



PROCEDURE

Title: **STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS
AND SERVICE ANIMALS**

Procedure No.: 5018a
Effective Date: 2020 May 19

Department: Learning Support Services: Special Education

Reference(s):

- Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19
- Education Act, RSO 1990, c.E2, s. 170(1), s.265(1); O. Reg. 298, s.11
- PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c.11
- Blind Persons' Rights Act, RSO 1990, c.B7,
- Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c.D16
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990, c.H7

Statement

The use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals is one strategy used to accommodate the special needs of individuals with disabilities. This procedure provides direction to Principals / Supervisors regarding the admittance and implementation of Guide Dogs / Service Animals for students in the school environment.

The success of the implementation of Guide Dogs / Service Animals depends on clear communication, a well-informed school / work community and careful planning. The information provided will assist the Principal / Supervisor to make the best possible arrangements for the students with disabilities as well as other students, staff, volunteers and visitors in the school.

1.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this Procedure, the following definitions apply:

Accredited training organization for a guide dog or service animal is accreditation by:

- a) International Guide Dog Federation ("IGDF"): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide Dogs for the blind / low vision are trained by its member organizations;
- b) Assistance Dogs International ("ADI"): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide, Hearing and Service Dogs are trained by its member organizations; or
- c) A Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that attests to compliance with the Meghan Search and Rescue Standard in Support of Accessibility: Persons with a Disability Teamed with Service Dogs standard for training (MSAR).

Administered By: Learning Support Service – Special Education

Amendment Date (s):

Adult student shall be defined to mean a student who is 18 years of age or older, or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent(s) / guardian(s).

Disability means:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or in a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997](#).

Guide Dog is a dog trained as a guide for a blind / low vision person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

Handler refers to the individual trained by an Accredited Training Organization who is managing the Guide Dog / Service Animal and who will be the student for whom the Guide Dog / Service Animal is provided.

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) shall be defined to mean the custodial parent(s) of the student or the guardian(s) pursuant to the *Education Act*.

Service Dog is a dog which has been certified after successfully completing a training program provided by an Accredited Training Organization.

Service Animal is an animal that has been trained to perform specific tasks for people with disabilities. Service animals are trained to perform a wide variety of tasks, which may include, but are not limited to, deep pressure therapy, anchoring, stimulus distraction, and alerting their Handler to a change in medical status.

Emotional Support Animal refers to an animal that provides comfort and security. They do not, however, have training for specific tasks and therefore, Emotional Support Animals do not qualify as Service Animals under the AODA.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The School Board encourages any family considering the purchase of a Guide Dog / Service Animal to accommodate the need(s) of a student at school, or at a school related function, to meet with the school principal or superintendent before making a commitment.

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- 2.2 This Administrative Procedure identifies the individualized process to be followed when a parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student applies to the School Board to have a Guide Dog / Service Animal accompany the student while the student is attending school or a school-related event.
- 2.3 When a parent(s) / guardian(s) seeks to have their child attend, or an adult student seeks to attend school or school-related events with a Guide Dog / Service Animal, both the Guide Dog / Service Animal *and* the student Handler must be certified as having been successfully trained to a standard consistent with an accredited training facility.
- 2.4 Only in exceptional circumstances, subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the School Board consider Service Animals other than dogs, as an accommodation for a student and only if other reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Service Animals have traditionally been highly trained dogs that assist individuals with various tasks of daily living (Guide Dogs, Hearing and Signal Dogs, Mobility Assistance Dogs, Seizure Response Dogs).
- 3.2 In most circumstances, a Guide Dog will be a highly trained dog provided to support the orientation and mobility needs of a student Handler who has a diagnosis of blindness / low vision, and the Guide Dog will provide the student Handler with greater independence, dignity and opportunity for integration.
- 3.3 The term Service Animal is used in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), to describe an animal that assists an individual with a disability to be able to access goods and services available to the public. A school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does *not* apply to a student's use of a Service Animal when accessing education services in school buildings.

The determination of whether the Service Animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate a demonstrated disability-related learning need is a decision of the School Board.

Such a decision will consider that animals, other than dogs, are not trained by an Accredited Training Organization and may pose a risk to the safety of students and staff and / or may be disruptive to the learning environment and / or may act as a distraction in the learning environment.

- 3.4 Due to risks to safety, and risks of disruption and distraction in the learning environment, the School Board does **not** permit training of a potential Guide Dog / Service Animal in the school setting or during school activities.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Principals

- 4.1 School Principals are responsible for the management of the school premises, the staff providing educational programs and the safety of all students.
- a) A school Principal has authority to exclude any animal, including a Guide Dog / Service Animal, from entry onto school premises and into school building(s), as an accommodation for a student, provided that the student is offered appropriate alternative accommodation to meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs.
 - b) School Principals, before admitting a Guide Dog / Service Animal into the school or school-related activities with the student Handler, shall require the parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student to submit a completed Application for Guide Dog / Service Animal, (see Appendix A).
- 4.2 On receipt of the Application for Guide Dog / Service Animal, the school Principal shall review the application for completeness and may request any additional information or clarification necessary to assess the request for accommodation.
- 4.3 The school Principal shall complete the Principal's Checklist for Guide Dog / Service Animal (see Appendix B).
- 4.4 The school Principal shall be responsible for communication with the parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student with respect to the accommodation process, and where approved, the implementation and management of the accommodation.

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) / Adult Student

- 4.5 The parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student is required to provide all necessary documentation and engage in the consultation process for the purpose of considering and implementing, if appropriate, the request that a Guide Dog / Service Animal accompany the student at school and / or on school-related activities. The parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student shall be responsible for:
- a) submission of the Application for Guide Dog / Service Animal, (see Appendix A);
 - b) all costs related to the Guide Dog / Service Animal, including but not limited to food, grooming, leash, harness, crate and / or mat, veterinary care, et cetera;
 - c) obtaining training and maintaining the Guide Dog / Service Animal training to provide the accommodation in a safe manner that does not disrupt student learning;
 - d) providing confirmation of municipal license for the Guide Dog / Service Animal (to be updated annually);
 - e) providing confirmation of certificates of training not older than 6 months from an Accredited Training Organization attesting that the Guide Dog / Service Animal and student Handler have successfully completed training and may safely engage in a public setting without creating a risk of safety or a risk of disruption within a school setting;

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- f) providing confirmation of a diagnosis from a registered family physician, nurse practitioner, pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, audiologist or optometrist with a recommendation for the use of a Guide Dog / Service Animal;
- g) providing a description of the services provided to the student by the Guide Dog / Service Animal and how those services will accommodate the student's disability-related needs and assist the student in achieving their learning goals and / or goals of daily living while at school;
- h) providing a certificate not greater than three (3) months old from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario attesting that, the animal is an adult; does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans; has received all required vaccinations; is in good health to assist the student; and identifying the age and breed, (to be updated annually);
- i) providing evidence confirming general liability insurance providing coverage in an amount of 1 million dollars in the event of an injury or death as a result of the Guide Dog / Service Animal's attendance on school property or on a school-related activity.

Students

- 4.6 Students will be expected to act as the Guide Dog / Service Animal's primary Handler. The student Handler must:
- a) demonstrate the ability to control the Guide Dog / Service Animal in accordance with the training received;
 - b) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Animal is always wearing a vest and leash or harness when the animal is working;
 - c) ensure the Guide Dog / Service Animal does not disrupt the learning of others with unnecessary movement, vocalization or other behaviour, including aggressive or threatening behaviour;
 - d) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Animal's biological needs are addressed, complete Management Plan for the Care of Guide Dog / Service Animal (see Appendix C);
 - e) transition and maintain at all times the Guide Dog / Service Animal on a leash, a harness, or in a crate;
 - f) comply with an accommodation plan that addresses the competing rights of others.

Guide Dog / Service Animal

- 4.7 The Guide Dog / Service Animal:
- a) shall be highly trained and certified to the standard of an Accredited Training Organization;
 - (i) will have evidence of training or re-certification confirming compliance with training requirements within the last 6 months, or as requested by the Principal.

- b) must be groomed and clean;
- c) must at all times while on school property or at a school-related event, be responsive to commands and demonstrate that it can perform the necessary tasks or accommodation;
- d) must *not* engage in behaviour that puts at risk the safety of others, including other animals, or that creates disruption or distraction in the learning environment;
 - (i) such behaviour includes, but is not limited to, growling, nipping, barking, attention seeking, eating.
 - (ii) any such behaviour is grounds to prohibit the Guide Dog / Service Animal's attendance on school property and in the school building.
- e) must have control of its biological functions so as not to soil the inside of buildings, or require feeding during the school day;
- f) must demonstrate continuous appropriate behaviour with its Handler and others in the school environment to remain eligible for entry in school buildings or school-related events.

5.0 Assessment of the Accommodation Request

- 5.1 Once the application and all necessary documentation is received by the school Principal, a review will take place by the Board team supporting the student and a meeting shall be scheduled to review the accommodation request. Every effort will be made to review the documentation and schedule a meeting in a reasonable time frame.
- 5.2 A meeting with the Board team supporting the student, the parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student and student (as appropriate), the health practitioner recommending the Guide Dog / Service Animal for the student, the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Animal and of the Handler, and any other individuals who may contribute to the accommodation process may be scheduled to review the request for accommodation.
- 5.3 Each request for a Guide Dog / Service Animal will be addressed on an individual basis giving consideration to:
 - a) the individual learning strengths and needs of the student, the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals, Management of Aggressive Behaviour Safety Plan, Behaviour Plan and / or student's Individual Plan of Care (IPOC);
 - b) supporting documents such as psychological assessments, occupational or physical therapy assessments, functional behaviour assessments etc.
 - c) evidence of how the Guide Dog / Service Animal's attendance at school might provide accommodation for a demonstrated disability-related learning need and / or act of daily living necessary while at school;
 - d) assessment information provided by a regulated health professional with expertise regarding the student's disability-related needs supporting the request for a Guide Dog / Service Animal;

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- e) the training and certification of the Guide Dog / Service Animal and student as Handler;
 - f) the impact of the accommodation on the student's dignity, integration and independence;
 - g) whether one or more alternative accommodations can meet the needs of the student;
 - h) whether the student's attendance with a Guide Dog / Service Animal might require an increase in the level of staff support provided to the student;
 - i) the impact of the accommodation on the learning environment for the student, other students, including, health, safety, disruption and distraction;
 - j) any competing human rights of students, staff, and community members using the school pursuant to a permit.
 - (i) recommendations for accommodation plans to reconcile competing rights
- 5.4 The process of accommodation, including inquiries regarding competing rights and notice to the school community, shall respect the student's right to privacy regarding their disability and specific learning needs and / or needs of daily living.
- 5.5 A Guide Dog / Service Animal shall only be considered when reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student. The parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student must complete the Application for Guide Dog / Service Animal, (see Appendix A).
- a) The accommodation process following a request by a parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student for a Guide Dog / Service Animal shall be consistent with the process noted above, but shall also include any special considerations that may arise if an animal is a species other than a dog, including the ability to be trained, necessary biological functions, the capacity for the animal to respond to commands, whether the animal may be kept on a leash or harness or in a crate and how such restrictions might impact accommodation.
- 5.6 The determination with respect to the application for a Guide Dog / Service Animal shall be communicated to the parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student in writing. (See Sample Letter Decision Approving Guide Dog / Service Animal, Appendix D or Sample Letter Decision Declining Guide Dog / Service Animal, Appendix E).
- 5.7 In the event that an application has been declined, any questions or concerns should be directed to the Principal.

6.0 Implementing the Accommodation

Where approval is granted, the school Principal, in consultation with the student's educational team, will do the following:

- a) make changes to the student's IEP and / or the student's IPOC;

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- (i) may provide for the accommodation on an interim trial basis, in which case the indicators of success or lack of success for this form of accommodation will be identified before the trial period begins.
- b) organize an orientation session for school staff, students and the student Handler;
- c) develop a timetable identifying a bio-break, water break, location / process to be followed during instructional and non-instructional times;
 - (i) access may be limited to certain activities, areas of the school, or certain times of the day, including but not limited to, where exclusion is required pursuant to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* or the *Food Safety and Quality Act 2001*, which prohibit Service Animals from being in places where food is prepared, processed or handled.
 - (ii) assessment may be required by the School Board's Safety Specialist, of health and safety issues applicable to different areas / activities in the school.
- d) develop emergency procedures, to include a fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan;
- e) send notice to the community via a letter to parents / guardians (See Sample Letter to School Community, Appendix F); posting on the school's website / social media; presentation by the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Animal during a School Council meeting; signage on the school's front door, gymnasium and library doors; communication to potential occasional staff accepting a position where the Guide Dog / Service Animal may be providing service to the student;
- f) hold a student assembly for introduction and orientation regarding the Guide Dog / Service Animal;
- g) make arrangements for transportation of the Guide Dog / Service Animal to and from school, if necessary;
 - (i) if the Guide Dog / Service Animal will be accompanying the student on a school vehicle, inquiries must be made regarding competing rights; the transportation plan must specify where the Guide Dog / Service Animal and student will be located; the vehicle shall have a sticker / sign identifying the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Animal on board.
 - (ii) documentation about the Guide Dog / Service Animal will be included with the route information so that new or substitute bus drivers are aware of the Guide Dog / Service Animal's presence.
 - (iii) specialized transportation shall **not** be provided solely for the purpose enabling the Guide Dog / Service Animal to travel to and from school with the student.

7.0 Continuous Assessment

- 7.1 A review of the effectiveness of the Guide Dog / Service Animal in supporting the student's learning goals shall be undertaken as part of each review of the student's IEP, in the event of a Violent Incident Report, and as otherwise deemed necessary by the Principal.
- 7.2 Approval may be revoked at any time by the Principal if:
- a) there are any concerns for the health and safety of students, staff or the Guide Dog / Service Animal;
 - b) there is behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping. In the event that this behaviour occurs, the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Animal from the classroom immediately, and the student's parent(s) / guardian(s) will be called to pick up the Guide Dog / Service Animal from the school. Alternative options for accommodation will be discussed;
 - c) there has been a change to the student's circumstances or disability-related needs, which had supported the original approval or a change to the needs of students / staff such that there is a new competing right;
 - d) the Board in its discretion determines that the accommodation is not effective for the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living.

8.0 Records

- 8.1 A copy of the application, confirmation of approval / denial of application, as well as any other relevant documents supporting the accommodation, shall be retained in the student's Ontario Student Record.
- 8.2 The School Board shall be required to collect, use and disclose the personal information of the student in order to fulfill the accommodation process. Notice of the collection, use and disclosure must be provided to the parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student. Efforts should be made to limit the personal information to only that which is necessary.
- 8.3 The Board is required, pursuant to PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals, to collect information regarding the implementation of the policy and procedure regarding Guide Dogs / Service Animals, including:
- a) Total number of requests for students to be accompanied by a Guide Dog / Service Animal;
 - (i) Whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students.
 - (ii) The student's grade.
 - b) The number of requests approved and denied;
 - (i) If denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and / or services provided to the student to support their access to the Ontario Curriculum.

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- (ii) Species of Service Animals requested and approved.
- (iii) Types of needs being supported: emotional, social, psychological, physical.

9.0 Food Areas

Regulation 493/17, of Ontario's *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, allows Guide Dogs / Service Animals in areas where food is served, sold, and offered for sale. Steps should be taken to ensure that Guide Dogs / Service Animals in school cafeterias, or areas where students are consuming food, are not disruptive and do not eat student food.

No animals are allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled such as the kitchen of the school cafeteria or the hospitality classroom.



Student Use of Guide Dogs / Service Animals

Application for Guide Dog / Service Animal

This form is to be submitted to the School Principal.

School _____

Grade _____

Student Name _____

Address _____

Home / Cell Telephone Number _____

Disability-Related Needs to be Accommodated by the Guide Dog / Service Animal

- Please attach a copy of the assessment report from a registered family physician, pediatrician, nurse practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist, optometrist or audiologist containing the student's diagnosis. This report describes, in detail the disability-related learning needs, or acts of daily living, to be accommodated and how the Guide Dog / Service Animal will provide accommodation in a school setting.

Municipal License

- Please attach a copy of the municipal license, not more than 12 months old. This license must be updated on an annual basis.

Veterinary Certificate

- Please attach a certificate from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario (confirmation to be updated annually) attesting to:
 - the breed of animal, age of animal and that the animal is an adult;
 - the animal does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans;
 - the animal has received all required vaccinations;
 - the animal is in good health to assist the student.

Certificate of Training

- Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the Guide Dog / Service Animal's training by a training organization accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR Standard for Training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals Procedure 5018a.
- A letter confirming that the trainer will attend a School Council Meeting to provide a presentation and respond to questions from the school community.

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the student handler's training by an accredited training organization by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR Standard for Training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals Procedure 5018a.

Information regarding Guide Dog / Service Animal

- Describe in detail the tasks or services performed by the Guide Dog / Service Animal.

- Identify the oral commands or visual signs to which the Guide Dog / Service Animal responds.

- Attestation will be required confirming that the Guide Dog / Service Animal does not make vocal noises, does not engage in distracting behaviour, and does not exhibit aggression.

- Identify whether the Guide Dog / Service Animal will be on a leash, or a harness, or in a crate.

- Describe the biological needs of the Guide Dog / Service Animal.

Student

- Can the student independently manage the Guide Dog / Service Animal?

- Describe in detail where, when and how the student currently utilizes the Guide Dog / Service Animal's services in public spaces for accommodation purposes.

- Please describe below what responsibilities the student is capable of performing independently.

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Insurance

The owner of a service animal is responsible for any injury or death caused by the animal. Please attach a certificate of home or contents insurance. Where the animal is owned by a registered charity, please provide a letter from the registered charity confirming their ownership of the animal.

Personal information of the student and parent/guardian is being collected by the Thames Valley District School Board in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to be used to provide education services pursuant to the *Education Act s.170(1)7* and PPM 163 and the *Human Rights Code*, s.1.



Student Use of Guide Dogs / Service Animals

Principal's Checklist for Guide Dog / Service Animal

School _____

Grade _____

Student Name _____

Pre-Application Requirements for Guide Dog / Service Animal

- ☐ Meeting with applicant and school Principal
- ☐ Review and discuss requirements

Application Requirements for Guide Dog / Service Animal

- ☐ Assessment report with diagnosis and accommodation to be provided
- ☐ Supporting documents (IEP, psychological, occupational therapy, physical therapy, functional behaviour, and/or orientation and mobility assessments)
- ☐ Copy of municipal license (within 12 months)
- ☐ Veterinary certificate (within 3 months)
- ☐ Certificate of training or attestation for Guide Dog / Service Animal (within 6 months)
- ☐ Certificate of training or attestation for student Handler (within 6 months)
- ☐ Letter of confirmation that the trainer will present to School Council
- ☐ Certificate of insurance (within 3 months) or letter from the registered charity which owns the Guide Dog / Service Animal
- ☐ Letter of inquiry with school staff and community using the school pursuant to permit regarding allergies, phobia/fear or cultural sensitivity

Implementation Requirements upon Approval

- ☐ Accommodation plan where there are competing rights (may include restriction of access to areas of school, change in classroom etc.)
- ☐ Management Plan for the Care of Guide Dog / Service Animal
- ☐ Timetable identifying bio breaks, when accompanying student, when in crate
- ☐ Emergency procedures (fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan)

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- ☐ Confirmation letter to parent(s) / guardian(s) / adult student that Guide Dog / Service Animal will be accompanying student
- ☐ Information session at a School Council meeting
- ☐ Signage for front door, gymnasium door and library door advising of Guide Dog / Service Animal
- ☐ Transportation plan (if required)
- ☐ Orientation for school staff and students
- ☐ Identification of benchmarks for assessment of effectiveness (to be reviewed with IEP)

**Student Use of Guide Dogs / Service Animals**

Management Plan for the Care of Guide Dog / Service Animal

Name of Student _____

Date _____

Name of Guide Dog / Service Animal _____

School / Site _____

Name(s) of individual(s) responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan for the Care of Guide Dog / Service Animal:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

NOTE: Responsibility for care of the animal rests 100% with the individual(s) listed above, not Thames Valley District School Board staff.

Water needs (e.g. provision of water bowl, procedures for use, cleaning, etc.)

Dietary Needs Procedure

Bladder / Bowel needs of the animal (e.g. frequency, location, disposal, etc.)

Other considerations

1. Rest periods from “work”

2. Hot weather

3. Winter weather

4. Additional Considerations

Signature of Parent(s) / Guardian(s) / Adult Student or registered charity staff

_____ Date _____

Signature / Name of Individual(s) responsible for care of the animal

_____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

Signature of Principal

_____ Date _____



Student Use of Guide Dogs / Service Animals

Sample Letter Decision Approving Guide Dog / Service Animal

[insert date]

Dear [insert Parent(s) / Guardian(s) / Adult Student]

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Animal to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs / acts of daily living.

I wish to confirm approval of your request.

As we have discussed, your child's ability to perform the responsibilities of a Handler, and assessment of benchmarks established for evaluating the effectiveness of the Guide Dog / Service Animal in meeting your child's accommodation needs will take place on a regular basis.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the Guide Dog / Service Animal is groomed, has a vest, harness, leash or crate [if necessary], as well as a water bowl. All costs associated with the care of the Guide Dog / Service Animal will be your responsibility.

If concerns arise regarding the integration of the Guide Dog / Service Animal into the school community and your child's class(es), a meeting will be scheduled to review how the issues might be resolved.

In the event that the Guide Dog / Service Animal engages in behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping et cetera, the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Animal from the classroom immediately and you will be required to arrange for the Guide Dog / Service Animal to be removed from the school. In such a case, alternative options for accommodation will be reviewed.

Sincerely,

Principal



Student Use of Guide Dogs / Service Animals

Sample Letter Decision Declining Guide Dog / Service Animal

[insert date]

Dear [insert Parent(s) / Guardian(s) / Adult Student]

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Animal to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs / acts of daily living.

I wish to communicate that your request is being denied.

As we have discussed, your child is not able to perform the responsibilities of a Handler [and / or the Guide Dog / Service Animal is not trained and may be disruptive, or a distraction in the school environment], and reasonable alternative accommodations that respect your child's dignity, encourage independence and facilitate integration are available to support your child's learning needs and access to meaningful educational services.

If you wish to discuss this further, please arrange a time to meet with me.

Sincerely,

Principal



Student Use of Guide Dogs / Service Animals

Sample Letter to the School Community

[insert date]

Dear Parents/Guardians

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Animal will be attending [school] with a student in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code*.

The Guide Dog / Service Animal is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest. The Guide Dog / Service Animal will be on a leash, a harness or in a crate at all times while on school property or at a school related function.

An information session has been scheduled to take place at a School Council meeting on [insert date]. A trainer from [insert] will be present to answer any questions that you might have about the training of the Guide Dog / Service Animal.

An orientation session will be provided for all students, to explain the role of a Guide Dog / Service Animal as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Animal will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Animal in our school.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal