

PUBLIC SCHOOLS BRANCH

Operational Procedure

SERVICE DOGS IN SCHOOLS	
<i>Policy Section</i> Programs and Services	<i>Procedure Number</i> 404.1
<i>Pages</i> 3	<i>Approved Date</i> October 25, 2016
<i>Reviewed Date</i>	<i>Effective Date</i> October 25, 2016
<i>Replaces: ELSB Operational Procedure 404.1 Service Dogs in Schools, April 7, 2015</i>	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to provide specific direction to schools regarding the use and inclusion of service dogs in the school environment.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Public Schools Branch is committed to providing accessible and inclusive educational opportunities to students. The use of specially trained service dogs from accredited training organizations is one strategy to accommodate the special needs of individuals with disabilities.
- 2.2 Trained service dogs play an important role in assisting people with disabilities in their daily lives. The successful implementation of a service dog in an educational environment depends on clear communication, a well-informed school community and careful planning.

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1 This procedure includes guide dogs, hearing dogs, autism service dogs and other service dogs in schools but does not include therapy dogs.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Accredited Service Dog Training Organization – A service dog training organization which has been accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation, Assistance Dogs International or other recognized accrediting organization.
- 4.2 School Grounds - The school building and the property surrounding the school building.
- 4.3 Service Dog - A dog that has been specially selected and trained by an accredited service dog training organization to perform a task(s) or function(s) that mitigates the student's disability and includes guide, hearing, autism or other type of service dogs.
- 4.4 Service Dog Support Person – a person designated to assist the student, if necessary, with handling or meeting the needs of the service dog while at school.
- 4.5 School Community - The staff, students, parents/guardians and volunteers of a specific school.
- 4.6 Therapy Dog - A dog that provides comfort, love and companionship to a person(s) in his/her daily routine.

CONDITIONS FOR USE OF A SERVICE DOG

- 4.7 Parent/Guardian Responsibilities
- 4.7.1 A parent/guardian requesting a service dog to attend school with his/her child must:
- a) Submit a request to the school principal using the Service Dog in School Request Form.
 - b) Bear any financial costs associate with the service dog; and
 - c) Provide the school principal with proof of up-to-date vaccinations, required licences or certificates, and confirmation that the service dog is in good health.
- 4.8 Principal Responsibilities
- 4.8.1 Ensure the use of the service dog is consistent with the needs of the student while at school;
- 4.8.2 Consult with the PSB Student Services Department prior to arranging a case conference regarding the service dog;
- 4.8.3 Arrange a case conference with parents/guardians, classroom teacher(s), appropriate special education and support staff, a representative from the service dog training organization, and student, when appropriate, to develop a plan that identifies and defines:
- a) The purpose and function of the service dog;
 - b) The service dog support person, if required; and
 - c) The logistics of how the dog will be incorporated into the daily routine of the student, school and school community;
- 4.8.4 Elicit information from the school community regarding allergies, fears, extreme phobias, or religious consideration for planning purposes;
- 4.8.5 Ensure there is a transition plan for the student and the service dog;
- 4.8.6 Ensure there is a transportation plan for the student and the service dog;
- 4.8.7 Inform the school community of the purpose and rules of conduct around the service dog, including any other school community that will be in contact with the service dog;
- 4.8.8 Arrange any training for the school community, as needed; and
- 4.8.9 Post signs on each entry door of the school to advise visitors of the presence of the service dog.
- 4.9 Service Dog Support Person Responsibilities
- 4.9.1 The service dog support person is responsible for assisting the child, where necessary, with the handling, care and management of the service dog while the service dog is on school grounds or at a school activity off school grounds.
- 4.9.2 The service dog support person may assist the student with the personal care and physical needs of the service dog, such as the safest and most environmentally sound place for the service dog to relieve itself and the removal/disposal of animal waste.
- 4.9.3 The service dog support person may require training or guidance from an accredited service dog training organization.
- 4.9.4 If the service dog support person is not an employee of the Public Schools Branch, the support person must adhere to the *Volunteers in Schools* policy and procedure.

5.0 CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- 5.1 The agreement to accommodate a service dog is reviewed by the school annually or as needed, based on the requirements in this procedure and may be modified as required.
- 5.2 If the student moves to a different school within the Public Schools Branch, the parent must notify both schools in advance so a transition plan can be established.
- 5.3 The agreement to accommodate a service dog in the school may be suspended or terminated by the Director of Student Services if:
 - 5.3.1 The service dog cannot be adequately managed in school by the student and/or service dog support person;
 - 5.3.2 The needs of the student are not being met by the service dog, as intended;
 - 5.3.3 The service dog does not have up-to-date vaccination records, certification documentation and/or licensing, as required.

6.0 DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 Service Dogs in Schools – Request Form
- 6.2 Service Dog Management Plan
- 6.3 Principal Check List
- 6.4 Sample Letter to Class Parents
- 6.5 Sample Letter to School Parents

7.0 REFERENCE

- 7.1 PSB Operational Policy - *701 Volunteers in Schools*
- 7.2 PSB Operational Procedure - *701.1 Volunteers in Schools*
- 7.3 *Human Rights Act*

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