

## **SERVICE DOGS IN SCHOOLS**

### **Background**

Good Spirit School Division is committed to the delivery of high-quality educational programs, supports and services that allow students and employees with diverse needs to maximize their learning and achievement. The Division recognizes that the diverse needs of some individuals may require unique accommodation(s). These accommodations, linked to the student's Inclusion and Intervention Plan or an employee's Workplace Accommodation Plan may include the use of Service Dogs in situations where there is a physical disability, such as blindness or low vision, deafness, or hearing impairment, as well as seizure disorder, or autism spectrum disorder. The approval of a Service Dog is decided after extensive consultation and is not automatically approved.

### **Definition:**

"Service Dog" means a dog that has been trained and accredited by Assistance Dogs International to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.

### **Procedures**

1. A request for a Service Dog to accompany an individual must be made in writing, to the Principal and Superintendent of Education responsible for Student Services using Form 331-1 Parent/Guardian/Employee Request for a Service Dog.
2. The Request for Service Dog application must be accompanied by supporting medical documentation regarding the need for accommodation. Decisions regarding approval of a Service Dog are made on a case-by-case basis.
3. The parents/guardians or employee must co-operate with the school division and provide appropriate information about the restrictions and define the benefit of a Service Dog in order for the school division to determine if other accommodations would address the restrictions of the student or employee during school hours.
4. Before approving the presence of a Service Dog in the school the Principal shall, with the support of the Student Services Coordinator and the Superintendent of Education responsible for student services, make inquiries as to whether or not the introduction of the Service Dog into the school will affect the medical restrictions of other students in the school.
5. If the presence of a Service Dog is approved by the Principal and the Superintendent.
  - 5.1. If other students/staff with medical restrictions will be affected by the presence of the Service Dog:

- 5.1.1 The Principal shall determine how the accommodations of all students/staff can best be achieved;
  - 5.1.2 The parents/legal guardian of the student or employee requesting the Service Dog will cooperate with the school to minimize any possible effects of the presence of the Service Dog on the medical restrictions of other students;
  - 5.1.3 The Principal shall make best efforts to accommodate all students in consideration with all students' learning needs.
6. The parent/legal guardian or employee requesting the presence of a Service Dog must:
  - 6.1. Accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behaviour of the Service Dog while being present at a school;
  - 6.2. Provide appropriate insurance coverage (third party liability coverage of not less than \$2,000,000) naming and stating the Division's interest therein, for any damages caused by the Service Dog or any damages or injuries caused to the Service Dog and shall provide proof of such coverage annually;
  - 6.3. Pay for any training of school personnel regarding the use and care of the Service Dog in the school;
  - 6.4. Participate in an annual review of the presence of the Service Dog at the school;
  - 6.5. Provide information in writing from the service agency who trained the Service Dog indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the Service Dog, including the safest and most environmentally sound place for the dog to relieve itself, the safe removal and disposal of dog waste, and considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather;
  - 6.6. Provide evidence of up-to-date vaccinations and licensing of the Service Dog annually;
  - 6.7. Indicate who will accompany and handle the Service Dog both inside and outside the school and what arrangements have been made with regard to alternate handlers when necessary;
  - 6.8. Make arrangements for the Service Dog to visit the school to familiarize it with the school site, and indicate how and when initial and ongoing training will be provided for staff; and,
  - 6.9. Allow school division staff and volunteers to touch, feed, or deal with the Service Dog in any way that may be required to ensure appropriate care of the Service Dog and the safety of students and staff.
7. Considerations and limitations include:
  - 7.1. The school division may impose reasonable conditions or restrictions relating to:
    - 7.1.1. Transportation of the Service Dog to and from school;
    - 7.1.2. Restricting the presence of the Service Dog to specific areas in the school;
    - 7.1.3. Exclusion from access to specific areas where required by other laws (i.e., food preparation areas)

- 7.2. The right to be accompanied by a Service Dog does not apply if the student and/or handler is not in control of the behavior of the Service Dog. The Service Dog will also be denied access to the school if it:
- Is not clean or has an offensive odor
  - Urinates or defecates in inappropriate locations
  - Vocalizes unnecessarily: barking, growling, howling, whining
  - Shows aggression toward people
  - Solicits or steals food or other items
- 7.3. The agreement to accommodate a Service Dog is reviewed annually and may be modified as required following the same process set out in this administrative procedure.
- 7.4. If the student or employee moves to a different school, the request for a Service Dog must be resubmitted to the Principal at the new site for consideration
- 7.5. The agreement to accommodate a Service Dog may be terminated by the Division if the dog does not meet the needs of the student or employee or have up to date Assistance Dog International accreditation documentation or licensing.
8. The Principal, Student Support Teacher, and parents/guardians/employee will work together to complete Form 331-2, Service Dog Planning Checklist, to ensure all factors have been considered and planned for.
9. The application, insurance and related documentation will be retained on file at the student's school and submitted to the Superintendent of Education responsible for student services. Employee documentation will be stored in Atrieve.
10. The Principal will initiate the annual reviews and receipt of necessary documentation.

Reference: St. Johns Ambulance Therapy Dog Program  
Service Dog Administrative Procedure 331

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