



Policy on Service Animals

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The Policy on Service Animals was developed by the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department with contributions from the following individuals:

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Santa Rosa County District School's understands and appreciates that a student may need the assistance of a service animal to access the District's campuses, programs, and activities. To meet its obligations, the District created this policy in accordance with Federal and State law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Definitions

The ADA (28 CFR 35.104), similar to Section 413.08, Florida Statutes, defines a "**Service animal**" as "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. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. 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. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition."

An "emotional support" or "therapy animal" does not qualify as an animal under the ADA or Florida law.

Service animals may also include miniature horses so long as the miniature horse meets the reasonable modifications and assessment factors set forth in 28 CFR 35.136.

Ownership

Service animals are personal property of students and their parents. The District is not responsible for training or otherwise caring for service animals. The parent/guardian will be responsible for providing materials needed for care of the service animal such as snacks, plastic bags for waste disposal, and a water bowl.

Standards and Required Behavior

Service animals must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist a person with a disability. Service animals shall be harnessed, leashed or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work, or the individual's disability prevents the use of these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal or other effective controls.

Service animals may be excluded from District campuses, programs and activities in the following circumstances: (1) the service animal is out of control; (2) the service animal is not housebroken; (3) the service animal poses a "direct threat" to the health or safety of others, based upon an individualized assessment; or (4) the service animal's presence would constitute a "fundamental alteration" to the nature of the services, program or activity provided by the District.

If a service animal is excluded, the parent/guardian may file an appeal in accordance with Board Policy 2.72 (III).

Application Process

1. The parent/guardian must submit a request in writing to the school's principal for the service animal to accompany the student. A student may not bring a service animal to school until it has been approved by the principal.
2. The parent/guardian must provide documentation that the service animal meets all rabies vaccination requirements set forth under Florida law and local regulations. The District may request, but the parent/guardian is not required to provide, the following:
 - a. Evidence that the service animal is trained;
 - b. Certifications from veterinarians related to the service animal's health; and
 - c. Documentation for the handler's background screening and fingerprints should the student not be able to independently control the service animal.

Failure of a parent/guardian to provide the information set forth in (a) through (c) shall not serve as a basis to deny a request to permit a service animal on campus.

3. The District will ask the following questions during the application process:
 - a. Whether the student for whom the request is made is an individual with a disability; and
 - b. Whether the service animal meets the definition of "service animal" set forth in this policy.
4. The District's application process requires that parents/guardians specify the kind of animal that will accompany the student, the disability at issue, and the work or tasks performed.
5. The parent/guardian must identify the individual who will serve as the handler. If the student is not the handler, the individual identified must meet all District requirements applicable to volunteers.
6. The principal and ESE Department will review the submitted documentation and notify the parent/student within 10 days in writing whether the service animal request is approved or denied.
7. If approved, the parent/guardian must sign a service animal agreement acknowledging the circumstances under which a service animal may be excluded from District campuses, programs and activities. The service animal agreement will also require that the parent/guardian will be charged for any damage caused by the service animal.
8. If denied, the parent/guardian may file an appeal in accordance with Board Policy 2.72 (III).

Transportation

Approved service animals are permitted to travel with students. To address transportation needs, the bus driver and Director of Transportation or his/her designee will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss any critical commands, daily interaction issues, and emergency/evacuation procedures for the service animal. The service animal will board the bus by the steps and will not be permitted to board the bus via the bus lift unless the student uses the lift to enter and exit the bus. The service animal will be seated at the bottom of the handler's feet during transportation.

Service animals must participate in all bus evacuation and emergency drills.

Possible situations that could cause cessation of transportation include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: (1) the service animal poses a threat to the safety of others; or (2) urinating or defecating on the bus.

Implementation

If approved, the school will work with the parent/guardian, student and handler to familiarize the service animal with the school campus prior to arrival, orient the service animal to faculty and students, establish an educational program to help educate students on proper behavior, establish a place for the service animal to defecate and urinate, and establish a resting place.

If a student has an IEP or Section 504 Plan, the accommodation section will include a provision that the student is permitted to bring a service animal to school. The IEP or Section 504 Plan will not indicate that the District will provide the service animal unless the IEP team or Section 504 team determines the District must provide the service animal for the student to receive a free appropriate public education.

For questions please contact the Exceptional Student Education Department at (850) 983 5167.

Parent Request for a Student to Bring a Service Animal to School

A service animal is one that has been trained to perform a task directly related to a students' disability.

Student Name:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Guardian Name: Address: City: State: FL Zip Code: Home Phone Number: Cell Phone Number:	School: Grade Level: Check box and circle grade Elementary: <input type="checkbox"/> K 1 2 3 4 5 Middle: <input type="checkbox"/> 6 7 8 High: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 10 11 12 Locklin: <input type="checkbox"/> SITE/SKILL/SEARCH: <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Is a Handler required other than student? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, Handler's Name: Relationship to Student: Has information been provided regarding the Handlers fingerprints and background screening? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Disability to which the task is directly related <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Other Health Impairment (Ex. Seizure) Kind of Service Animal: Is the Service Animal house broken? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
What types of Tasks/Services are performed by the service animal? <input type="checkbox"/> Guide Dog (e. g. Low vision and navigation) <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility Assistance (e.g. pulling wheelchair) <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Alerts (e.g. seizure triggers) <input type="checkbox"/> Retrieving Items (e.g. telephone, meds) <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Support for Balance <input type="checkbox"/> Alerting individuals who are deaf to presence of sound <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Is there a copy at the school of the service animal's liability insurance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, does the school have a copy of the insurance coverage? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a copy at the school of the service animal's current health and immunization records completed by a competent authority (e.g. veterinarian)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

I/We the parents/guardians understand it is our responsibility to:

Please initial each of the boxes below

- ☐ Provide the principal with all requested documentation, reports, etc. in a timely manner.
- ☐ Assume financial responsibility for the service animal's training, veterinary care, physical damages caused by the animal.
- ☐ Participate in an IEP/Section 504 or administrator meeting to inform the principal and other staff of all relevant information as it pertains to the service animal.
- ☐ Provide the required equipment and service animal care items.
- ☐ Establish a written "plan of care" to include how water and bio breaks will occur.
- ☐ Immediately remove and dispose of animal waste in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.
- ☐ I/We understand that if the service animal exhibits any behaviors (e.g. growling, scratching, nipping, biting, etc.) or health issues (vomiting, diarrhea, open wounds, fleas, ticks, etc.) at school it will be removed until the plan is re-evaluated to ensure the safety of staff, students, and visitors.
- ☐ I/We agree to assist with sensitivity training for other students and staff if appropriate.
- ☐ I/We acknowledge having received and read a copy of the SRCSD's Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting that a Student be Allowed to Bring a Service Animal to School.

Signature of Parents and Guardians: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Principal: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Director of Exceptional Education: _____ Date: _____

Management Plan for the Care of the Service Animal

Student Name:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Guardian Name:	School:
Address:	Grade Level: Check box and circle grade
City: State: FL Zip Code:	Elementary: <input type="checkbox"/> K 1 2 3 4 5
Home Phone Number:	Middle: <input type="checkbox"/> 6 7 8
Cell Phone Number:	High: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 10 11 12
	Locklin: <input type="checkbox"/>
	SITE/SKILL/SEARCH: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other: _____

Person(s) responsible for the service animal in the school environment: _____

Where does the service animal use the restroom: _____

Frequency of the bladder/bowel needs: _____

Appropriate rest periods when not working (if needed): _____

Mode of transportation to campus: _____

Mode of transportation from campus: _____

Location of food and/or watering area: _____

Procedure for Field Trips (including transportation): _____

Alternative Plan if Handler or Animal is Absent: _____

Special Considerations: _____

Requested documentation has been provided by the parent/guardian:

☐ Current vaccines and health information provided by a licensed veterinarian

☐ Copy of service animal liability insurance

This form must be updated at the beginning of each school year and kept in the students cumulative file at school.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note when possible and feasible, these responsibilities should be handled by the student in the same manner as at home. In the event that the student is not able to undertake these responsibilities it is the responsibility of the parent/guardians to provide total care for the service animal at school. This includes the provision of food, water, bio breaks, supervision of the animal during rest periods and immediate removal and disposal of animal waste in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.