animal, with the exception of autism service dogs.
- 4.5.4** In the case where a service animal is placed with a person who is unable, due to age, ability or other factors, to act as the primary caregiver or handler, the animal will be trained to work 'for' an adult(s) for the child. This may include a teacher or an Educational Assistant taking responsibility as a handler or person with primary responsibility for the dog during school hours. Training will be provided by the service organization.

5.0 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix A** - Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting a Service Animal in the School
- 5.2 Appendix B** - Request for Service Animal Involvement with Student
- 5.3 Appendix C** - Management Plan for the Care of the Service Animal
- 5.4 Appendix D** - Checklist for Implementation of a Service Animal into a School
- 5.5 Appendix E** - Sample Parent Letter or Newsletter Insert

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS REQUESTING A SERVICE ANIMAL IN THE SCHOOL

1. The success of the implementation of a service animal into a school setting depends on clear communication, a well-informed school community and careful planning. The information you provide will assist the Principal to make the best possible decisions for your child and other students as well as for the staff, volunteers and visitors in the school. The information you provide will be filed in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR).
2. The use of a service animal 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, it will be reviewed at a case conference, or one will be developed in consultation with you. The Principal will invite you, your child's teacher, a representative from the training centre, the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) in the school, the Special Education Consultant and any other relevant school board staff to the case conference to discuss your child's needs, the accommodations that are already in place for your child, as well as the additional assistance provided by a service animal.
3. The information you provide will help the Principal to implement your request. It is important that you provide information that addresses the safety of the students and staff. For example, the Principal needs to know that the animal has no history of nipping, biting or growling at children or adults, nor exhibits aggressive protective behaviours.
4. The well-being of the animal is also very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed, and your input as a trained handler is valuable. The Principal also needs 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 school grounds, introduction to assemblies/concerts, recess, and informing the staff and students about interacting with the animal will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the animal as possible.
5. The Catholic School Council advises the Principal on matters pertaining to the school community. It is customary to provide an information session for the Catholic School Council and other interested parents. It is our experience that important information shared in this way facilitates understanding and acceptance of new practices at the school. You will be asked to participate in the information session.
6. After all the discussion and planning is in place, the goal will be to implement the plan as soon as possible.

7. Your responsibilities include:

- transporting or walking the animal to and from school, or facilitating the use of bus transportation;
- providing the required equipment and animal care items;
- assuming financial responsibility for the animal's training, veterinary care, and other related costs;
- working co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success;
- assisting the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community;
- providing the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion; and
- informing the Principal of all relevant information that may affect the students and staff.

8. Once the necessary information has been discussed, the Principal will consult with the Superintendent of the school, the Superintendent of Special Education and the District Principal of Special Education prior to the admittance and implementation of the service animal into the school.

9. A series of planning steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the service animal.

REQUEST FOR SERVICE ANIMAL INVOLVEMENT WITH A STUDENT

Name of student: _____ D.O.B. _____

Address: _____

Name(s) of parent(s)/guardians(s): _____

Telephone number(s): _____

- a) I/We request that _____ be allowed to use a service animal at school and at school-related activities.
- b) Service the animal will provide the student with: _____
- c) Length of time the student and animal have worked together? _____
- d) Duration of this requested intervention? _____
- e) Additional information that will assist the Principal (e.g. safety, behaviour, or temperament of the dog issues).
- f) I/We understand that it is our responsibility to
 - transport or walk the animal to and from school, or facilitate the use of bus transportation;
 - provide the required equipment and animal care items;
 - assume financial responsibility for the animal's training, veterinary care, and other related costs;
 - work co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success;
 - assist the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community;
 - provide the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion; and
 - inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect our child, the other students, and/or staff
- g) I/we give permission for this information to be shared with the school community.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date:** _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Signature of Principal: _____ **Date:** _____

Notice of Collection: Personal information on this form is collected pursuant to the Authority of the Education Act R.S.O., 1990, c.E.2 and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O.1990, c.M56 and may be used as necessary for board operations, school programs, education services and student records.

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CARE OF THE SERVICE ANIMAL

Name of student: _____

D.O.B.: _____

O.E.N.: _____ **School year:** _____

Name of animal: _____

School: _____

Person(s) responsible in the school environment: _____

Note: Where possible and feasible, these responsibilities should be handled by the student in the same manner as at home. Care of the animal is also a skill to be taught.

Water needs: (e.g. provision of water bowl, procedures for use, cleaning etc.)

Bladder/Bowel Needs of the animal: (e.g. - frequency, location, disposal etc.)

Other considerations: (e.g. rest periods away from work, hot and winter weather, etc.)

Rest periods away from work: _____

Hot weather: _____

Winter weather: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____

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CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A SERVICE ANIMAL INTO A SCHOOL

Advise parent/guardian and student 18 years and older, making the request, that CDSBEO has a procedure to follow before a decision is made.

Provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with the forms:

Request for Service Animal Involvement With a Student (Appendix B)

Information for Parents / Guardians Requesting a Service Animal In the School (Appendix A)

Inform Superintendent of Education and District Principal of Special Education as well as the Superintendent responsible for the school of the request.

Ensure that parent/guardian submits copies of the following documentation:

- copy of recommendation for service animal by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons
- copy of service animal's registration with a recognized training centre
- copy of current, official vaccination certificate for the animal
- proof the animal is registered in Canada
- copy of training certification of parent(s)/guardian(s)
- proof of municipal license, if applicable

Consider/research implications related to student in the school AND on busses (considering students from other schools) regarding:

- Allergies
- Fear of animals
- Cultural sensitivities and other issues
- Plan for required accommodations

Convene a case conference with the following in attendance:

- Parents/Guardians and/or student over the age of 18
- classroom teachers(s)
- SERT
- Special Education Consultant
- representative from the dog training centre
- Educational Assistant(s) who work with the student.

Review the request with respect to its consistency with the IEP and/or recommendations from the IPRC.

Inform school staff that a request has been made and receive their input.

Inform appropriate bus contact that a request has been made and receive input.

Inform School Council and community at a School Council meeting and receive their input.

B1:13 APPENDIX D (Cont'd)

Meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student 18 years or older, to inform them of the information you have received, and to review the implementation plan, including the fire and emergency exit plans, and Management Plan for the care of the animal.

Advise the Superintendent of Education and the District Principal of Special Education of your actions.

Develop a communication strategy to inform students, staff, community and relevant employee representatives.

Include information in registration packages.

Post signs on the entrance doors, and at any other appropriate places to advise visitors of the dog's presence.

Monitor and review the implementation on a regular basis.

File relevant documentation and correspondence in the documentation file of student's OSR.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER OR NEWSLETTER INSERT

{SCHOOL LETTERHEAD}

DATE

Dear Parents/Guardians: **RE: Service Animal at School**

Beginning on (date) one of the grade () students at our school will attend class with a (Guide, Hearing, Service, Autism Service) animal to support (his/her) special needs.

Successful transition and entry of the animal into the school environment has been planned in accordance with the CDSBEO 'USE OF A SERVICE ANIMAL BY A STUDENT' procedure and with input and consultation from the school and broader community.

The animal has been specially trained and is certified. This is a working animal and will be easily identified as one by the vest it wears. Students will be introduced to the animal at a school assembly or in school training and rules for interaction will be reviewed. Working animals should not be petted or approached without the permission of the animal's handler.

Should you wish further information or would like to speak further about the entry of a service animal into the school setting, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly.

Sincerely, Principal Name
cc: Superintendent