

432 ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL

SERVICE ANIMALS

I. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Independent School District No. 593 prohibits discrimination against individuals based on disability, including individuals who require the assistance of a service animal. Toward that end, the District acknowledges its obligation to modify its policies to allow the use of a service animal by individuals with disabilities.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. A “handler is an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal or a trainer who is accompanied by a service animal.
- B. A “service animal” is a dog (regardless of breed or size) that is individually trained to perform “work or tasks” for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including an individual with a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental disability. Other species of animals, whether
 1. The “work or tasks” performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler’s disability.
 2. Examples of “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 preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.
 3. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the providing of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship are not “work or tasks” for the purposes of this policy.
- C. A “trainer” is a person who is training a service animal and is affiliated with a recognized training program for service animals.

III. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Equal Access: A handler has the right to be accompanied by a service animal whenever and to the same extent that the handler has the right: (a) to be present on District property or in District facilities; (b) to attend or participate in a school sponsored event, activity, or program; or (c) to be transported in a vehicle that is operated by or on behalf of the District.
- B. Equal Treatment: The District may not do any of the following: isolate the handler from individuals without service animals; ask or require the handler to pay an extra fee; or treat the handler less favorably than individuals without service animals.
- C. Care and Supervision: The School District is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. The handler is solely responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal including, but not limited to, feeding, watering, cleaning, and toileting. Neither the District nor its staff will assume such responsibilities.
- D. Tether: A service animal must have a harness, leash or other tether, unless: (a) the handler is unable to use a harness, leash, or other tether because of a disability, or (b) the use of a harness, leash or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe and effective performance of work or tasks. If either (a) or (b) applies, the service animal must be under the handler's control by voice, signals, or other effective means.
- E. Control: A service animal must be under the control of its handler.
- F. Removal: A school official may require a handler to remove a service animal from District property, a district facility, a vehicle operated by or on behalf of the District, or a school sponsored event, activity, or program if the service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or the service animal is not housebroken. If the District requires an individual with a disability to remove a service animal, the individual may remain on District property, in a District facility, in a District owned or operated vehicle, or at a school sponsored event, activity, or program without having the service animal, unless the individual has violated a law or school rule or regulations that would warrant the removal of the individual.
- G. Liability: A handler who is accompanied by a service animal is liable for any and all harm, injury, or damage caused by the service animal.

V. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE ANIMALS

- A. Permitted Inquiries: District staff generally may ask a handler if an animal is required because of a disability and, if so, what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. However, District staff may not make those inquiries when it is readily apparent that the animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability (*e.g.* the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind or has impaired vision, pulling a person's wheelchair, or providing assistance with stability or balance to an individual with an observable mobility disability).
- B. Prohibited Inquiries: District staff may not ask a handler about the nature or extent of a disability. In addition, District staff may not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal.
- C. Vaccinations: Each handler is responsible for ensuring that the service animal is properly vaccinated.
- D. Allergies: If a student or employee notifies the District that he or she is allergic to a service animal, The District will balance the rights of the individuals involved. Generally, allergies that are not life threatening are not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a service animal.
- E. Fear of Animals: Fear of animals is not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a service animal.
- F. Working Status of Service Animals: Students, parents, and employees of the District should not feed or pet a service animal without permission from the handler. In addition, students, parents, and employees generally should not seek to separate a service animal from its handler.
- G. Notice Encouraged but not Required: Students, parents, and employees are encouraged, but not required, to notify the building principal if they expect to be utilizing a service animal on a regular basis. This notification will not be used to deny access to any program, service, activity, or benefit. Rather, this notification will be used to provide an opportunity for discussion that is designed to assist the student or employee in transitioning to the regular use of a service animal at school or work.

THERAPY DOGS

I. GENERAL

The Board of Education, in recognizing the educational uses of dogs in the classroom, requires that permission be obtained from the Building Principal before animals (other than service animals) are brought to the school or classrooms. It is the Building Principal's responsibility to confirm that there is appropriate educational purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom. Animals, other than service animals, are not to be transported on school buses.

Any school which cares for or uses animals for study will afford the animal the following: Appropriate quarters; sufficient spaced for the normal behavior and postural requirements of the species; proper ventilation, lighting, and temperature control; adequate food and clean drinking water; a school issued identification tag, and quarters which shall be cleaned on a regular basis and located in an area where undue stress and disturbance are minimized.

Animals in school must be properly supervised, handled, and cared for and only the teacher or those students designated by the teacher are to handle animals.

It shall be the responsibility of the Principal or his/her designee to develop a plan of care for those animals housed in school in the event of an emergency school closing. Animal-specific guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control shall be followed at all times.

The Crookston ISD #593 supports the implementation of a Therapy Dog program for the academic, social, and emotional benefit of its students.

A Therapy Dog is a dog trained to provide affection and comfort to students in the Crookston ISD #593. The most important characteristic of a therapy dog is its temperament. A good therapy dog must be friendly, patient, confident, at ease in all situations, and gentle. Therapy dogs must enjoy human contact and be content to be petted and handled, sometimes clumsily. A therapy dog's primary job is to allow unfamiliar people to make physical contact with it and to enjoy that contact. Therapy dogs are not considered trained service dogs as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (see Service Animals section above). All therapy dogs must have certification of therapy dog training from a recognized training program. A copy must be placed on file in the School District Office.

II. GUIDELINES

The following minimum standards shall be in effect for all therapy dogs approved to serve in the Crookston ISD #593:

- A. All therapy dogs must have certification of therapy dog training from a recognized training program. A copy must be placed on file in the School District Office.
- B. A therapy dog is expected to be clean, well-groomed, and not have an offensive odor.
- C. A therapy dog is expected not to urinate or defecate in inappropriate locations.
- D. A therapy dog is expected not to annoy any member of the student body or school personnel by seeking attention.
- E. A therapy dog is expected to not vocalize unnecessarily.
- F. A therapy dog is expected to show no aggression towards people or other animals.
- G. A therapy dog is expected to not solicit or steal food or other items from the student body or school personnel.
- H. A therapy dog is expected to not in any way interfere with the educational process of any student.
- I. A therapy dog is expected to not pose a health or safety threat to any student, personnel, or other persons.
- J. A therapy dog is expected to wear their ISD #593 Identification tag with name and photo.
- K. A schedule for the therapy dog will be kept on file for the dog's school day.

A therapy dog may be excluded from school property if a school administrator determines any of the above are being violated. Owner shall remove the dog immediately if so.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

Therapy dogs are independently owned by school employees and must meet standards of health as prescribed by veterinarians at the owner's expense. Required training for accreditation is at the owner's expense. The school district bears no financial responsibility for the care or feeding of the animal. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance of the therapy dog.

Therapy dogs in the school setting shall be recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and approved by the Board of Education. Prior to recommendation and approval, owners shall provide:

- 1. Proof of current inoculations
- 2. Proof of Health, such as current health certificate from a Veterinarian
- 3. Visible cleanliness of dog with no signs of fleas/ticks
- 4. A visually healthy, alert and not grossly over or underweight dog
- 5. Proof of physical
- 6. Proof of Heartworm test
- 7. A copy of the owner's current Homeowner's Insurance Policy that provides liability insurance for injuries or damages that arise from the dog while on school property.

8. Proof of current licensure from local licensing authority.
9. Therapy dog must have appropriate identification and training.

These same requirements must be met on an annual basis, prior to the start of any school year.

All therapy dogs and owners shall be tested and accredited by a nationally recognized dog therapy certification/registration program. (Therapy Dog, Inc., American Kennel Club Therapy Dog, Pet Partners, Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Canine Good Citizen, etc.).

Owner of dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others that is caused by the therapy dog while on school grounds.

The building principal shall notify parents on an annual basis regarding the presence of a therapy dog in the school building. Each building is limited to two (2) therapy dogs per year.

Legal References: 28 C.F.R. § 36.136
Minn. Stat. § 363A.19
Minn. Stat. § 256C.02