

Service Animals in Schools Procedure

A. Service Animal Uses

A service animal is defined as any dog 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. Service animals are working animals, not pets. A service animal must be able to recognize a condition, and then make a response to that condition. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks.

Work or tasks performed must be directly related to the individual's disability. Work or tasks include, but are not limited to assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by prevention or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

Use of a service animal by a student with a disability will be allowed in school when it is determined that the student's disability requires such use in order to assist or accommodate access to the instructional program, school services and/or school activities.

The use of a service animal by a student with a disability will not be conditioned on the payment of a fee, security deposit or surcharge.

The district may not prohibit a dog who is trained to work as a service animal solely on the basis of breed. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, generally may not work as service animals.

B. Requirements for Service Animal Access

Before a service animal will be permitted in school, on school property or at school sponsored events, the student's parent or guardian must provide a description of the task(s) the service animal is expected to perform in assisting the student with a disability, unless it is readily apparent that the animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for that individual.

The district will provide access to a person with a disability who needs a service animal provided that the tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the disability; and the animal has been individually trained to perform a task, is housebroken; is free of disease and parasites, has a harness, leash or tether so it cannot run free and is under the control of the person with a disability.

A service animal must also be licensed and immunized in accordance with the laws, regulations and ordinances of the city of Bellevue, in King County, and the state of Washington.

C. Parents or Animal Handlers

Parents or animal handlers who will be present in school for the purpose of assisting a student with his/her service animal are required to submit to a sex offender registry and criminal back-ground check. In addition, parents and handlers must comply with all standards of conduct that apply to school employees and volunteers.

D. Removal or Exclusion of a Service Animal from School or School Property

The building principal or district administrator may request an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from school, a school sponsored activity or school property if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control the animal. Examples of the animal being out of control include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others;
2. The animal fundamentally alters the instruction program, school activities or student learning.
3. The animal fails to consistently perform the function(s)/service(s) to assist or accommodate the individual with the disability;
4. The animal is ill; or
5. The animal is not housebroken.

If the district excludes a service animal, it will provide the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

E. Service Animals at School-Sponsored Events

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals to events or activities open to the public that are held in schools or on school property.

F. Responsibility/Liability

1. Neither the district, nor its employees, are responsible for the cost, care or supervision of the service animal. Please refer to Policies 2161, Education of Students with Disabilities, and 2162, Education of Students with Disabilities Under Section 504, for responsibility for related services);
2. A service animal must be under the control of its handler. A service animal must also have a harness, leash or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash or other tether, or the use of the harness, leash or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (*e.g., voice control, signals or other effective means*); and
3. The owner/handler of the service animal is responsible for any and all damage caused by the service animal at school, on school premises or at school activities.

G. Appeals

A parent or guardian of a student with a disability whose service animal has been excluded or removed may appeal the decision using the process identified in Board Policy 4220 and Procedure 4220P (Complaints Concerning Programs and Staff)

H. Resources

1. Superintendent of Public Instruction
Equity and Civil Rights Office
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200
360.725.6162

2. Washington State Human Rights Commission
711 South Capitol Way, Suite 402
P.O. Box 42490
Olympia, WA 98504-2490
360.753.6770

3. Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
915 Second Avenue, Room 3310
Seattle, WA 98174
206.607.1600

Date: 9.15, 8.19