



AP 2-800 – USE OF CERTIFIED SERVICE ANIMALS

1. Background

The Western School Division Board of Trustees supports and recognizes that, in certain cases, appropriate educational programming may include the services of a certified service animal.

A certified service animal is a recognized working animal that has been trained to assist individuals who have a medically diagnosed physical or developmental disability. There are strict guidelines that apply to their access, handling, and interaction.

References used to develop these guidelines include:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) 15(1)
The Public Schools Act 41(1), 41(1.1)
Appropriate Educational Programming (MR 155/2005) 2(2), 3, 5(1), 5(2), 7(2)
The Human Rights Code (Manitoba) 9(2)
The Service Animals Protection Act (Manitoba) 1(a)

2. Procedural Guidelines

Decisions regarding the use of service animals by students in the school environment are made on a case-by-case basis. All circumstances of a particular request, including the individual needs of the student being assisted by the animal and the needs of other students and staff, will be considered. Where necessary in the decision making process, the rights and needs of one person may have to be balanced against the rights and needs of another.

Entry of service animals is decided after extensive consultation and in accordance with the procedures listed below. The request will be reviewed by the Principal with the Student Services Administrator and the Superintendent.

These guidelines provide direction to school administrators regarding parent/guardian requests for the integration of service animals into the schools.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Parents/Guardians

- 3.1. Make a formal request to the school principal using the Request for a Service Animal in School form (AP 2-802) outlining the needs of their child and the benefits of using a service animal as part of their child's programming.
- 3.2. Provide a letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons or the college of Psychologists of Manitoba (or similar provincial organization) confirming the diagnosis of an accepted exceptionality and the recommendation for the use of a certified service animal.
- 3.3. Provide a letter from an accredited service animal training program [membership in Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF)], stating that a service animal has been placed with the child and provide a Certificate of Training for the animal with the services that it has been trained to perform.
- 3.4. Annually provide the school with proof of up-to-date vaccinations, a municipal Service Animal license and confirmation the service animal is in good health.



- 3.5. Assume financial responsibility relating to the use and care of the service animal. This includes the provision of a full-trained animal handler to help with the initial implementation or any re-training sessions that may be required for school division staff and students.
- 3.6. Where possible and feasible, the child provides care for the animal and assumes the role of service animal handler.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal

- 4.1. Consult with the Student Services Administrator and/or the Superintendent.
- 4.2. Ensure proper documentation has been completed and is in place prior to developing an implementation plan for integration of a certified service animal into the school.
- 4.3. Review AP 2-801 Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting a Certified Service Animal in School with parents/guardians.
- 4.4. Schedule a meeting with parents/guardians, classroom teacher(s), resource teacher, a representative from the training facility, Student Services Administrator, and support staff members who work with the student to review the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and to include the function of service animal in the goals of the IEP.
- 4.5. Ensure that the students, school staff, the school community and the Student Services Administrator are informed of the anticipated integration of a service animal into the school.
 - i. A letter is to be sent home for all students and provided to all staff to inform them of the anticipated introduction of a service animal into the school. (see page 4 for a sample letter)
 - ii. A letter is to be sent home to the students in any of the classes where the service animal will be present in case of student allergies or extreme phobias. (see page 5 for a sample letter)
 - iii. A letter is to be sent to parents/guardians of all children who travel on the same bus (if applicable). (see page 5 for a sample letter)
- 4.6. Facilitate communication with the Transportation Supervisor (if applicable) regarding transportation. A personalized transportation plan should be developed.
- 4.7. Ensure signage is placed on the doors of the school alerting visitors to the service animal's presence.
- 4.8. Review the school Emergency Response Plan and notify the local fire department of the existence of a service animal.
- 4.9. Arrange for training of staff by the service animal training facility. Arrange for demonstrations from the animal service trainer and/or parents on the rules of conduct around service animals.
- 4.10. Complete the *Management Plan for the Care of a Service Animal* form (AP 2-803) together with parents/guardians.
- 4.11. Monitor the entry of the service animal regularly and review on an annual basis.

5. Roles and Responsibilities of the Transportation Supervisor

- 5.1. Inform the driver of the presence of a certified service animal on the bus; and ensure that appropriate training will be provided.



5.2. Develop a protocol for handling the service animal on the bus in conjunction with the service animal trainer/handler that will include:

- i. Location of animal during transport (should not be blocking aisles)
- ii. Plan to train other students who will ride the bus with the service animal to ensure the understanding of the function of a service animal and the procedures for handling the service animal on the bus
- iii. A bus evacuation plan for the service animal

5.3. Ensure that there is sufficient documentation and procedural instruction available on the bus for spare bus drivers.

6. Exclusions

Where the use of a service animal in a school has been approved, the animal may be excluded from access to the premises only where:

- exclusion is required by a statute.
- the service animal is of a breed that is prohibited by law or municipal bylaw e.g., Pit Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers.
- there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of the service animal. Consideration should be given to options available prior to exclusion of the animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. The situation should be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk should be considered, e.g. creating distance between the individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.; or
- there has been a material change in the circumstances that led to the original approval of the use of the animal in school.



SAMPLE LETTER TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Insert School Letterhead

Date:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a service animal in our school helping one of our students. The service animal will be in our school effective (insert date).

Service animals are trained and recognized by an accredited training facility, and are able to assist with many of the routine activities which pose challenges for some students. The student's right to have a service animal is protected under The Human Rights Code of Manitoba.

There will be an upcoming information session for parents/guardians at the school on (insert date) to assist with your understanding of how the service animal will be integrated into the school. As well, a school-wide assembly will be held for all students to help them identify with the service animal and how it will fit into the daily routines of all students. They will be instructed as to the proper procedure regarding the animal and that the animal is a "working" service animal and not a pet while at school.

We anticipate the service animal being of benefit to the student's learning and we look forward to this new addition to our school and school community.

Thank you for your understanding and support. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (insert school phone number).

Sincerely,

Principal



SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN THE CLASSROOM (AND ON THE SCHOOL BUS)

Insert School Letterhead

Date:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a service animal in our school helping one of our students. The service animal will be in your child's classroom effective (insert date).

Service animals are trained and recognized by an accredited training facility, and are able to assist with many of the routine activities which pose challenges for some students. The student's right to have a service animal is protected under The Human Rights Code of Manitoba.

An upcoming information session for parents/guardians on (insert date) will offer more information on how the animal will be integrated into the school setting.

Students will participate in a school-wide assembly on (insert date) to assist with the integration of the service animal and how the animal will fit into the daily routines of all students.

The students in the classroom (and on the school bus) will also receive more direct instruction and training as to the proper procedure and conduct when around the service animal. They will be informed that the service animal is a working animal and not a pet while at school.

We anticipate the service animal being of benefit to the student's learning and we look forward to this new addition to our school and school community.

Thank you for your understanding and support. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (insert school phone number).

Sincerely,

Principal