

SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Section	SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS	546
---------	----------------------	-----

Management Guideline	SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS PROCEDURE
----------------------	--------------------------------------

Applicable Policy	SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS
-------------------	----------------------------

Board Approved: June 23, 2020

Reviewed: June 2, 2020

Review By: December 2023

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. It is the policy of Superior-Greenstone 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 services in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and facilitates the development of independence.
- 1.2. This Management Guideline or Procedure identifies the individualized process to be followed when a Parent or Adult Student applies to the SGDSB to have a Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal accompany the student while the student is attending school or a school-related event.
- 1.3. 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 SGDSB. 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.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Service animals have traditionally been trained dogs that assist individuals with various tasks of daily living (Guide Dog, Hearing and Signal Dogs, Mobility Assistance Dogs, Seizure Response Dogs).
- 2.2. In most circumstances, a Guide Dog will be a trained dog provided to support the orientation and mobility needs of a student Handler who has blindness/low vision, and the Guide Dog will provide the student Handler with greater independence, dignity and opportunity for integration.
- 2.3. The term Service Animal is used in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, to describe an animal that assists an individual with a disability to be able to access goods and services available to the public. A school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to a student's use of a Service Dog/Service Animal when accessing education services in school buildings.
 - a) Pursuant to the *Code* it is possible that a Service Animal might include different species that provide a therapeutic function (horses), emotional support, sensory function, companionship and/or comfort.
 - b) The determination of whether the animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate a demonstrated disability-related learning

need and/or act of daily living necessary while at school and school related activity, is a decision of SGDSB. Such a decision will consider that animals, other than dogs, are not trained by an Accredited Training Organization and may pose a risk to the safety of students and staff and/or may be disruptive to the learning environment.

3. **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this Management Guideline/Procedure and Policy 546 the following definitions apply:

Accredited Training Organization is a Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that is accredited by:

International Guide Dog Federation (“IGDF”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide Dogs for the blind/low vision are trained by its member organizations; or

Assistance Dogs International (“ADI”): which develops and ensures compliance 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:

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 coordination, 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,

a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

a mental disorder, or

an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Guide Dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

Handler

Parent shall be defined to mean a custodial parent of the student or a guardian pursuant to the *Education Act*.

Service Dog means a dog, which has been certified after successfully completing a training program provided by an Accredited Training Organization.

Service Animal for the purpose of this Management Guideline/Procedure, includes a therapy dog, companion animal, comfort animal and emotional support animal, and includes a dog or other domesticated animal that may legally reside in an urban, residential home, that is not highly trained to perform particular tasks to assist with a student's disability-

- ii) such behaviour is grounds to prohibit the Guide Dog/Service Dog's attendance on school property and in the school building;
- d) needs to have control of its biological functions so as not to soil the inside of buildings, and
- e) needs to demonstrate continuous appropriate behaviour with its Handler and others in the school environment to remain eligible for entry in school buildings or school-related events.

5. *Assessment of the Accommodation Request*

- 5.1. Once the application and all necessary documentation is received by the school principal, a review will take place by the SGDSB team supporting the student and a meeting shall be scheduled to review the accom(ud)1

- h) whether the student's attendance with a Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal might require an increase in the level of staff support provided to the student;
- i) whether training will be required for staff and/or the student;
- j) the impact of the accommodation on the learning environment for the student,

b) organize an orientation

7.2. Approval may be revoked at any time by the principal if:

- a) there are concerns for the health and safety of students, staff or the Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal;
- b) there is behaviour that is disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping. In the event, that this behaviour occurs the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal from the classroom immediately and the student's Parent will be called to pick up the Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal from the school. Alternative options for accommodation will be discussed;
- c) there has been a change to the student's circumstances or disability-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; or
- d) the SGDSB in its discretion determines that the accommodation is not

SGDSB will report to the Ministry of Education, upon request, regarding activities related to the Policy and data collected. The data will inform policy review at the SGDSB.

9. Food Areas

Regulation 493/17, of Ontario's *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, allows Guide Dogs/Service Dogs and Service Animals in areas where food is served, sold, and offered for sale.

Steps should be taken to ensure that Guide Dogs/Service Dogs and Service Animals in school cafeterias, or areas where students are consuming food, are not disruptive and do not eat student food.

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

10. Related Forms and Letters

Forms

Appendix A Application Request for Guide Dog/Service Dog

Appendix B Application Request for Service Animal

Appendix C Principal's Checklist for Guide Dog/Service Dog

Letters

Appendix D



Appendix A to Service Animals in Schools
Managem2t.c

Insurance

Pursuant to

RSO 1990, c.D16, the owner of a dog is responsible for



Appendix B to Service Animals in Schools Management Guideline

Application for Service Animal

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 Service Animal

Please attached a copy of the assessment report from a registered pediatrician, psychologist or psychiatrist, containing the student's disability-related needs and describing in detail the disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living to be accommodated and how the service animal will provide accommodation in a school setting.

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

Information regarding Animal

Describe in detail the tasks or services performed by the animal.
Identify the oral commands or visual signs to which the animal responds.
Attestation will be required confirming that the animal does not engage in disruptive behaviour, does not exhibit aggression.
Identify whether the animal will be on a leash/harness or in a crate.
Describe the biological needs of the animal.

Student

Can the student independently manage the animal?
Describe in detail where, when and how the student currently utilizes the animal's services in public spaces for accommodation purposes.
Please describe below what, if any, responsibilities the student is capable of performing independently.
Please describe below the responsibilities you wish to have assumed by a school staff member.

Insurance

A parent must provide an insurance certificate identifying SGDSB as an insured party in the event that the animal causes damage to the school or its contents, or causes injury or death to any person accessing the school building or the school grounds. A minimum of two million dollars of coverage will be required.

Sample Letter to Employees and School Permit Holders

Date

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 providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a guide dog / service dog in our school including health and safety concerns such as allergies.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

Appendix D to Service Animals in Schools

Sample Letter 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.