

10.22 ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOLS

The Board of Education supports the concept of using animals as an educational tool. However, prior to any use of animals in the schools, the administration should contact appropriate organizations or authorities regarding resource materials and suggested learning activities that may be available to help students increase their understanding of animals.

All animal use in school buildings shall be consistent with the District's health and safety policies. The administration is responsible for developing regulations for the care and control of the animals.

Animals of any kind are not permitted on or in any school owned property without prior permissions from the superintendent, assistant superintendent or building administrator.

Service Animals

In compliance with Federal law, the Board permits the use of service animals in the schools for those individuals with qualified disabilities.

Definition

A "service animal" includes any dog that is individually 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.

Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition, except miniature horses in certain circumstances. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. 28 C.F.R. 35.104.

Animals that provide comfort or companionship and that have not been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability do not qualify as service animals.

Qualification

District staff are limited in what information or documentation may be requested regarding a service animal. In situations where it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, staff may ask only two specific questions:

- 1) Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- 2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability. Service animals are not required to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

Service animals are not exempt from state or local requirements regarding vaccination and/or registration and licensing. All animals present for any reason on school property must be properly licensed and vaccinated in accordance with all state and local laws and ordinances.

Notification

Any individual requiring a service animal to participate in the District's educational programs must notify the applicable building principal in writing of such need at least ten (10) days prior to the first day the animal will be present on school property. Upon receipt of such notice, school staff will meet with the student and his/her parents/guardians to develop a plan addressing the presence of the service animal in the school.

The building principal shall notify the parents of all students in classes in which the service animal will be present. The parents of these students must promptly notify the building principal if the presence of the service animal will impact the health of their student. Appropriate arrangements will be made to accommodate both the individual requiring the service animal and the affected student.

Care and Supervision

Service animals are the personal property of the student and/or parents. The Board does not assume responsibility for training, daily care, or healthcare or supervision of any animal on school property. The Board does not assume responsibility for personal injury or property damage arising out of or relating to the presence or use of an animal on District property or at District-sponsored events.

Service animals present on school grounds or in school buildings must be under the control of the handler at all times. The handler is responsible for caring for and supervising the service animal, which includes toileting, feeding, and grooming and veterinary care. Service animals will have an appropriate harness, leash, or other tether, unless this would interfere with the animal's performance of its work or tasks and/or the student's disability prevents him/her from using such a tether. In such cases, the animal must remain under alternative means of control by the handler.

If the handler of the service animal is not the student for whom the animal provides services, the handler shall be deemed a volunteer subject to Board of Education Policy 3.17.

Removal and Exclusion

The building principal shall determine if and when the service animal must be removed and/or excluded from school property. This determination shall be based on documented instances of:

- 1) The service animal's demonstration that it is disruptive and/or not under the control of the student and/or its handler; and/or
- 2) The service animal's demonstration that it is not housebroken.

The principal's decision to remove and/or exclude the service animal may be appealed in accordance with the complaint and grievance procedure set forth in Board of Education Policy 10.08.

Transportation

Students requiring service animals in accordance with this policy shall be permitted to access and use District transportation with their service animals. Transportation may also be available for a service animal's handler if this individual is someone other than the student.

Revised 12/ /19