

Administrative Procedure 256 - Service Dog

Background

Service Dogs are trained to assist children and adults who have a physical or developmental disability with their daily living activities. The use of service dogs is an intervention strategy that is recognized as an aid to children with special needs. Use of a service dog by a student with a disability will be allowed in school or on Division property when it has been determined that the student's disability requires such use for the student to have equal access to the services, programs or activities offered by the school, and when the Division's requirements have been met to the satisfaction of the Division.

Procedures

Once the Division has been notified, these administrative procedures will be put into place prior to the admittance of a service dog to the school.

1. Parent Responsibilities

- 1.1. Provide a letter to the Division requesting permission for a service dog and outlining the benefits of having a service dog attend school with their child.
- 1.2. Provide a letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons confirming the diagnosis of a recognized special need, including a recommendation for the use of a service dog.
- 1.3. Provide a Certificate of Training for the service Dog from the National Service Dogs Training Centre or from another certified training centre.
- 1.4. Pay for all financial implications incurred by the Division and/or school regarding the use and care of the service dog. (e.g., appropriate training for Division staff members.)
- 1.5. Annually, provide the Division with proof of a municipal dog license and proof of up to date vaccinations provided by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine confirming that the service dog is in good health.
- 1.6. Arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the service dog, including a once a day bio-break procedure and providing an appropriate kennel and water bowl.
- 1.7. Provide evidence that the employee or student can maintain appropriate care and control of the service dog while it is on school property.

2. Division/School Responsibilities

- 2.1. Ensure that the use of a service dog is consistent with the needs or recommendations of the student's Individual Program Plan (IPP).

- 2.2. Arrange a case conference with parents, classroom teachers(s), appropriate special education staff, a representative from National Service Dogs or other service provider, the student when appropriate, and other consultants if necessary, and the Director of Inclusive Services to discuss and develop a plan to determine:
 - 2.2.1. The purpose and function of the service dog;
 - 2.2.2. Who will accompany and handle the service dog outside;
 - 2.2.3. Personal care and physical needs of the service dog;
 - 2.2.3.1. The safest and most environmentally sound place for the service dog to relieve itself
 - 2.2.3.2. Removal and disposal of animal waste,
 - 2.2.3.3. Provision of a suitable container for waste,
 - 2.2.3.4. Considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather;
 - 2.2.4. Classroom considerations such as seating arrangements;
 - 2.2.5. Any necessary changes in routine and procedures and program changes;
 - 2.2.6. Arrangement for the service dog to visit the school and bus without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site; prior to commencement of services;
 - 2.2.7. A transition plan for the service dog and the student;
 - 2.2.8. 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 sDirector of Inclusive Servicesassistant(s), etc);
 - 2.2.9. Rules of conduct around the service dog for students, staff and the public and
 - 2.2.10. Disseminating and regulating such rules.
- 2.3. It shall be the responsibility of the individual with the disability to insure the proper care and supervision of a service dog. The Division shall not be responsible for the training, feeding, grooming or care of any service dog permitted to attend school or ride on school buses under this Administrative Procedure. The Division must approve any person who is authorized to assist in the care and supervision of the service dog while on school property.
- 2.4. Forward the following letters home to inform:
 - 2.4.1. 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;
 - 2.4.2. The students in any of the classes where the service dog will be present to elicit information concerning allergies, extreme phobias, or religious considerations from the student's parents, and
 - 2.4.3. The students who will be sharing transportation where the service dog will be present, including students from another school or school authority.
 - 2.4.4. Retain all letters regarding the service dog in the student's confidential file for a period of one year.
- 2.5. Inform all staff, including teachers, educational assistants, custodians, all support staff, volunteers, and School Council and health and safety representatives, of the presence of service dogs.
- 2.6. Liaise with the Director of Inclusive Services and the Principal to resolve any specific concerns or issues raised regarding the presence of a service dog.

- 2.7. 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.
 - 2.8. Contact the Director of Transportation Services regarding any transportation requirements.
 - 2.9. 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.
 - 2.10. Develop an alternative dog handler for instances when the primary dog handler is absent.
3. Limiting, Removing or Excluding Service Dogs from School

The Division may limit, remove or exclude from school facilities or property any service dog for reasons it deems appropriate. Examples of such include the following:

- 3.1. The service dog poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee or student or others at school, causes a significant disruption of school activities or otherwise jeopardizes the safe operation of the school or a school event. Examples of such include, but are not limited to:
 - 3.1.1. The service dog does not urinate or defecate in appropriate/designated locations.
 - 3.1.2. The service dog solicits attention, visits or annoys any member of the student body or school personnel.
 - 3.1.3. The service dog vocalizes unnecessarily, (i.e., barking, growling or whining).
 - 3.1.4. The service dog shows aggression towards people or other animals.
 - 3.1.5. The service dog solicits or steals food or other items from the student body or school personnel.
 - 3.1.6. The service dog is unable to perform reliably the service for which it has been approved.
 - 3.1.7. The service dog is not under the full control of the student with the disability or the designated employee.
 - 3.1.8. The service dog is a public health threat as a result of being infested with parasites or having a communicable disease of the skin, mouth or eyes.
 - 3.1.9. The service dog is unclean and unsanitary.
 - 3.1.10. The service dog's presence significantly impairs the learning of students.
 - 3.1.11. The service dog's presence fundamentally alters the nature of any school program.
 - 3.1.12. The student or the student's parents fail to provide or maintain current documentation required by this Administrative Procedure.
 - 3.1.13. The student, or the student's parents fail to abide by any additional conditions of the terms of an individual program plan regarding their service dog.

4. Restrictions and Off-Limits for Service Dogs:

The Division imposes some restrictions on service dogs for safety reasons. Service dogs may be excluded or have limited access to certain areas of school facilities or certain programs for safety reasons. Areas or programs which may be considered off-limits for service dogs include, but are not limited to:

- 4.1. Laboratories, mechanical rooms, custodial closets, food preparation areas, areas where protective clothing is necessary, areas which have exposed sharp metal cutting or other sharp objects which may pose a threat to the service dog's safety, areas with high levels of dust, and areas where there is moving machinery.
- 4.2. The determination to deny or limit the access of a service dog to specific programs or areas of that school facility will be on a case-by-case basis.

5. Conflicting Disabilities:

- 5.1. Employees, students/parents of a student with medical issues that are impacted by animals (such as respiratory diseases) are to contact the Principal if they have a concern about exposure to a service dog.
 - 5.1.1. The employee, student/parents of a student will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the disability and the need for an accommodation.
 - 5.1.2. The Principal will facilitate a process to resolve the conflict that considers the conflicting needs/accommodations of all persons involved.

6. Notice of Appeal

- 6.1. Any student/parent of a student with a service dog who is aggrieved by the Principal's decision to remove, limit or exclude a service dog may appeal that decision to the Superintendent. That appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.

Reference: Section 3, 11, 31, 32, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 204, 222, 225 Education Act
Alberta Human Rights Act
Alberta Service Dogs Act
Blind Persons' Rights Act
Alberta Service Dogs Qualifications Regulation 197/2008
Calgary Board of Education Administrative Regulation: Service Dogs

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