

 <p style="text-align: center;"> <small>DIVISION SCOLAIRE</small> LOUIS RIEL <small>SCHOOL DIVISION</small> </p>	<p>Service and Non-Service Animals in Schools</p>
<p>ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOL June 4, 2019</p>	<p>Supporting Policy IMG</p>

This protocol provides direction to school administrators regarding parent/guardian or employee requests for the use of service and non-service animals, in LRSD schools.

Definitions:

Non-Service Animals:

Companion Animals is an emerging support for students. These animals may be present to assist a child in feeling comfortable or less anxious in the school environment. A companion animal is not necessarily professionally trained. A companion animal does not have designated responsibilities and provides companionship only. Companion animals and therapy animals are not considered service animals and are not guaranteed access to public spaces.

Therapy Animals are trained to provide affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, and schools. Therapy animals have a trained handler and must be under the direction of an adult who is authorized to be in the setting. See [sample forms](#) if bringing a therapy animal into your school.

Service Animals:

A **Service/Assistance animal** is a recognized working animal that has been trained to assist children and adults who have a physical or developmental disability with their daily living activities. The parent and school have to follow strict guidelines that apply to their access, handling, and interaction. The use of service animals is an intervention strategy that is recognized as an aid to students with exceptional needs.

Guide Dogs for the Blind & Visually Impaired focus on increased independent travel for the individual. The guide dog is trained for safe street crossings, using public transportation, and exposure to all environments. Users of guide dogs will have previous mobility training in the school system or adult agencies for blind and visually impaired. The handler for a Guide Dog is the individual who requires the support. The individual goes through intensive training with a trained dog. Guide Dogs are usually not provided for children and youth.

The term "service animals" includes animals that assist those with a physical disability, and include pulling, bracing, retrieving, and hearing dogs. Service animals may also be trained to prevent children from leaving the classroom unsupervised, running into traffic, etc.

I. Roles and Responsibilities

When Parents/Guardians approach the School Principal requesting the use of a service animal for their child, the Principal must check to determine if the request is for a service animal or a companion animal.

Decisions regarding the use of service animals by students in the school environment are made on a case-by-case basis. All circumstances of a request, including the individual needs of the student being assisted by the animal and the needs of other students and staff, will be considered. Where necessary in the decision-making process, the rights and needs of one person may have to be balanced against the rights and needs of another.

Entry of service animals is decided after consultation and in accordance with the procedures listed below. The request will be reviewed by the Principal with the Director of Student Services, and in consultation with Superintendent (or designate) as necessary.

Parent's Responsibilities

- To initiate the process of having a service animal assist a student in school, speak with the Principal. The Principal will provide a copy of the [Information for Parents Requesting a Service Animal in a School Letter](#) to parents and request parents/guardians to fill out a [Request for a Service Animal Form](#), including all the attachments stated within the form.

Principal's Responsibilities

1. Consult with the Director of Student Services and/or the Superintendent (or designate) prior to planning the school entry process to ensure that the request is consistent with the requirements for a Service Animal or Guide Dog.
2. Host chair a meeting with the parents, a representative from the animal training facility (optional), the classroom teacher(s), the student services teacher, the Student Services Coordinator, and the support staff who work with the student. The purpose of the meeting is to review the student's Student Specific Plan or IEP and required accommodations including the type of service the service animal will provide. The services provided by the service animal should be, or become, part of the goals of the IEP. Discussions will include relevant information such as:
 - health and safety considerations (including severe allergies and staff or students with asthma),
 - the potential impact of the involvement of the service animal on the school community,
 - animal care requirements,
 - handling routines and responsibilities,
 - guidelines for staff and students, other student issues,
 - transportation to and from school,
 - the role of and communication with parents,
 - the designation of a staff who will be the handler and an alternate handler of animal in the school.
3. Please refer to and complete the [Management Plan for the Care of a Service Animal form](#).
4. Upon approval from the Superintendent of schools (or designate) inform all school staff members (i.e. teaching staff, educational support staff, secretarial staff, custodial staff, etc.) of the service animal coming into the school.

- An information session for interested school community members may be held to inform them, and to receive feedback or relevant information. The Principal may invite the parents of the student requiring the service animal to participate in the information session.
 - Prior to any information session, information should be shared with parents of the student requiring the use of a service animal. See [Sample Letter to School Community](#) and [Sample Letter to Families with Children in the Classroom/on the School Bus](#)
5. School division administration may inform relevant employee groups and/or the Workplace Safety & Health Committee that a service animal will be in the school.
 6. Contact the school division Transportation Department (if applicable) regarding transportation. A personalized transportation plan should be developed for the IEP.
 7. Place signs on entrance doors to inform school visitors of the possible presence of a service animal.
 8. Review the school Emergency Response Plan. Notify the local fire department of the existence of a service animal.
 9. Arrange for training of staff by the training facility which would include demonstrations from on the rules of conduct around service animals.
 10. Monitor the entry of the service animal regularly and review on an annual basis.

2. Exclusions

An animal may be excluded from access to the premises only where:

- exclusion is required by a statute.
- the service animal is of a breed that is prohibited by law or municipal bylaw e.g., Pit Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers
- there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of the service animal. Consideration should be given to options available prior to exclusion of the animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. The situation should be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk should be considered

Required or References Information

- [Parents Requesting a Service Animal in a School Letter](#)
- [Request for a Service Animal Form](#)
- [Management Plan for the Care of a Service Animal form](#)
- [Sample Letter to School Community](#)
- [Sample Letter to Families with Children in the Classroom/on the School Bus](#)
- [Pet Therapy Consent Agreement](#)
- [Pet Program Sample Information](#)
- [Therapy Animal in School – Sample Parent Letter](#)