



Administrative Procedure 4550

Use of Certified Service Dogs in Brandon School Division

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference: [1](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#)

Administrative Procedures Cross Reference:

[Appropriate Educational Programming and Inclusion](#)

Form Cross Reference:

Legal/Regulatory Reference:

[Office of the Fire Commissioner – Canine Program](#)

[The Manitoba Human Rights Commission](#)

Date Adopted: October 2011

Amended: December 2017

The Brandon School Division supports and recognizes that in certain cases, appropriate educational programming may include the services of a certified service dog.

A certified service dog means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, specific to that disability.

A letter will be sent home to the students in any of the classes where the dog will be present in case of students' allergies or extreme phobias.

No individual student's rights and needs take precedence over any other individual student's rights and needs. In providing for *Appropriate Educational Programming and Inclusion* for students who require certified service dogs, other students' legal rights to an education are given equal consideration.

Purpose

The Division recognizes that the use of certified service dogs is increasing in a number of different treatment program areas in schools in North America. The presence of a service dog requires appropriate planning and preparation before implementing the program.

Procedures

Once the School Leader has been notified of the anticipated integration of the animal to the school, the following protocol is to be implemented by the Division prior to the admittance of a service dog to the school.

These procedures will be fast-tracked should a child who uses a certified service dog come to a school during the school year.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

It is expected that parents will advise the Division as soon as possible that a service dog is required.

- Upon becoming aware of the child's need for a service dog the parents/guardians shall provide a letter to the School Leader from their medical doctor recommending the use of a certified service dog prior to the commencement of the process of *Appropriate Educational Programming and Inclusion*.
- Parents/guardians shall provide a letter to the School Leader outlining what they see as being the benefits of having the service dog attend school with their child.
- A certificate of training for the dog from the service dog organization must be provided. All financial costs to obtain this certificate are the sole responsibility of the family. Service dogs certified by an organization inside or outside of Canada must have the certification standards verified by the *Office of the Fire Commissioner*.
The student handler's ability to control the animal in a school setting must be verified by the *Office of the Fire Commissioner*.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide the school with proof that the dog has its yearly vaccinations, required licenses, and is in good health.

School Leader Responsibility

- The School Leader is responsible to facilitate with the parents arrangements and communication of such together with the anticipated timeline for introduction of a service dog to the school.
- The School Leader shall ensure that the students, school staff, the school community and the Superintendent/CEO or designate are informed of the anticipated presence of the certified service dog in the school.
 - A letter is to be sent home for all students and provided to all staff to inform the school community as to the arrival of a service dog to school (sample below).

- A letter is to be sent home to the students in any of the classes where the dog will be present in case of students' allergies or extreme phobias.
- If transportation of the student requiring the services of the dog is required the School Leader shall inform the Transportation Supervisor of the presence of the dog on the bus and that the driver and Transportation Educational Assistant (if applicable) will receive appropriate training.
- A letter is to be sent to parents/guardians of all children who travel on the same bus (sample below).
- An assembly or class visits are to be arranged to explain the role of the service dog.
- The School Leader shall ensure a sign is placed on the doors of the school alerting visitors/emergency service providers to the dog's presence.
- The School Leader shall ensure that the service dog organization provides training to the student's school team (School Leader, Teacher/s, Educational Assistants, Transportation personnel) prior to the dog commencing work in the school. Training will be provided at the Division's expense.
- The School Leader, on behalf of the school and parents, shall submit a mutually agreed to implementation plan to the Superintendent/CEO or designate as soon as possible prior to the introduction of the service dog to the school setting.

Resource Teacher Role and Responsibility

- A case conference is set up involving the Parents/Guardians, School Leader, Teacher(s), Educational Assistant(s), a representative from the service dog organization, the student when appropriate, the Assistant Superintendent or Intensive Support Administrator to discuss the following:
 - Ensure classroom staff are informed and involved.
 - Discuss the purpose/function of the service dog.
 - Advising school team of who is responsible for the care of the dog – (This rests 100% with the handler/family). An adult from the family (or designate) must be available to take the service dog for a “bio-break” one time per day, preferably “midday,” (or as agreed upon by the school team).
 - Establish where is the safest and most environmentally sound place for the dog to relieve itself.
 - Discuss what considerations have been made for seasonal changes (i.e., winter, summer, etc.).

- The dog should be offered water at mid-day, no water bowl should be left down at any time. Water should be offered, then the bowl removed (determine where the dog's water bowl is to be kept and who will fill the water bowl).
- Examine the physical arrangements in the classroom(s).
- Examine transportation arrangements, i.e., all relevant bus procedures.
- Discuss other issues including: Interference with delivery of academic program, possible changes to in-class routines and procedures, increased demands on resource staff and teachers, provision of an assistant(s) to assist the student with the dog, other children who are allergic to dogs, recognition of children with a fear of dogs.
- Review cultural sensitivity for groups who will not share space with an animal.
- Identify a date for a follow-up meeting to discuss dog handling issues/concerns.
- Identify a process to have questions answered as they arise.
- The use of a service dog should be incorporated into the Student Specific Plan.
- A copy of the parent letter and the medical diagnosis is placed in the Pupil File. A transition-in plan is created which may involve the use of Social Stories, visits of the dog to the school/classroom, etc.
- The performance of the service dog is to be reviewed frequently during the phase-in process and after four weeks of full integration into the student's school.
- An appropriate emergency exit plan must be put into place and the Fire Department alerted as to the existence of the dog in the school.

Supervisor of Transportation's Responsibility

The Transportation Supervisor shall:

- Inform the driver and where applicable, the transportation EA of the presence of a certified service dog on the bus; and ensure that appropriate training will be provided.
- As part of the training procedure, the protocol for handling the certified service dog on the bus will be developed and implemented in conjunction with the dog trainer/handler that will include:
 - Location of dog during transport (should not be blocking aisles) i.e. under seat or in the seat compartment.

- The other students should receive training from the driver and/or parent or service provider to ensure the understanding of the role and function of the certified service dog as well as the procedures for handling the dog in the bus.
- A bus evacuation plan for the dog is developed and practiced.
- The Transportation Supervisor shall ensure that there is sufficient documentation and procedural instruction available on the bus for spare bus drivers.

Sample Letters to Parents/Guardians

(Date)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that (*one/two*) of our students *have/has* received a service dog from National Service Dogs of Canada. "*Name of Service Dog*" is a (*description of dog, i.e. three year old Golden Retriever*), that will be accompanying the students to and from school and working with the two students throughout the school day.

_____, Program Director and Co-Founder of National Service Dogs of Canada from Cambridge, Ontario, was at (*your school name*) on (*date*) to train staff in how to handle and work with "*Name of Service Dog*" and the student(s). "*Name of Service Dog*" wears a purple "working" vest when (*he/she*) is working with the student(s) and (*his/her*) job is to increase independence and provide safety for the student(s).

We will be having an assembly to introduce "*Name of Service Dog*" to the rest of the students in our school and to educate them so they respond appropriately when they see "*Name of Service Dog*" (i.e. do not pet him when they see that he is wearing his purple vest because he is working).

We have checked all of our students' medical forms and do not have any students in our school who have indicated a severe allergy to dogs. _____, of National Service Dogs of Canada, has instructed us to tell students and parents that if they feel they may be allergic to dogs, then do not touch the dog.

We are excited to be able to have "*Name of Service Dog*" as an additional resource for our student(s) and are looking forward to having him as part of our (*your school name*) Community.

If you have questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at _____. Brochures regarding the National Service Dogs Program are available at our office.

Sincerely,

_____,
School Leader

Sample

(Date)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that *(one/two)* of our bus students *has/have* received a service dog from National Service Dogs of Canada. "*Name of Service Dog*" is a *(description of dog, i.e. Golden Retriever)*, that will be accompanying the student(s) to and from school and working with the student(s) through the school day.

_____, Program Director and Co-Founder of National Service Dogs of Canada from Cambridge, Ontario, was at *(name of school)* on *(date)* to train staff in how to handle and work with "*Name of Service Dog*" and the student(s). "*Name of Service Dog*" wears a purple "working" vest when *(he/she)* is working with the student(s) and *(his/her)* job is to increase independence and provide safety for the student(s).

"*Name of Service Dog*" will be riding to and from school on our school bus beginning *(date)* and we would like to check with all of our bus students' parents to see if there are any allergies that we need to be aware of so that seating can be adjusted. _____, of National Service Dogs of Canada, has instructed us to tell students and parents that if they feel they may be allergic to dogs, then do not touch the dog. Please contact me if you believe your child to be allergic to dogs.

We are pleased to be able to have "*Name of Service Dog*" as an additional resource for our student(s). If you have questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at *(telephone number)*. Brochures regarding the National Service Dog Program are available at our office.

Sincerely,

_____,
Supervisor of Transportation