

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Effective Date: August 1, 2018

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 It is the policy of the Near North District School Board in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and facilitates the development of independence.
- (a) The School Board utilizes a variety of placements, differentiated programming, and evidence-based interventions and strategies to provide meaningful access to education for students who have disability-related needs that impact their learning.
 - (b) The School Board does not provide Guide Dogs, Service Dogs or Service Animals to students.
 - (c) ~~1.1.1 The School Board encourages any family considering the purchase of a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal to meet with the school principal or superintendent before making a commitment.~~
- 1.2 This Administrative Procedure identifies the individualized process to be followed when a parent or adult student applies to the School Board to have a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal on the premises of a school or at a school-related event.
- 1.3 Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and Ontario Regulation 474/00 *Access to School Premises*, the Near North District School Board requires each school to have a process for visitors.
- 1.4 Any determination of whether a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal is an appropriate accommodation for a student while receiving education services is a decision of the School Board. A regulated health professional cannot unilaterally prescribe that a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal be a specific accommodation while the student is receiving education services at school.
- 1.5 When an adult student or parent seeks to have their ail aropn567pct

with the standards by which Guide, Hearing and Service Dogs are trained by its member organizations;

or

A Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that attests to compliance with the Meghan Search and Rescue Standard in Support of Accessibility: Persons with a Disability Teamed with Service Dogs standard for training (MSAR).

Adult student shall be defined to mean a student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed him/her/themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent

Disability means,

- (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 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 o lkn

dog or other domesticated animal that may legally reside in an urban, residential

disability-related needs, but provides emotional support (and/or companionship, calming influence) for a student with a disability-related mental health and/or psychological need and/or comfort during a difficult period.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principals

4.1 School principals are responsible for the management of the school premises, the staff providing educational programs and the safety of all students.

- (a) A school principal has authority to exclude any animal, including Guide Dogs / Service Dogs and Service Animals, from entry onto school premises and school building(s), as an accommodation for a student, provided that the student is offered appropriate alternative accommodation to meet the

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(c) or harness when the dog is not in its crate.

(d)

- 5.2 principal, a review will take place by the Board team supporting the student and a meeting shall be scheduled to review the accommodation request. Every effort will be made to review the documentation and schedule a meeting in a reasonable timeframe.
- 5.3 A meeting with the Board team supporting the student, the parent/adult student and student (as appropriate), the health practitioner recommending the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal for the student, the trainer of the Guide Dog

- (ii) officer health and safety issues applicable to different areas/activities in the school;
- (d) develop emergency procedures, to include a fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan;
- (e) notice to the community via a letter to parents; posting on the website / social media; presentation by the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog during a school council meeting or association supporting the use of the doors; communication to potential occasional staff accepting a position where

Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the classroom immediately and the pick up the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the school. Alternative options for accommodation will be discussed.

- (c) -related needs, which had supported the original approval or a change to the needs of students/staff such that there is a new competing right;
- (d) the Board in its discretion determines that the accommodation is not effective for the demonstrated disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living.

8. RECORDS

8.1 A copy of the application and confirmation of approval, as well as any other relevant documents supporting the accommodation shall be retained in the Ontario Student Record.

8.2 The School Board shall be required to collect, use and disclose the personal information of the student in order to fulfill the accommodation process. Notice of the collection, use and disclosure must be provided to the parent/adult student. Efforts should be made to limit the personal information to only that which is necessary.

8.3 The Board is required pursuant to PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals to collect information regarding the implementation of the policy and procedure regarding Guide Dogs and Service Animals, including.

- (a) Total number of requests for students to be accompanied by Guide Dog / Service Dogs / Service Animals;
 - (i) Whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students;
 - (ii)
 - (iii) Whether the student is the Handler;
- (b) The number of requests approved and denied;
 - (i) If denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and/or services provided to the student to support their access to the Ontario Curriculum;
 - (ii) Species of Service Animals requested

cafeterias, or areas where students are consuming food, are not disruptive and do not eat student food.

No animals are allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled such as the kitchen of the school cafeteria or the hospitality classroom.

10. SOURCES

Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19

Education Act, RSO 1990, c.E2, s. 170(1), s.265(1); O. Reg. 298, s.11

PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals

J.F. v. Waterloo Catholic District School Board, 2017 HRTO 1121 (CanLII)

Accessibility for Ontarions with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c.11

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Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990, c.H7

11. RELATED FORMS & LETTERS

Forms

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Appendix A

Application for Guide Dog/ Service Dog

This form is to be submitted to the School Principal

School _____
Grade _____
Student Name _____
Address _____
Home/Cell Telephone Number _____

Disability-Related Needs to be Accommodated by Guide Dog/ Service Dog

Please attach a copy of the assessment report provided by a registered pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, optometrist or audiologist containing the student's diagnosis and describing in detail the disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living to be accommodated and how the Guide Dog/ Service Dog will provide the accommodation in a school setting.

Municipal License

Please attached a copy of the municipal license, not more than 12 months old. This confirmation is to be updated annually.

Veterinary Certificate

Please attach a certificate from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario (confirmation to be updated annually) attesting to:

- the breed of dog, age of dog and that the dog is an adult;
- the dog does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans;
- the dog has received all required vaccinations;
- the dog is in good health to assist the student

Certificate of Training

Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the Guide Dog/ Service Dog's training by a training organization accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR standard for training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animal's Administrative Guideline. A letter confirming that the trainer will agree to attend a School Council Meeting to provide a presentation and respond to questions from the school community.

Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the student Handler's training by an accredited training organization by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR standard for training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animal's Administrative Guideline.

Student NOT the Handler

Where the student is not the Handler, please describe below what, if any, responsibilities the student is capable of performing independently and the responsibility you wish to be supported by a school staff member.

Insurance

Pursuant to *Dog Owners' Liability Act*, RSO 1990, c. D16, the owner of a dog is responsible for any injury or death caused by the dog. Please attach a certificate of home or contents insurance. Where the dog is owned by a registered charity, please provide a letter from the registered charity confirming their ownership of the dog.

Personal information of the student and parent/guardian is being collected by the Near North District School Board in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to be used to provide education services pursuant to the *Education Act* s.170(1)7 and PPM 163 and the *Human Rights Code*, s.1.

Our mission is to educate learners to their fullest potential in preparation for life-long learning

Appendix D

Sample Letter to Employees & School Permit Holders

Date

To Employees and Permit Holders

This letter is to advise that the school is in the process of planning for a

Appendix D

Sample Letter to the School Community

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog/ Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Rights Code*.

The Guide Dog/ Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

An information session has been scheduled to take place following the school council meeting on [insert date]. A trainer from [insert] will be present to answer any questions that you might have about the training of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs.

An orientation session will be provided for all students, to explain the role of Guide Dogs/ Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog/ Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in

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Appendix D

Sample Letter to the Parents of Students in Class(es)

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians

On [date] the school forwarded a letter home to all parents advising that a Guide Dog/ Service Dog would be introduced to our school community.

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog/ Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in your child's class/ [insert course] in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code* beginning [insert date].

The Guide Dog/ Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

Your child has participated in an orientation session to explain the role of Guide Dogs/ Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog/ Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or me. Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal



Appendix D

Sample Decision Letter Approving Guide Dog/ Service Dog/ Service Animal

Date

Dear Parent/ Adult Student

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child/ you attend school with a Guide Dog/ Service Dog to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs/ acts of daily living.

I wish to confirm approval of your request.

As we have discussed, your/your child's ability to perform the responsibilities of a Handler, and assessment of benchmarks established for evaluating the effectiveness of the Guide Dog/ Service Dog/ Service Animal in meeting your /your child's accommodation needs will take place on a regular basis.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the Guide Dog/ Service Dog/ Service Animal is groomed, has a vest or harness and crate [if necessary), as well as a water bowl. All costs associated will be your responsibility.

If concerns arise regarding the integration of the Guide Dog/ Service Dog into the school community and your/your child's class(es), a meeting will be scheduled to review how the issues might be resolved.

In the event that the Guide Dog/ Service Dog engages in behaviour that is, distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping, you/your child/the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog/Service Dog from the classroom immediately and you will be required to arrange for the Guide Dog/ Service Dog to be removed from the school. In such a case, alternative options for accommodation will be reviewed.

Sincerely,

Principal

