

719-AR. SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

Service animals are dogs or miniature horses trained to assist individuals with disabilities in the activities of normal, daily living. In compliance with law, service animals accompanying individuals with disabilities will be permitted in district buildings; on district property; and on vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the district when in compliance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

Types Of Service Animals

1. Guide – animal is trained to serve as a travel tool to persons who are blind or have severe visual impairment.
2. Hearing – animal is trained to alert a person who is deaf or has significant hearing loss when a sound occurs.
3. Service – animal is trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. The animal may perform functions such as carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping up a person after a fall, assisting with wheelchair, etc.
4. Sensory signal (Ssig) – animal is trained to assist a person with autism. The animal may provide sensory input such as sight and hearing, and may alert the person to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism.
5. Seizure alert/response – animal is trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder. During a seizure, the animal may stand guard over the person or go for help, depending on the person's needs. An animal may be trained to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance.
6. Psychiatric service – animal is trained to assist a person with a mental disability to go out in public, socialize and remain focused.
7. Trainee – undergoing training to be a service animal. The animal must be housebroken and fully socialized, which means the animal will not, except on rare occasions, bark, yip, growl or make disruptive noises; will have a good temperament and disposition; will not show fear; will not be upset or agitated when it sees another animal; and will not be aggressive. If a trainee begins to display improper behavior, the handler immediately will act to correct the animal or remove the animal from the district building, property or vehicle.

Instructions To Employees/Students

1. Allow a service animal to accompany the owner or handler at all times in school buildings and district vehicles and on district property, except where service animals are specifically prohibited.
2. Do not separate or attempt to separate an owner or handler from his/her service animal.
3. Do not pet a service animal, as this distracts the animal from the assigned functions.
4. Do not feed a service animal, as the animal may have specific dietary requirements or feeding times, and feeding could cause the animal to become ill.
5. Do not deliberately startle a service animal.

Allergic Reactions By Others

If a student or employee assigned to a classroom or program in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the owner or handler will be required to move the animal to a different location designated by the building principal or designee.

An alternate plan will be developed by the appropriate staff and the student's parent/guardian. The plan could include reassignment of the owner or handler to a different classroom or program or reassignment of the allergic individual.

Removal From District Schools, Facilities And Property

When a district administrator determines that a service animal is violating the conditions of Board policy, the administrator will revoke permission and require the owner or handler to immediately remove the animal from the school, vehicle, or district property. The administrator shall document the incident(s) that led to the decision to remove the service animal. If necessary, the administrator may contact local law enforcement.

Examples of violations by an owner or handler of a service animal can include the following:

1. Service animal is not under control of owner or handler and is significantly unruly or disruptive, including barking, growling, biting, clawing, running around, or behavior that brings attention to the animal. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the animal will be prohibited from district buildings, vehicles, and property until the owner or handler takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior, which may include muzzling or refresher training.
2. Service animal is ill and should not be taken into district buildings or vehicles or on district property.
3. Service animal is unclean and/or not well-groomed. An animal that becomes wet from the weather or weather-related incidents but is otherwise clean should be considered a clean animal.

4. Service animal does not do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability.

If the building principal recommends excluding, limiting or removing a student's service animal for any of the reasons noted above, the principal shall convene a meeting of the Section 504 or IEP team to discuss the reason(s) that may require the exclusion, placing of limitations or removal of the service animal and what alternative methods or actions may resolve the problem(s) presented by the service animal.

If the building principal recommends excluding, limiting or removing an employee's service animal for any of the reasons noted above, the principal shall meet with the employee to discuss the reason(s) that may require the exclusion, placing of limitations or removal of the service animal and what alternative methods or actions may resolve the problem(s) presented by the service animal. The building principal may also discuss the issue with other district employees and administrators who may be able to assist in reaching a decision regarding the service animal's continued presence at the school.

A building principal shall have the right to require the immediate removal from school property of a service animal, due to aggressive behavior, health or grooming issues, such as fleas or parasites, or any other condition or behavior which poses a serious direct or immediate threat to the health or safety of persons at the school.

Any employee or student with a service animal who is aggrieved by a decision to exclude, limit or remove a service animal may appeal that decision to the Superintendent of the district. That appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.

Restrictions And Off-Limits Areas

1. Mechanical Rooms/Custodial Closets – boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electric closets, elevator control rooms, and custodial closets.
2. Protective Clothing Required Areas – chemical laboratories, wood shops, metal/machine shops and photography dark rooms.
3. Dangerous Areas – any room with sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from a surface, hot materials on the floor, high level of dust, or moving machinery.

A student who is requesting an exception for a service animal to be permitted in a restricted access area will contact the principal, who will determine if and in what manner an exception will be made.

Access by a service animal to a classroom or program held in a restricted area will be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on the nature of the restriction and the best interest of the owner or handler and the animal.