

SERVICE DOGS IN SCHOOLS

Background

Prairie South School Division is committed to the delivery of high quality education 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 learning profile, may include the use of service dogs 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.

Prairie South 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.

"Service Dog" means a dog that has been trained and certified by a nationally recognized training institute, to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.

Note: *"Emotional support animals or therapy animals, which provide therapeutic benefits, but do not have specialized training to provide services for a disabled person, fall outside of this (procedure)." – Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*

Procedures

1. A request for a service dog to accompany an individual must be made in writing, to the principal:
 - 1.1 **The Request for Service Dog application (Appendix A 343)** must be completed along with all supporting documentation.
2. 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 Dog to the student when requested by the school division in order for the school division to determine if other accommodations would address the restrictions of the student during school hours.
3. Before approving the presence of a Service Dog in the school the Principal shall, with the support of the Superintendent of Learning, make enquiries as to whether or not the introduction of the Service Dog into the school will affect the medical restrictions of other students in the school.
4. If the presence of a Service Dog is approved by the principal and the Superintendent then the following shall apply:
 - 4.1 If other students/staff with medical restrictions will be affected by the presence of the Service Dog:
 - 4.1.1 the Principal shall determine how the accommodations of all students/staff can best be achieved;

- 4.1.2 the parents/legal guardian of the student requesting the Service Dog will cooperate with the school to minimize any possible effects of the presence of the Service Dog on the medical restrictions of other students; Prairie South School Division Administrative Procedures Manual 300-
- 4.1.3 the Principal shall make best efforts to accommodate all students in consideration with all students' learning needs.
- 4.2 The parent/legal guardian requesting the presence of a Service Dog must:
 - 4.2.1 accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behaviour of the Service Dog while being present at a school and indemnify the school division in writing;
 - 4.2.2 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 Dog or any damages or injuries caused to the Service Dog and shall provide proof of such coverage annually;
 - 4.2.3 pay for any training of school personnel regarding the use and care of the Service Dog in the school;
 - 4.2.4 participate in an annual review of the presence of the Service Dog at the school;
 - 4.2.5 provide information in writing from the service agency who trained the Service Dog indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the service dog, including the safest and most environmentally sound place for the dog to relieve itself, the safe removal and disposal of dog waste, and considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather;
 - 4.2.6 provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations, and licensing of the Service Dog annually;
 - 4.2.7 indicate who will accompany and handle the service dog both inside and outside the school and what arrangements have been made with regard to alternate handlers when necessary;
 - 4.2.8 make arrangements for the Service Dog 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.
 - 4.2.9 Allow school division staff and volunteers to touch, feed, or deal with the Service Dog in any way that may be required to ensure appropriate care of the Service Dog and the safety of students and staff.

5. Considerations and limitations include:
 - 5.1 The school division may impose reasonable conditions or restrictions relating to:
 - 5.1.1 transportation of the Service Dog to and from school;
 - 5.1.2 restricting the presence of the Service Dog to specific areas in the school;
 - 5.1.3 exclusion from access to specific areas where required by other laws (i.e., food preparation areas)
 - 5.2 The right to be accompanied by a service dog does not apply if the individual is not in control of the behavior of the Service Dog.
 - 5.3 The agreement to accommodate a Service Dog is reviewed annually and may be modified as required following the same process set out in this administrative procedure.
 - 5.4 If the student moves to a different school, the request for a Service Dog must be resubmitted and initiated in advance, at the new site with the principal.
 - 5.5 The agreement to accommodate a Service Dog may be terminated by the Division if the dog does not have up to date certification from a nationally recognized training institute or licensing.
6. The application, insurance and related documentation will be retained on file at the student's school.
7. The Principal will initiate the annual reviews and receipt of necessary documentation.

Reference: The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code

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