



## **Newly Developed Procedure PR729, Student Use of Service Animals in Schools**

**To:** Governance and Policy Committee

**Date:** 8 January, 2020

**Report No.:** 01-20-3811

### **Strategic Directions**

- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the newly developed Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Procedure (PR729) as presented in this report, be received.

### **Context**

On October 30, 2019, the Board approved the Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Policy (P096) which was developed in accordance with the Ministry of Education's directions outlined in the Policy/ Program Memorandum (PPM) 163.

The newly developed Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Procedure (PR729) supports the implementation of the Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Policy (P096). The Procedure outlines detailed processes for the use of service animals by students in schools. The Procedure is based on and incorporates key provisions of the Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals Administrative Procedure Template (Appendix B), provided to the TDSB and other school boards by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE).

The Procedure was reviewed by Executive Council and approved on December 10, 2019. The Procedure came into effect on January 1, 2020.

## **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

The Procedure has been provided to school principals, superintendents and applicable central staff responsible for implementation of the Use of Service Animals in Schools Policy (P096). Training and information sessions will be provided to school administrators on a regular basis and/or upon request.

## **Resource Implications**

No additional resources were allocated by the Ministry of Education for the implementation of the Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Policy and this Procedure. Resource implications will be identified by staff during 2020/21 school year based on the number of accommodation requests.

## **Communications Considerations**

The Student Use of Services Animals in Schools Procedure (PR729) is posted on the Board's internal and external website and will be communicated through the System Leaders' Bulletin and the TDSB Connects.

## **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

### Policies:

- Accessibility Policy (P069)
- Student Health Support Policy (P092)
- Equity Policy (P037)

### Procedures:

- Use of Service Animals by the General Public (PR604)

### Legislative Acts and Regulations:

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*
- *Blind Person's Rights Act*
- *Education Act*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*

### Other Documents:

- Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018)
- PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Student Use of Service Animals in Schools Procedure (PR729) - New
- Appendix B: Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals Administrative Procedure Template

**From**

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# Toronto District School Board

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Procedure PR729

Title: **STUDENT USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS**

Adopted: December 10, 2019

Effectuated: December 10, 2019

Revised: NA

Reviewed: NA

Authorization: Executive Council

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## 1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Service animals have traditionally been highly trained dogs that assist individuals with various tasks of daily living (Guide Dog, Hearing and Signal Dogs, Mobility Assistance Dogs, Seizure Response Dogs).
- 1.2 In most circumstances, a Guide Dog will be a highly trained dog provided to support the orientation and mobility needs of a student Handler who has a diagnosis of blindness/low vision, and the Guide Dog will provide the student Handler with greater independence, dignity and opportunity for integration.
- 1.3 The term Service Animal is used in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), to describe an animal that assists an individual with a disability to be able to access goods and services available to the public. **A school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to a student's use of a Service Dog / Service Animal when accessing education services in school buildings.**
- (a) Pursuant to the *Code* it is possible that a Service Animal might include different species that provide a therapeutic function (horses), emotional support, sensory function, companionship and/or comfort.
  - (b) The determination of whether the animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate a demonstrated disability-related learning need is a decision of the Board.
    - (i) Such a decision will consider that animals, other than dogs, are not trained by an Accredited Training Organization and may pose a risk to the safety of students and staff and/or may be disruptive to the

learning environment and/or may act as a distraction in the learning environment.

- 1.4 Due to risks to safety, and risks of disruption and distraction in the learning environment, the TDSB does **not** permit training of potential guide dogs and service dogs in the school setting or during school activities.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 It is the Policy of the TDSB in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and facilitates the development of independence.
- (a) The TDSB utilizes a variety of placements, differentiated programming, and evidence-based interventions and strategies to provide meaningful access to education for students who have disability-related needs that impact their learning.
  - (b) The TDSB does not provide Guide Dogs, Service Dogs or Service Animals to students.
  - (c) The TDSB encourages any family considering the purchase of a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal to meet with the school principal or superintendent before making a commitment.
- 2.2 This Procedure identifies the individualized process to be followed when a parent or adult student applies to the School Board to have a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal accompany the student while the student is attending school or a school-related event.
- 2.3 Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and Ontario Regulation 474/00 *Access to School Premises*, the Board requires each school to have a process for visitors.
- 2.4 Any determination of whether a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal is an appropriate accommodation for a student while receiving education services is a decision of the Board. A regulated health professional cannot unilaterally prescribe that a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal be a specific accommodation while the student is receiving education services at school.
- 2.5 When an adult student or parent seeks to have their child attend school or school related events with a Guide Dog / Service Dog, both the Guide Dog / Service Dog **and** the Student Handler must be certified as having been successfully trained by an accredited training facility.

- (a) Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the School Board consider an application for a student who will not be acting as the primary trained Handler of the Guide Dog / Service Dog.
- (b) Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the School Board consider Service Animals, other than dogs, as an accommodation for a student and only if other reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Procedure, the following definitions apply:

*Accredited training organization* means a guide dog or service dog trainer that is accredited by:

- International Guide Dog Federation (“IGDF”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide Dogs for the blind/low vision are trained by its member organizations;
- Assistance Dogs International (“ADI”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide, Hearing and Service Dogs are trained by its member organizations; or
- A Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that attests to compliance with the Meghan Search and Rescue Standard in Support of Accessibility: Persons with a Disability Teamed with Service Dogs standard for training (MSAR).

*Adult student* means a student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed him/her/themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent

*Disability* means:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*;

**Guide Dog** means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*;

**Handler** refers to the individual trained by an Accredited Training Organization who is managing the Guide Dog / Service Dog and in most cases will be the student for whom the Guide Dog / Service Dog is provided;

**Parent** means custodial parent of the student or a guardian pursuant to the *Education Act*;

**Service Dog** means a dog which has been certified after successfully completing a training program provided by an Accredited Training Organization.

**Service Animal** for the purpose of this Procedure includes a therapy dog, companion animal, comfort animal and emotional support animal and includes a dog or other domesticated animal that may legally reside in an urban, residential home, that is not highly trained to perform particular tasks to assist with a student's disability-related needs, but provides emotional support (and/or companionship, calming influence) for a student with a disability-related mental health and/or psychological need and/or comfort during a difficult period.

#### **4.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

Associate Director, Leadership, Learning and School Improvement and Executive Superintendent, Human Rights and Indigenous Education

#### **5.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

This Procedure applies to all students, families and staff who are involved in the use, or potential use of Service Animals in schools.

#### **6.0 PROCEDURES**

##### **Principals**

- 6.1 School principals are responsible for the management of the school premises, the staff providing educational programs and the safety of all students.

- (a) A school principal has authority to exclude any animal, including Guide Dogs / Service Dogs and Service Animals, from entry onto school premises and school building(s), as an accommodation for a student, provided that the student is offered appropriate alternative accommodation to meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs.
  - (b) School principals, before admitting a Guide Dog / Service Dog into the school or on school related activities with the student Handler, shall require a parent/adult student to submit a completed application, included in **Appendix A** of the Procedure.
  - (c) Before admitting a Service Animal, the school principal shall require the parent/adult student to submit a completed application, included in **Appendix B** of the Procedure.
- 6.2 On receipt of an application for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal, the school principal shall review the application for completeness and may request any additional information or clarification necessary to assess the request for accommodation.
- 6.3 The school principal shall be responsible for communication with the parent/adult student with respect to the accommodation process, and where approved the implementation and management of the accommodation.
- 6.4 Where a student supported by a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal, whose parent is the Handler, seeks only to attend a school excursion with the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal, which is at a location where the public is customarily admitted, efforts will be made to facilitate the student's participation with the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal and parent as the Handler.
- (a) Inquiries may need to be made regarding competing rights and transportation arrangements.

### **Parents/Adult Students**

- 6.5 Parents or Adult Students are required to provide all necessary documentation and engage in the consultation process for the purpose of considering and implementing, if appropriate, the request that a Guide Dog / Service Dog accompany the student at school and/or on school-related activities. The parent or adult student shall be responsible for:
- (a) submission of **Appendix A**;
  - (b) all costs related to the dog, food, grooming, harness, crate and/or mat and veterinary care;



- (c) obtaining training and maintaining the Guide Dog / Service Dog training to provide the accommodation in a safe manner that does not disrupt student learning;
  - (d) providing confirmation of municipal license for the dog (to be updated annually),
  - (e) providing confirmation of certificates of training not older than 6 months from an Accredited Training Organization attesting that the dog and student Handler have successfully completed training and may safely engage in a public setting without creating a risk of safety or a risk of disruption within a school setting;
- (a) diagnosis from a registered pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist (or other regulated health professional as determined by the School Board) with a recommendation for the use of a Guide Dog / Service Dog;
  - (b) a description of the services provided by the Guide Dog / Service Dog to the student, and how those services will accommodate the student's disability-related needs and assist the student in achieving their learning goals and/or goals of daily living while at school;
  - (c) a certificate not greater than three (3) months old from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario attesting that, the dog is an adult; identifying the age and breed; does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans; has received all required vaccinations; and is in good health to assist the student (to be updated annually);
  - (d) general liability insurance providing coverage in an amount specified by the Board<sup>1</sup> in the event of an injury or death as a result of the Guide Dog / Service Dog's attendance on school property or on a school-related activity (to be updated annually)<sup>2</sup>.

## Students

- 6.6 Students will be expected to act as the Guide Dog / Service Dog's primary Handler. The student handler must:
- (a) demonstrate the ability to control the Guide Dog / Service Dog in accordance with the training received;
  - (b) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Dog is always wearing a vest and leash or harness when the dog is not in its crate.

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<sup>1</sup> Note usually 2 million in general liability insurance coverage is requested. This requirement might need to be waived on the basis of equity in the event that it causes financial hardship for a family.

<sup>2</sup> Note insurance should not pose a barrier to the provision of accommodation as a result of socio-economic factors

- (c) ensure the Guide Dog / Service Dog does not disrupt the learning of others with unnecessary movement, vocalization or other behaviour, including aggressive or threatening behaviour;
- (d) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Dog's biological needs are addressed;
- (e) transition and maintain at all times the Guide Dog / Service Dog on a leash, harness, mat and/or crate;
- (f) comply with an accommodation plan that addresses the competing rights of others;

### **Guide Dog / Service Dog**

#### 6.7 The Guide Dog / Service Dog:

- (a) shall be a highly trained and certified by Accredited Training Organization;
  - (i) will have evidence of training or re-certification confirming compliance with training requirements within the last 6 months be required;
- (b) must be groomed and clean;
- (c) must at all times while on school property be responsive to commands and demonstrate that it can perform the necessary tasks or accommodation;
- (d) must **not** engage in behaviour that puts at risk the safety of others, including other animals, or that creates disruption or distraction in the learning environment;
  - (i) such behaviour includes, but is not limited to, growling, nipping, barking, attention seeking, eating;
  - (ii) any such behaviour is grounds to prohibit the Guide Dog / Service Dog's attendance on school property and in the school building,
- (e) must have control of its biological functions so as not to soil the inside of buildings, or require feeding during the school day;
- (f) must demonstrate continuous appropriate behaviour with its Handler and others in the school environment to remain eligible for entry in school buildings or school-related events.

#### 6.8 Assessment of the Accommodation Request

- 6.8.1. Once the application and all necessary documentation is received by the school principal, a review will take place by the Board team

supporting the student and a meeting shall be scheduled to review the accommodation request. Every effort will be made to review the documentation and schedule a meeting in a reasonable timeframe.

- 6.8.2. A meeting with the Board team supporting the student, the parent/adult student and student (as appropriate), the health practitioner recommending the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal for the student, the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog and of the Handler, and any other individuals who may contribute to the accommodation process may be scheduled to review the request for accommodation.
- 6.8.3. Each request for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be addressed on an individual basis giving consideration to:
- (a) the individual learning strengths and needs of the student, the student's IEP goals, safety plan, behaviour plan and/or student's medical plan of care (if any);
    - (i) supporting documents such as psychological assessments, occupational or physical therapy assessments, functional behaviour assessments etc.
  - (b) evidence of how the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal's attendance at school might provide accommodation for a demonstrated disability-related learning need and/or act of daily living necessary while at school;
  - (c) assessment information provided by a regulated health professional with expertise regarding the student's disability-related needs supporting the request for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal;
  - (d) the training and certification of the Guide Dog / Service Dog and student as Handler;
  - (e) the impact of the accommodation on the student's dignity, integration and independence;
  - (f) whether one or more alternative accommodations can meet the needs of the student;
  - (g) whether the student's attendance with a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal might require an increase in the level of staff support provided to the student;
  - (h) whether training will be required for staff and/or the student;
  - (i) the impact of the accommodation on the learning environment for the student, other students, including, health, safety, disruption and distraction;

- (j) any competing human rights of students, staff, and community members using the school pursuant to a permit;
  - (i) recommendations for accommodation plans to reconcile competing rights.
- 6.9 The process of accommodation, including inquiries regarding competing rights and notice to the school community, shall respect the student's right to privacy regarding their disability and specific learning needs and/or needs of daily living.
- 6.10 Where the student is not the primary Handler, Board staff must be trained as the Handler(s) and accompany the student and dog at all times. As a result, such requests will be individually considered, in accordance with the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship, including consideration of the resources required, alternative accommodations that might meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs and the impact on the staff and other students.
- 6.11 Service Animals shall only be considered when reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student. Parents must complete an application for a Service Animal included in **Appendix B** of the Procedure.
  - (a) The accommodation process following a request by a parent/adult student for a Service Animal shall be consistent with the process noted above, but shall also include any special considerations that may arise if an animal is a species other than a dog, including the ability to be trained, necessary biological functions, the capacity for the animal to respond to commands, whether the animal may be kept on a leash/harness/crate/mat and how such restrictions might impact accommodation.
- 6.12 The determination with respect to the application for a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal shall be communicated to the parent/adult student in writing in accordance with **Appendix D**.

### **IMPLEMENTING THE ACCOMMODATION**

- 6.13 Where approval is granted, the school principal in consultation with the student's educational team, will do the following:
  - (a) make changes to the student's IEP goals and/or student's medical plan of care;
    - (i) may provide for the accommodation on an interim trial basis, in which case the indicators of success or lack of success for this form of accommodation will be identified before the trial period begins.

- (b) organize an orientation session for school staff, students and the student Handler;
- (c) develop a timetable identifying a bio-break, water break, location/process to be followed during instructional and non-instructional times;
  - (i) access may be limited to certain activities, areas of the school, or certain times of the day, including but not limited to, where exclusion is required pursuant to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* or the *Food Safety and Quality Act 2001*, which prohibit Service Animals from being in places where food is prepared, processed or handled.
  - (ii) assessment may be required by the School Board's health and safety officer health and safety issues applicable to different areas/activities in the school;
- (d) develop emergency procedures, to include a fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan;
- (e) notice to the community via a letter to parents; posting on the school's website / social media; presentation by the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog during a school council meeting or association supporting the use of the Service Animal; signage on the school's front door, gymnasium and library doors; communication to potential occasional staff accepting a position where the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal may be providing service to the student;
- (f) student assembly for introduction and orientation regarding the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal;
- (g) arrangements for transportation of the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal to and from school, if necessary;
  - (i) If the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be accompanying the student on a school vehicle, inquiries must be made regarding competing rights, the transportation plan must specify where the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal and student will be located; the vehicle shall have a sticker / sign identifying the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal is on board;
  - (ii) Documentation about the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be included with the route information so that new or substitute bus drivers are aware of the Guide Dog / Service Dog's or Service Animal's presence.

- (iii) Specialized transportation shall **not** be provided solely for the purpose enabling the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal to travel to and from school with the student;

### **Continuous Assessment**

- 6.14 A review of the effectiveness of the Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal in supporting the student's learning goals shall be undertaken as part of each review of the student's IEP, in the event of a Violent Incident Report, and as otherwise deemed necessary by the Principal.
- 6.15 Approval may be revoked at any time by the principal if:
  - (a) there are any concerns for the health and safety of students, staff or the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal;
  - (b) there is behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping. In the event that this behaviour occurs, the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the classroom immediately and the student's parent/guardian will be called to pick up the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the school. Alternative options for accommodation will be discussed.
  - (c) there has been a change to the student's circumstances or disability-related needs, which had supported the original approval or a change to the needs of students/staff such that there is a new competing right;
  - (d) the Board in its discretion determines that the accommodation is not effective for the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living.

### **Records**

- 6.16 A copy of the application and confirmation of approval, as well as any other relevant documents supporting the accommodation shall be retained in the student's Ontario Student Record.
- 6.17 The School Board shall be required to collect, use and disclose the personal information of the student in order to fulfill the accommodation process. Notice of the collection, use and disclosure must be provided to the parent/adult student. Efforts should be made to limit the personal information to only that which is necessary.

- 6.18 The Board is required pursuant to PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals to collect information regarding the implementation of the policy and procedure regarding Guide Dogs and Service Animals, including.
- (a) Total number of requests for students to be accompanied by Guide Dog / Service Dogs / Service Animals;
    - (i) Whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students;
    - (ii) The student's grade;
    - (iii) Whether the student is the Handler;
  - (b) The number of requests approved and denied;
    - (i) If denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and/or services provided to the student to support their access to the Ontario Curriculum;
    - (ii) Species of Service Animals requested and approved; and
    - (iii) Types of needs being supported: emotional, social, psychological, physical.

## **FOOD AREAS**

- 6.19 Under Ontario Regulation 562, of *Ontario's Health Promotion and Protection Act*, only Guide Dogs / Service Dogs are allowed to be in areas where food is served, sold, and offered for sale. Other Service Animals are not permitted in school cafeterias. No animals, including Guide Dogs / Service Dogs, are allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled such as the kitchen of the school cafeteria or the hospitality classroom.

## **7.0 EVALUATION**

This operational procedure will be reviewed at a minimum every four (4) years after the effective date

## **8.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Application for Guide Dog/Service Dog  
 Appendix B: Application for Service Animal  
 Appendix C: Principal's Checklist for Guide Dog/ Service Dog  
 Appendix D: Sample Letters

## **9.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Policies:

- Accessibility Policy (P069)
- Student Health Support Policy (P092)
- Equity Policy (P037)

Operational Procedures:

- Use of Service Animals by the General Public (PR604)

Legislative Acts, Regulations and Other Resources:

- *Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19*
- *Education Act, RSO 1990, c.E2, s. 170(1), s.265(1); O. Reg. 298, s.11*
- *PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals*
- *J.F. v. Waterloo Catholic District School Board, 2017 HRTO 1121 (CanLII)*
- *Accessibility for Ontarions with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c.11*
- *Blind Persons' Rights Act, RSO 1990, c.B7,*
- *Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c.D16*
- *Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990, c.H7*
- *Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, SO 2001, c.20*



**APPLICATION FOR GUIDE DOG/ SERVICE DOG**

**This Form is to be submitted to the School Principal**

**School**

**Grade**

**Student Name**

**Address & Home / Cell Telephone Number**

**Disability-Related Needs to be Accommodated by Guide Dog / Service Dog**

- Please attach a copy of the assessment report from a registered pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, optometrist or audiologist containing the student's diagnosis and describing in detail the disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living to be accommodated and how the Guide Dog/ Service Dog will provide accommodation in a school setting.

**Municipal License**

- Please attached a copy of the municipal license, not more than 12 months old; confirmation to be updated annually.

**Veterinary Certificate**

- Please attach a certificate from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario (confirmation to be updated annually) attesting to:
  - the breed of dog, age of dog and that the dog is an adult;
  - the dog does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans;
  - the dog has received all required vaccinations;
  - the dog is in good health to assist the student

**Certificate of Training**

- Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the Guide Dog / Service Dog's training by a training organization accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR standard for training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animal's Procedure [#].
- A letter confirming that the trainer will attend a School Council Meeting to provide a presentation and respond to questions from the school community.
- Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the student Handler's training by an accredited training organization by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR standard for training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animal's Procedure [#].

**Student NOT the Handler**

Where the student is not the Handler, please describe below what, if any, responsibilities the student is capable of performing independently and the responsibilities you wish to have assumed by a school staff member.

**Insurance**

Pursuant to *Dog Owners' Liability Act*, RSO 1990, c.D16, the owner of a dog is responsible for any injury or death caused by the dog. Please attach a certificate of home or contents insurance. Where the dog is owned by a registered charity, please provide a letter from the registered charity confirming their ownership of the dog.

**This Form is to be submitted to the School Principal**

Personal information of the student and parent/guardian is being collected by the ● District School Board in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to be used to provide education services pursuant to the *Education Act* s.170(1)7 and PPM 163 and the *Human Rights Code*, s.1.

**APPLICATION FOR SERVICE ANIMAL****School****Grade****Student Name****Address & Home / Cell Telephone Number****Disability-Related Needs to be Accommodated by Service Animal**

- Please attached a copy of the assessment report from a registered pediatrician, psychologist or psychiatrist, containing the student's diagnosis and describing in detail the disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living to be accommodated and how the Service Animal will provide accommodation in a school setting.

**Veterinary Certificate**

- Please attach a certificate from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario (confirmation to be updated annually) attesting to:
  - the species of animal, age and confirmation that the animal is an adult;
  - the animal does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans or dogs;
  - the animal has received all required vaccinations; and
  - the animal is in good health to assist the student.

**Information regarding Animal**

- Describe in detail the tasks or services performed by the animal;
- Identify the oral commands or visual signs to which the animal responds;
- Attestation will be required confirming that the animal does not make vocal noises, does not engage in distracting behaviour, does not exhibit aggression;
- Identify whether the animal will be on a leash/harness or in a crate;
- Describe the biological needs of the animal;

**Student**

- Can the student independently manage the animal?
- Describe in detail where, when and how the student currently utilizes the animal's services in public spaces for accommodation purposes.
- Please describe below what, if any, responsibilities the student is capable of performing independently.
- Please describe below the responsibilities you wish to have assumed by a school staff member.

**Insurance**

A parent must provide an insurance certificate identifying that Board as an insured in the event that the animal causes damage to the school or its contents, or causes injury or death to any person accessing the school building or the school grounds. A minimum of two million dollars of coverage will be required.

Personal information of the student and parent/guardian is being collected by the ● District School Board in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to be used to provide education services pursuant to the *Education Act* s.170(1)7 and PPM 163 and the *Human Rights Code*, s.1.

**Principal's Checklist for Guide Dog / Service Dog****School****Grade****Student Name****Application Requirements for Guide Dog / Service Dog**

- Assessment report with diagnosis and accommodation to be provided
- Supporting documents (IEP, psychological, occupational therapy, physical therapy, functional behaviour, and/or orientation and mobility assessments)
- Copy of municipal license [within 12 months]
- Veterinary certificate [within 3 months]
- Certificate of training or attestation for Guide Dog / Service Dog [within 6 months]
- Certificate of training or attestation for student Handler [within 6 months]
- Letter of confirmation that the trainer will present to School Council
- Certificate of insurance [within 3 months] or Letter from the registered charity which owns the dog
- Letter of inquiry with school staff and community using the school pursuant to permit regarding allergies, phobia/fear or cultural sensitivity
- Assessment by health and safety officer

**Implementation Requirements**

- Accommodation plan where there are competing rights (may include restriction of access to areas of school, change in classroom etc.)
- Timetable identifying bio breaks, when accompanying student, when in crate
- Emergency procedures (fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan)
- Letter to parents that Guide Dog/Service Dog will be accompanying student
- Information session during to school council meeting
- Posting on school website or Facebook that Guide Dog/Service Dog will be accompanying student
- Signage for front door, gymnasium door and library door advising of Guide Dog / Service Dog
- Transportation plan (if required)
- Orientation for school staff and students
- Training for staff member acting as Handler (if required)
- Identification of benchmarks for assessment of effectiveness (to be reviewed with IEP)

## Sample Letter to Employees and School Permit Holders

Date

To Employees and Permit Holders

This letter is to advise that the school is in the process of planning for a Guide Dog / Service Dog to attend [school] with a student in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code*.

The Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

A specific timetable will be created, which identifies where and when the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be at different periods of the school day, and will be shared with you.

We respect the needs of all staff and our community partners in providing a safe and inclusive workplace and environment. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog in our school.

Thank you for your on-going cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Sample Letter to the School Community**

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code*.

The Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

An information session has been scheduled to take place following the school council meeting on [insert date]. A trainer from [insert] will be present to answer any questions that you might have about the training of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs.

An orientation session will be provided for all students, to explain the role of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog in our school.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Sample Letter to the Parents of Students on School Bus**

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians

On [date] the school forwarded a letter home to all parents advising that a Guide Dog / Service Dog would be introduced to our school community.

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will riding a student to and from school to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code* beginning [insert date].

The Guide Dog / Service Dog and student will be assigned a specific seating area on the bus, and the Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained not to be disruptive while riding on school transportation. It will be identifiable by its vest or harness.

Your child will be participating in an orientation session to explain the role of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in providing a safe and inclusive services for education. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog on your child's bus.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Sample Letter to the Parents of Students in Class(es)**

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians

On [date] the school forwarded a letter home to all parents advising that a Guide Dog / Service Dog would be introduced to our school community.

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in your child's class / [insert course] in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code* beginning [insert date].

The Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

Your child has participated in an orientation session to explain the role of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or me.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Sample Letter Decision Letter Approving Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal**

Date

Dear Parent / Adult Student

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child / you attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Dog to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs / acts of daily living.

I wish to confirm approval of your request.

As we have discussed, your / your child's ability to perform the responsibilities of a Handler, and assessment of benchmarks established for evaluating the effectiveness of the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal in meeting your / your child's accommodation needs will take place on a regular basis.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal is groomed, has a vest or harness and crate [if necessary], as well as a water bowl. All costs associated will be your responsibility.

If concerns arise regarding the integration of the Guide Dog / Service Dog into the school community and your / your child's class(es), a meeting will be scheduled to review how the issues might be resolved.

In the event that the Guide Dog / Service Dog engages in behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping, you / your child / the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Dog from the classroom immediately and you will be required to arrange for the Guide Dog/ Service Dog to be removed from the school. In such a case, alternative options for accommodation will be reviewed.

Sincerely,

Principal



**Sample Letter Decision Letter Declining Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal**

Date

Dear Parent / Adult Student

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs / acts of daily living.

I wish to communicate that your request is being denied.

As we have discussed, your child is not able to perform the responsibilities of a Handler [and/or the Service Animal is not trained and may be disruptive or a distraction in the school environment], and reasonable alternative accommodations that respect your child's dignity, encourage independence and facilitate integration are available to support your child's learning needs and access to meaningful educational services.

This decision is not subject to appeal; however, if you wish to discuss the alternative accommodation measures available to support your child while at school, please contact me to arrange for a meeting.

Sincerely,

Principal

**Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals****ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE****1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 It is the policy of the ● District School Board in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and facilitates the development of independence.
- (a) The School Board utilizes a variety of placements, differentiated programming, and evidence-based interventions and strategies to provide meaningful access to education for students who have disability-related needs that impact their learning.
  - (b) The School Board does not provide Guide Dogs, Service Dogs or Service Animals to students.
  - (c) The School Board encourages any family considering the purchase of a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal to meet with the school principal or superintendent before making a commitment.
- 1.2 This Administrative Procedure identifies the individualized process to be followed when a parent or adult student applies to the School Board to have a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal accompany the student while the student is attending school or a school-related event.
- 1.3 Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and Ontario Regulation 474/00 *Access to School Premises*, the ● District School Board requires each school to have a process for visitors.
- 1.4 Any determination of whether a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal is an appropriate accommodation for a student while receiving education services is a decision of the School Board. A regulated health professional cannot unilaterally prescribe that a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal be a specific accommodation while the student is receiving education services at school.
- 1.5 When an adult student or parent seeks to have their child attend school or school related events with a Guide Dog / Service Dog, both the Guide Dog / Service Dog **and** the Student Handler must be certified as having been successfully trained by an accredited training facility.
- (a) Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the School Board consider an application for a student who will not be acting as the primary trained Handler of the Guide Dog / Service Dog.
- 1.6 Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the School Board consider Service Animals, other than dogs, as an accommodation for a student and only if other reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

## Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Service animals have traditionally been highly trained dogs that assist individuals with various tasks of daily living (Guide Dog, Hearing and Signal Dogs, Mobility Assistance Dogs, Seizure Response Dogs).
- 2.2 In most circumstances, a Guide Dog will be a highly trained dog provided to support the orientation and mobility needs of a student Handler who has a diagnosis of blindness/low vision, and the Guide Dog will provide the student Handler with greater independence, dignity and opportunity for integration.
- 2.3 The term Service Animal is used in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarions with Disabilities Act* (AODA), to describe an animal that assists an individual with a disability to be able to access goods and services available to the public. **A school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to a student's use of a Service Dog / Service Animal when accessing education services in school buildings.**
- (a) Pursuant to the *Code* it is possible that a Service Animal might include different species that provide a therapeutic function (horses), emotional support, sensory function, companionship and/or comfort.
- (b) The determination of whether the animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate a demonstrated disability-related learning need is a decision of the School Board.
- (i) Such a decision will consider that animals, other than dogs, are not trained by an Accredited Training Organization and may pose a risk to the safety of students and staff and/or may be disruptive to the learning environment and/or may act as a distraction in the learning environment.
- 2.4 Due to risks to safety, and risks of disruption and distraction in the learning environment, the School Board does **not** permit training of potential guide dogs and service dogs in the school setting or during school activities.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 For the purpose of this Procedure the following definitions apply:

**Accredited training organization** is a guide dog or service dog trainer that is accredited by:

- International Guide Dog Federation (“IGDF”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide Dogs for the blind/low vision are trained by its member organizations; or
- Assistance Dogs International (“ADI”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide, Hearing and Service Dogs are trained by its member organizations;

**Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

or

- A Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that attests to compliance with the Meghan Search and Rescue Standard in Support of Accessibility: Persons with a Disability Teamed with Service Dogs standard for training (MSAR).

**Adult student** shall be defined to mean a student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed him/her/themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent

**Disability** means,

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*;

**Guide Dog** means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*;

**Handler** refers to the individual trained by an Accredited Training Organization who is managing the Guide Dog / Service Dog and in most cases will be the student for whom the Guide Dog / Service Dog is provided;

**Parent** shall be defined to mean a custodial parent of the student or a guardian pursuant to the *Education Act*;

**Service Dog** means a dog which has been certified after successfully completing a training program provided by an Accredited Training Organization.

**Service Animal** for the purpose of this Procedure includes a therapy dog, companion animal, comfort animal and emotional support animal and includes a dog or other domesticated animal that may legally reside in an urban, residential home, that is not highly trained to perform particular tasks to assist with a student's disability-related needs, but provides emotional support (and/or companionship, calming influence) for a student with a disability-related mental health and/or psychological need and/or comfort during a difficult period.

**Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals****4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES****Principals**

- 4.1 School principals are responsible for the management of the school premises, the staff providing educational programs and the safety of all students.
- (a) A school principal has authority to exclude any animal, including Guide Dogs / Service Dogs and Service Animals, from entry onto school premises and school building(s), as an accommodation for a student, provided that the student is offered appropriate alternative accommodation to meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs.
  - (b) School principals, before admitting a Guide Dog / Service Dog into the school or on school related activities with the student Handler, shall require a parent/adult student to submit a completed application, included in **Appendix A** of the Procedure.
  - (c) Before admitting a Service Animal, the school principal shall require the parent/adult student to submit a completed application, included in **Appendix B** of the Procedure.
- 4.2 On receipt of an application for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal, the school principal shall review the application for completeness and may request any additional information or clarification necessary to assess the request for accommodation.
- 4.3 The school principal shall be responsible for communication with the parent/adult student with respect to the accommodation process, and where approved the implementation and management of the accommodation.
- 4.4 Where a student supported by a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal, whose parent is the Handler, seeks only to attend a school excursion with the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal, which is at a location where the public is customarily admitted, efforts will be made to facilitate the student's participation with the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal and parent as the Handler.
- (a) Inquiries may need to be made regarding competing rights and transportation arrangements.

**Parents/Adult Students**

- 4.5 Parents or Adult Students are required to provide all necessary documentation and engage in the consultation process for the purpose of considering and implementing, if appropriate, the request that a Guide Dog / Service Dog accompany the student at school and/or on school-related activities. The parent or adult student shall be responsible for:
- (a) submission of **Appendix A**;
  - (b) all costs related to the dog, food, grooming, harness, crate and/or mat and veterinary care;

## Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

- (c) obtaining training and maintaining the Guide Dog / Service Dog training to provide the accommodation in a safe manner that does not disrupt student learning;
- (d) providing confirmation of municipal license for the dog (to be updated annually),
- (e) providing confirmation of certificates of training not older than 6 months from an Accredited Training Organization attesting that the dog and student Handler have successfully completed training and may safely engage in a public setting without creating a risk of safety or a risk of disruption within a school setting;
- (a) diagnosis from a registered pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist (or other regulated health professional as determined by the School Board) with a recommendation for the use of a Guide Dog / Service Dog;
- (b) a description of the services provided by the Guide Dog / Service Dog to the student, and how those services will accommodate the student's disability-related needs and assist the student in achieving their learning goals and/or goals of daily living while at school;
- (c) a certificate not greater than three (3) months old from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario attesting that, the dog is an adult; identifying the age and breed; does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans; has received all required vaccinations; and is in good health to assist the student (to be updated annually);
- (d) general liability insurance providing coverage in an amount specified by the Board<sup>1</sup> in the event of an injury or death as a result of the Guide Dog / Service Dog's attendance on school property or on a school-related activity (to be updated annually)<sup>2</sup>.

### Students

4.6 Students will be expected to act as the Guide Dog / Service Dog's primary Handler. The student Handler must:

- (a) demonstrate the ability to control the Guide Dog / Service Dog in accordance with the training received;
- (b) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Dog is always wearing a vest and leash or harness when the dog is not in its crate.
- (c) ensure the Guide Dog / Service Dog does not disrupt the learning of others with unnecessary movement, vocalization or other behaviour, including aggressive or threatening behaviour;

<sup>1</sup> Note usually 2 million in general liability insurance coverage is requested. This requirement might need to be waived on the basis of equity in the event that it causes financial hardship for a family.

<sup>2</sup> Note insurance should not pose a barrier to the provision of accommodation as a result of socio-economic factors

## Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

- (d) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Dog's biological needs are addressed;
- (e) transition and maintain at all times the Guide Dog / Service Dog on a leash, harness, mat and/or crate;
- (f) comply with an accommodation plan that addresses the competing rights of others;

### Guide Dog / Service Dog

#### 4.7 The Guide Dog / Service Dog:

- (a) shall be a highly trained and certified by Accredited Training Organization;
  - (i) will have evidence of training or re-certification confirming compliance with training requirements within the last 6 months be required;
- (b) must be groomed and clean;
- (c) must at all times while on school property be responsive to commands and demonstrate that it can perform the necessary tasks or accommodation;
- (d) must **not** engage in behaviour that puts at risk the safety of others, including other animals, or that creates disruption or distraction in the learning environment;
  - (i) such behaviour includes, but is not limited to, growling, nipping, barking, attention seeking, eating;
  - (ii) any such behaviour is grounds to prohibit the Guide Dog / Service Dog's attendance on school property and in the school building,
- (e) must have control of its biological functions so as not to soil the inside of buildings, or require feeding during the school day;
- (f) must demonstrate continuous appropriate behaviour with its Handler and others in the school environment to remain eligible for entry in school buildings or school-related events.

## 5. ASSESSMENT OF THE ACCOMMODATION REQUEST

- 5.1 Once the application and all necessary documentation is received by the school principal, a review will take place by the Board team supporting the student and a meeting shall be scheduled to review the accommodation request. Every effort will be made to review the documentation and schedule a meeting in a reasonable timeframe.
- 5.2 A meeting with the Board team supporting the student, the parent/adult student and student (as appropriate), the health practitioner recommending the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal for the student, the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog and of the Handler, and any other individuals who may contribute to the accommodation process may be scheduled to review the request for accommodation.

**Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

- 5.3 Each request for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be addressed on an individual basis giving consideration to:
- (a) the individual learning strengths and needs of the student, the student's IEP goals, safety plan, behaviour plan and/or student's medical plan of care (if any);
    - (i) supporting documents such as psychological assessments, occupational or physical therapy assessments, functional behaviour assessments etc.
  - (b) evidence of how the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal's attendance at school might provide accommodation for a demonstrated disability-related learning need and/or act of daily living necessary while at school;
  - (c) assessment information provided by a regulated health professional with expertise regarding the student's disability-related needs supporting the request for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal;
  - (d) the training and certification of the Guide Dog / Service Dog and student as Handler;
  - (e) the impact of the accommodation on the student's dignity, integration and independence;
  - (f) whether one or more alternative accommodations can meet the needs of the student;
  - (g) whether the student's attendance with a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal might require an increase in the level of staff support provided to the student;
  - (h) whether training will be required for staff and/or the student;
  - (i) the impact of the accommodation on the learning environment for the student, other students, including, health, safety, disruption and distraction;
  - (j) any competing human rights of students, staff, and community members using the school pursuant to a permit;
    - (i) recommendations for accommodation plans to reconcile competing rights.
- 5.4 The process of accommodation, including inquiries regarding competing rights and notice to the school community, shall respect the student's right to privacy regarding their disability and specific learning needs and/or needs of daily living.
- 5.5 Where the student is not the primary Handler, Board staff must be trained as the Handler(s) and accompany the student and dog at all times. As a result, such requests will be individually considered, in accordance with the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship, including consideration of the resources required, alternative accommodations that might meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs and the impact on the staff and other students.



**Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

- 5.6 Service Animals shall only be considered when reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student. Parents must complete an application for a Service Animal included in **Appendix B** of the Procedure.
- (a) The accommodation process following a request by a parent/adult student for a Service Animal shall be consistent with the process noted above, but shall also include any special considerations that may arise if an animal is a species other than a dog, including the ability to be trained, necessary biological functions, the capacity for the animal to respond to commands, whether the animal may be kept on a leash/harness/crate/mat and how such restrictions might impact accommodation.
- 5.7 The determination with respect to the application for a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal shall be communicated to the parent/adult student in writing in accordance with **Appendix D**.

**6. IMPLEMENTING THE ACCOMMODATION**

- 6.1 Where approval is granted, the school principal in consultation with the student's educational team, will do the following:
- (a) make changes to the student's IEP goals and/or student's medical plan of care;
- (i) may provide for the accommodation on an interim trial basis, in which case the indicators of success or lack of success for this form of accommodation will be identified before the trial period begins.
- (b) organize an orientation session for school staff, students and the student Handler;
- (c) develop a timetable identifying a bio-break, water break, location/process to be followed during instructional and non-instructional times;
- (i) access may be limited to certain activities, areas of the school, or certain times of the day, including but not limited to, where exclusion is required pursuant to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* or the *Food Safety and Quality Act 2001*, which prohibit Service Animals from being in places where food is prepared, processed or handled.
- (ii) assessment may be required by the School Board's health and safety officer health and safety issues applicable to different areas/activities in the school;
- (d) develop emergency procedures, to include a fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan;
- (e) notice to the community via a letter to parents; posting on the school's website / social media; presentation by the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog during a school council meeting or association supporting the use of the Service Animal; signage on the school's front door, gymnasium and library doors; communication to potential

## Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

occasional staff accepting a position where the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal may be providing service to the student;

- (f) student assembly for introduction and orientation regarding the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal;
- (g) arrangements for transportation of the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal to and from school, if necessary;
  - (i) If the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be accompanying the student on a school vehicle, inquiries must be made regarding competing rights, the transportation plan must specify where the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal and student will be located; the vehicle shall have a sticker / sign identifying the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal is on board;
  - (ii) Documentation about the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be included with the route information so that new or substitute bus drivers are aware of the Guide Dog / Service Dog's or Service Animal's presence.
  - (iii) Specialized transportation shall **not** be provided solely for the purpose enabling the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal to travel to and from school with the student;

### 7. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A review of the effectiveness of the Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal in supporting the student's learning goals shall be undertaken as part of each review of the student's IEP, in the event of a Violent Incident Report, and as otherwise deemed necessary by the Principal.
- 7.2 Approval may be revoked at any time by the principal if:
  - (a) there are any concerns for the health and safety of students, staff or the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal;
  - (b) there is behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping. In the event that this behaviour occurs, the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the classroom immediately and the student's parent/guardian will be called to pick up the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the school. Alternative options for accommodation will be discussed.
  - (c) there has been a change to the student's circumstances or disability-related needs, which had supported the original approval or a change to the needs of students/staff such that there is a new competing right;
  - (d) the Board in its discretion determines that the accommodation is not effective for the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living.

## Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

### 8. RECORDS

- 8.1 A copy of the application and confirmation of approval, as well as any other relevant documents supporting the accommodation shall be retained in the student's Ontario Student Record.
- 8.2 The School Board shall be required to collect, use and disclose the personal information of the student in order to fulfill the accommodation process. Notice of the collection, use and disclosure must be provided to the parent/adult student. Efforts should be made to limit the personal information to only that which is necessary.
- 8.3 The Board is required pursuant to PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals to collect information regarding the implementation of the policy and procedure regarding Guide Dogs and Service Animals, including.
- (a) Total number of requests for students to be accompanied by Guide Dog / Service Dogs / Service Animals;
    - (i) Whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students;
    - (ii) The student's grade;
    - (iii) Whether the student is the Handler;
  - (b) The number of requests approved and denied;
    - (i) If denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and/or services provided to the student to support their access to the Ontario Curriculum;
    - (ii) Species of Service Animals requested and approved; and
    - (iii) Types of needs being supported: emotional, social, psychological, physical.

### 9. FOOD AREAS

Under Ontario Regulation 562, of *Ontario's Health Promotion and Protection Act*, only Guide Dogs / Service Dogs are allowed to be in areas where food is served, sold, and offered for sale. Other Service Animals are not permitted in school cafeterias. No animals, including Guide Dogs / Service Dogs, are allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled such as the kitchen of the school cafeteria or the hospitality classroom.

### 10. SOURCES

*Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19*

*Education Act, RSO 1990, c.E2, s. 170(1), s.265(1); O. Reg. 298, s.11*

*PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals*

*J.F. v. Waterloo Catholic District School Board, 2017 HRTO 1121 (CanLII)*

*Accessibility for Ontarions with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c.11*

**Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

*Blind Persons' Rights Act, RSO 1990, c.B7,*  
*Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c.D16*  
*Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990, c.H7*  
*Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, SO 2001, c.20*

**11. RELATED FORMS & LETTERS****Forms**

Appendix A Application Request for Guide Dog / Service Dog  
Appendix B Application Request for Service Animal  
Appendix C Checklist for principals

**Letters**

Appendix D  
Sample Letter to Employees & School Permit Holders  
Sample Letter to the School Community  
Sample Letter to the Parents of Students on the School Bus  
Sample Letter to the Parents of Students in the Class(es)  
Sample Letter Approving the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal  
Sample Letter Denying the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal