

Instruction

Service Animals in the School District

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the use of service animals in South Eastern Special Education, including school buildings, vehicles and other property.

II. Policy

South Eastern Special Education will comply with all state and federal laws, regulations and rules regarding the use of service animals by disabled staff or students under appropriate circumstances.

III. Definition of a Service Animal

This policy applies to any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. Service animals do not include wild animals, farm animals, and rodents and animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, or to promote emotional well-being.

IV. Procedures and Requirements

- A. Staff members or parents must submit a request for the use of a service animal to the Director or designee. Such request must identify and describe the need for the service animal as it relates to the staff member or student's disability and describe the manner in which the service animal will meet the individual's particular need(s) and provide a letter from their physician who is the health care provider regarding the need for a service animal.
- B. Requests for the use of service animals on School District property must, whenever possible, be made no less than nine (9) weeks prior to the proposed use of the service animal. Under no circumstances may a service animal be on School District property without prior approval by the Director or designee.
- C. As part of the School District's consideration of a request for the use of a service animal, the School District may require certain documentation, including, but not limited to:
 1. Documentation that the service animal is properly trained and licensed;
 2. Certification of proper vaccinations verified by a veterinarian;
 3. Documentation that the handler for the service animal is properly trained; and
 4. Documentation of adequate liability insurance.
- D. The School District's review of a request for the use of a service animal may include consideration by a student's special education team and/or Section 504 team. Also, the School District may require a meeting with and/or additional information from the staff member or parent requesting the use of a service animal, including, but not

limited to, documentation/consultation from the staff member's or student's health care provider.

- E. The use of a service animal on School District property may be subject to a plan which introduces the service animal to the school environment, any appropriate training for staff and students regarding interaction with the service animal, and other activities or conditions deemed necessary by the School District. The School District's approval of the use of a service animal on School District property is subject to periodic review, revision or revocation by the Director or designee.
- F. Service animals must wear proper identification and always be on a leash or other form of restraint mechanism. It is the responsibility of the staff person or student who uses a service animal pursuant to this Policy to be the certified handler, providing proper handling of the service animal. Any cost incurred to handle the service animal will be the responsibility of the staff person or parent of the student who uses the service animal.
- G. The School District retains discretion to exclude or remove a service animal from its property is:
 - 1. The animal is out of control and/or the animal's handler does not effectively control the animal's behavior;
 - 2. The animal is not housebroken or the animal's presence or behavior fundamentally interferes in the functions of the School District; or
 - 3. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modification.

V. Liability

The staff member or student/parent is liable for any damage to School District or personal property and any injuries to individuals caused by their service animal. The staff member or student/parent who uses a service animal on School District property will hold the School District harmless and indemnify the School District from any such damages. Further, the staff member, student/parent will be required to submit a certificate of liability insurance covering the service animal and identifying the School district as an additional insured. The amount of required insurance coverage shall be determined by the School District.

ADOPTED: February 23, 2011