

PROCEDURES FOR SERVICE ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS

SERVICE ANIMAL INFORMATION

- A service animal is defined as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” 28 C.F.R. § 35.163. Dogs and miniature horses are the only species of animal that qualify as a “service animal” under the amended regulations.
- The regulations also contain examples of activities that do not qualify as the work of a service animal, including crime deterrence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship.
- “Emotional support” or therapy animals are not “service animals”.

INITIAL REQUEST FOR A SERVICE ANIMAL

IEP/504 Team-The IEP/504 team will meet with the parents to discuss the request for a service animal and seek answers to the questions below. The information will be submitted to the Director of Special Education.

1. Schedule a meeting with the parents and IEP/504 team (if applicable) to evaluate the request.
 - a. Determine whether the student is disabled under the ADA.
 - b. Determine what tasks the animal can perform.
 - c. Determine if the tasks the animal performs are for the benefit of the student.
 - d. Determine if the student would be denied the benefits of the school district’s services or programs if the service animal is excluded from school.
2. A school district is not required to either control or clean up after a service animal.
 - a. Is the student able to control the animal without assistance?
 - b. Is the service animal house broken? What clean up may be required if any? How will this be accomplished?
3. Is the service animal licensed with the city, county or township? Are shots up to date for the service animal?

APPROVAL OR DENIAL OF REQUEST FOR SERVICE ANIMAL

The Director of Special Education will schedule a meeting with the building administrator to review the information from the IEP/504 team and approve or deny the service animal request. If approved, the team (Director of Special Education, Principal, Director of Buildings and Grounds, and School Nurse) will develop the plan. The plan must include the notifications below and may include reasons for removing the service animal as listed below.

To respond to possible future complaints from staff/students, the team will review the Indoor Air Quality Management Plan (occupant health and comfort questionnaire).

REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS

1. Inform students and staff of the service animal's role at school. Develop rules regarding petting or feeding the service animal and supervision of the animal.
2. If a student or employee notifies the school district that he or she is allergic to a service animal or fearful of the service animal, convene a meeting to balance the rights of individuals involved.

REMOVING A SERVICE ANIMAL

1. A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove the service animal from the premises unless:
 - a. The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it; or
 - b. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
 - c. Generally speaking, a school district should be wary of excluding a service animal for an isolated incident of misbehavior or an isolated accident.