



SECTION:	Student Management and Welfare	APPROVAL DATE:
SUBSECTION:	Student Welfare	January 7, 2008
POLICY NAME:	Service Dogs in Schools	LAST REVISED:
POLICY NUMBER:	R.SMW.G.11	January 7, 2008

1. DEFINITIONS

Service Dog - A service dog is a working animal trained by either the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind or National Service Dogs. A certified service dog is allowed full public access in the province of Ontario and is trained to perform the skills required to meet the needs of the student with whom it has been partnered. These animals provide a number of services to the students who are diagnosed with one of the following disabilities: Physical, Blind or Low Vision, Autism Spectrum Disorder or a seizure disorder. Service dogs provide support to the student with mobility, safety, and independence issues. (See Appendix A for further information)

Dog Handler - A service dog that is trained to assist a child with special needs must be accompanied by an adult dog handler. The adult (a parent or educational assistant) is trained by a staff member of the National Service Dogs (NSD) during the school team training process.

2. LEGISLATION

The Human Rights Code and Ontarians with Disabilities Act describes "disability" as:

- 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, 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 other animal or on a 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, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 ("handicap").

3. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Provide a letter to the school requesting permission for a service dog and outlining the benefits of having a service dog attend school with their child.
- 3.2 Provide a letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, or from a member of the College of Psychologists confirming the diagnosis of a recognized special need, including a recommendation for the use of a service dog.

- 3.3 Provide a Certificate of Training for the service dog from the National Service Dogs Training Centre, or from another certified training centre.
- 3.4 Pay for all financial implications regarding the use and care of the service dog.
- 3.5 Annually, provide the school with proof of up-to-date vaccinations, a municipal service dog license, and confirmation that the service dog is in good health.
- 3.6 Arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the service dog while at school.

4. PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Ensure that the use of a service dog is consistent with the needs or recommendations of the IPRC or the IEP process.
- 4.2 Consult with the appropriate Superintendent of Education, and the Superintendent of Program prior to arranging a case conference.
- 4.3 Arrange a case conference with parents/guardians, classroom teacher(s), appropriate Special Education staff, a representative from National Service Dogs, or other service provider, the student when appropriate, a Speech and Language Pathologist if necessary, the Co-ordinator of Special Education and any other individual as deemed necessary by the principal, to discuss and develop a plan to determine:
 - 4.3.1 the purpose and function of the service dog;
 - 4.3.2 who will accompany and handle the service dog;
 - 4.3.3 personal care and physical needs of the service dog;
 - a) the safest and most environmentally sound place for the service dog to relieve itself,
 - b) removal and disposal of animal waste,
 - c) provision of a suitable accessible container for waste and
 - d) considerations for seasonal changes, and inclement weather;
 - 4.3.4 classroom considerations such as seating arrangements;
 - 4.3.5 any necessary changes in routine and procedures, and program changes;
 - 4.3.6 arrangements for the service dog to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site;
 - 4.3.7 a transition plan for the service dog and the student;
 - 4.3.8 a timetable for the introduction of the service dog to the school, and class and for the training of the student's school team (Principal, Teacher(s), Education Assistant(s), etc)
 - 4.3.9 rules of conduct around the service dog for students, staff, and the public, and disseminating and regulating such rules.
- 4.4 Forward the attached letters home to inform: (Appendix B)
 - 4.4.1 the school community of the arrival of the working service dog, its purpose, rules and regulations regarding the existence of the service dog at the school;
 - 4.4.2 the students in any of the classes where the service dog will be present to elicit information concerning allergies, extreme phobias, or other considerations from the students' parents/guardians, and
 - 4.4.3 the students who will be sharing transportation where the service dog will be present including students from another school or school board.
- 4.5 Retain all correspondence regarding the service dog in the student's Ontario School Record (OSR) for a period of one year, or until superseded.
- 4.6 Inform all staff including teachers, educational assistants, custodians, all support staff, volunteers, school council, union representatives, and health and safety representatives of the presence of service dogs.
- 4.7 Consult with the Special Education Co-ordinator and senior Administration to resolve any specific concerns or issues raised regarding the presence of a service dog.
- 4.8 Arrange for demonstrations from National Service Dogs or another certified service dog organization for the student body, staff, and the community as required to provide education and awareness of service dogs in schools.

- 4.9 Contact the Student Transportation Department regarding any transportation requirements.
- 4.10 Revise emergency procedures as required to include the service dog, such as evacuations, and notification to the Fire Department regarding the existence of the service dog.
- 4.11 Post signs on each entry door of the school to advise visitors of the presence of a working service dog.
- 4.12 Develop an alternative dog handler for instances when the dog handler is absent.

5. TRANSPORTATION

The following guidelines are suggested for safe transit of a service dog:

- 5.1 If needed, transportation must be provided as specified under the Human Rights Code.
- 5.2 The transport provider will be given proof that the service dog is licensed, and trained as a service dog.
- 5.3 The transport provider will ensure that there is documentation about the service dog with the route information for all drivers involved.
- 5.4 Drivers and passengers should have some basic training concerning conduct with the service dog.
- 5.5 En route, the service dog should be located in a seating compartment, and/or on the floor away from the aisle on a bus.
- 5.6 The Wellington Catholic District School Board may determine the need for another person to accompany the student and service dog while using transportation.
- 5.7. The transportation department must ensure that any student(s) from other schools/school boards traveling with a service dog be advised of the presence of the service dog.