

## Administrative Procedure 255 – Appendix A

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### DOGS IN SCHOOLS – GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES

#### Background

Live animals in schools should provide a direct educationally or culturally valuable experience for students. As well, many researchers have noted the benefits that animals have in various areas of society, such as hospitals, nursing homes, prisons and schools.

#### Procedures

1. Dogs in the classroom
  - 1.1 It is recognized that, at times, dogs are brought to schools to reduce stress / anxiety, foster interpersonal connections and promote the overall social-emotional well-being of students.
  - 1.2 Employees that bring dogs to school to provide service and comfort to students must provide documentation that the dog has been certified as a therapy dog. Such certification is offered through various organizations in Canada.
  - 1.3 As well, regular veterinarian care, including up to date vaccinations and deworming to ensure the dog is disease and parasite free is required.
2. Use of Service Dogs in School
  - 2.1 Service Dogs globally refers to a specifically trained dog used to undertake more than one task to mitigate a student's disabilities and has obtained certification under the *Guide Dog and Service Dog Act*.
  - 2.2 Use of a service animal by a qualified student with a disability will be allowed in school when it is determined that the student's disability requires such use in order to have equal access to the instructional program, school services and / or school activities.
  - 2.3 The parent / guardian of a student who believes the student needs to bring a service animal to school, must submit a written request to the school principal. The school principal, in consultation with the Director of Instruction – Student Services, will determine whether or not to permit the service animal in school.
  - 2.4 Before a service animal shall be permitted in school or on school property, the student's parent must provide:
    - 2.4.1 Diagnostic letter from Pediatrician, Psychiatrist or Specialist;

- 2.4.2 A description of the function(s) the service animal is expected to perform in assisting the person with a disability;
  - 2.4.3 Documentation of liability insurance;
  - 2.4.4 A copy of the animal's current certificate identifying it as a medical therapy animal, guide dog and municipal dog tag and / or;
  - 2.4.5 Certification of the service animal's training by a recognized agency or organization and / or demonstration of training;
  - 2.4.6 As well, regular veterinarian care, including up to date vaccinations and deworming to ensure the dog is disease and parasite free is required;
  - 2.4.7 Evidence that the student or employee can appropriately supervise, care for and control the animal at school, or, depending upon the circumstances involved, that there is a plan for some other person (e.g. a handler), other than school staff, to be present to care for and control the animal; and
  - 2.4.8 All of the above must be renewed each September for the service animal to be allowed back in the school.
3. Parents or animal handlers who will be present in school for the purpose of assisting a student with his / her service animal will be required to submit to a criminal background check. In addition, parents and handlers must comply with all standards of conduct that apply to school employees and volunteers.
4. The school principal may impose additional conditions on the presence of a service animal, depending upon the circumstances. The building principal may remove or exclude a service animal from the school or school property if:
- 4.1 The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
  - 4.2 The animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the instruction program, school activities or student learning;
  - 4.3 The presence of the animal would require a fundamental alteration of any school program;
  - 4.4 The student or employee is unable to fully control the animal; and
  - 4.5 The student or employee fails to appropriately care for the animal, including feeding, exercising, taking outside for performance of excretory functions and cleaning up.

Reference: Sections 8, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85, 177 School Act

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Revised: