



SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

Background

The North East School Division is committed to the delivery of high quality educational programs, supports and services that allow students with diverse needs to maximize their learning and achievement. The Division recognizes the diverse needs of some students may require unique accommodation(s). These accommodations, linked to the student's Inclusion and Intervention Plan, may include the use of Service Animals in situations where there is a physical disability, such as blindness or low vision, deafness or hearing impairment, as well as seizure disorder or autism spectrum disorder.

The North East School Division is also committed to ensuring it operates within the legal mandate of all legislation in meeting the needs of its students. This includes *The Education Act, 1995* and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

Definitions

"Service Animal" means a dog that has been trained by an organization that is accredited by Assistance Dogs International to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.

Emotional support animals or therapy animals, which provide therapeutic benefit, but do not have specialized training to provide services for a person with a disability, fall outside of this policy.

Procedures

1. A request for a Service Animal to accompany an individual must be made in writing to the principal and Superintendent of Student Services.
2. The Parent/Guardian [Request for Approval for the Use of a Service Animal Form \(AP-423.1\)](#) must be completed along with all supporting documentation. Supporting documentation includes:
 - 2.1 A letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (or similar provincial organization) confirming that the student's diagnosis of an accepted exceptionality and recommendation identifying the need for the use of a Service Animal in school and how it is essential and directly related to the learning needs of the student.
 - 2.2 Provide up-to-date proof the animal is in good health as well as an up-to-date record of vaccinations, proper licensing, insurance and liability coverage.
 - 2.3 Provide documentation of Service Animal training and proof of certification by Assistance Dogs International, including how long the certified service animal has been in place with the child and the date of formal certified service animal team recognition.
3. The parents/legal guardians must co-operate with the school division and provide appropriate information about the student's educational restrictions and define the benefit of a Service Animal to the student in order for the school division to determine if other accommodations would address the restrictions of the student during school hours.
4. Before approving the presence of a Service Animal in the school the principal shall, with the support of the Student Services Coordinator and the Superintendent of Student Services, make enquiries as to whether or not the introduction of the Service Animal into the school will affect the medical restrictions of other students in the school.



5. If the presence of a Service Animal is approved by the principal and the Superintendent of Student Services, then the following shall apply:
 - 5.1 If other students/staff with medical restrictions will be affected by the presence of the Service Animal:
 - 5.1.1 The principal shall determine how the accommodations of all students/staff can best be achieved;
 - 5.1.2 The parents/legal guardian of the student requesting the Service Animal will cooperate with the school to minimize any possible effects of the presence of the Service Animal on the medical restrictions of other students; and
 - 5.1.3 The principal shall make best efforts to accommodate all students in consideration with all students' learning needs.
 - 5.2 The parent/legal guardian requesting the presence of a Service Animal must:
 - 5.2.1 Accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behaviour of the Service Animal while being present at a school and indemnify the school division in writing;
 - 5.2.2 Provide appropriate insurance coverage (third party liability coverage of not less than \$1,000,000) naming and stating the Division's interest therein, for any damages caused by the Service Animal or any damages or injuries caused to the Service Animal and shall provide proof of such coverage annually;
 - 5.2.3 Pay for any training of school personnel regarding the use and care of the Service Animal in the school;
 - 5.2.4 Participate in an annual review of the presence of the Service Animal at the school;
 - 5.2.5 Provide information in writing from the service agency who trained the Service Animal indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the Service Animal, including the safest and most environmentally sound place for the animal to relieve itself, the safe removal and disposal of animal waste, and considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather;
 - 5.2.6 Provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations, and licensing of the Service Animal annually;
 - 5.2.7 Indicate who will accompany and handle the Service Animal both inside and outside the school and what arrangements have been made with regard to alternate handlers when necessary;
 - 5.2.8 Make arrangements for the Service Animal to visit the school to familiarize it with the school site, and indicate how and when initial and ongoing training will be provided for staff; and
 - 5.2.9 Allow school division staff and volunteers to touch, feed, or deal with the Service Animal in any way that may be required to ensure appropriate care of the Service Animal and the safety of students and staff.
 - 5.2.10 Provide food, water and "bio-breaks" to the service animal and arrange for timely removal and disposal of animal waste in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.
6. Considerations and limitations include:
 - 6.1 The school division may impose reasonable conditions or restrictions relating to:
 - 6.1.1 Transportation of the Service Animal to and from school;



- 6.1.2 Restricting the presence of the Service Animal to specific areas in the school;
- 6.1.3 Exclusion from access to specific areas where required by other laws (i.e., food preparation areas)
- 6.2 The school division retains discretion to exclude or remove the certified service animal from the school or school property if:
 - 6.2.1 The presence of the service animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
 - 6.2.2 The service animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the instruction program, school activities or students;
 - 6.2.3 The handler is unable to fully control the behaviour of the service animal;
 - 6.2.4 The handler fails to appropriately care for the animal; or
 - 6.2.5 The parent/guardian fails to provide the required documentation.
- 6.3 The agreement to accommodate a Service Animal is to be reviewed annually and may be modified as required following the same process set out in this administrative procedure.
- 6.4 If the student moves to a different school, the request for a Service Animal must be resubmitted and initiated in advance, at the new site with the principal.
- 6.5 The agreement to accommodate a Service Animal may be terminated by the Division if the animal is no longer required to meet the needs of the student or have up to date Assistance Dog International accreditation documentation or licensing.
- 7. The application, insurance and related documentation will be retained on file at the student's school and submitted to the Superintendent of Student Services.
- 8. The principal will initiate the annual reviews and receipt of necessary documentation.
- 9. If a parent/guardian or a student over the age of 18 wishes to appeal the decision of the Superintendent or designate, they shall follow the process outlined in [Board Procedure 105 – Board Communications-3.Channels of Communication.](#)

Reference: Section 109, 141, 142, 145, 146, 175, 178, The Education Act, 1995
The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code

Education in a Culture of Excellence

Effective Date: September 26, 2017

AP 423.1 - Parent/Guardian Request for Approval for the use of a Service Animal

Student Surname: _____ Student Given Names: _____

Name of School: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Day Phone Number: _____

Name of Physician: _____ Insurance Company/Coverage: _____

Identify and describe the need for the service animal as it relates to the student's disability and describe the manner in which the service animal will meet the individual's particular need (s). If more space is required, please add additional pages.

Length of time the student and Service Animal have worked together: _____

I/We acknowledge and understand that it is our responsibility to:

1. Provide the principal with all required documentation, reports, certificates, including:

- A letter from a physician confirming that the student's need for the use of a Service Animal in school is essential and directly related to the learning needs of the student.
- Provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations, licensing, insurance and liability coverage.
- Provide documentation of Service Animal training and proof of certification by Assistance Dogs International.

2. Assume financial responsibility for the Service Animal's training, veterinary care, city/town/country license and other related costs.

3. Participate in a school case conference meeting to inform the principal of all relevant information that may affect our child, other students, staff, and/or visitors to the school.

4. Assist the principal to communicate relevant information to the school community.

5. Work cooperatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success.

6. Organize or cooperate with the Division to arrange appropriate transportation.

7. Provide the required equipment and animal care items.

8. Provide food, water and "bio-breaks" to the Service Animal as required and remove and dispose of animal waste in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.

9. Remove the animal immediately from the school, should the Service Animal exhibit any unprovoked behaviours (ie. growling, scratching, nipping, biting, etc.) until the plan is re-evaluated to ensure the safety of staff, students, and visitors.

I/we acknowledge having read a copy of the North East School Division Administrative Procedure (423) - Service Animals in Schools.

Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date