

**THERAPY DOGS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY**

- 1.0 The District supports the use of therapy dogs for general classroom activities by qualified staff or other adults (“Handler”) for the direct benefit of students, subject to the conditions of this policy.
- 2.0 As used in this policy, “therapy dog” is defined as any dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Handler, who also has specific training or certification, to provide support, comfort, therapeutic benefits, or companionship to students.
- 3.0 A therapy dog is not a “service animal” or “service animal-in-training” as those terms are defined by District Policy and state and federal law. As a result, therapy dogs do not have any legal rights under state or federal law to access the types of public areas that a service animal or service animal-in-training may access.
- 4.0 Approval of the use of a therapy dog on District property is within the discretion of the building principal or appropriate District administrator.
- 5.0 The following requirements must be satisfied before a therapy dog will be considered for approval on District property.
  - 5.1 The Handler who wishes to bring a therapy dog on District property shall provide at least 20 working days’ advance written notice to the building principal or appropriate District administrator. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy dog will be used.
    - 5.1.1 This timeline may be waived in limited circumstances as requested by the District’s Crisis Recovery Team so that an organization approved by the District may bring therapy dogs on District property in response to a crisis or traumatic event.
    - 5.1.2 The District may enter into memorandums of understanding with organizations approved by the District to serve this purpose.
  - 5.2 The Handler must be an adult. Students are not permitted to bring or handle a therapy dog on District property.
  - 5.3 The Handler must submit proof of registration and certification as a therapy dog handler for each individual therapy dog that the Handler plans to bring on District property. The registration and certification must be from an organization that is approved by the District. The certificate shall remain current at all times and must be re-submitted if changes occur.
  - 5.4 The therapy dog must be clean, well-groomed, in good health, house broken, vaccinated against diseases common to dogs, and have appropriate identification as a therapy dog. The Handler must submit a health certificate or report of examination and appropriate vaccinations from a veterinarian licensed in Colorado. Such vaccinations must be kept current and up to date at all times.
  - 5.5 The Handler must submit a Certificate of Insurance showing general liability coverage for damages/injuries caused by the therapy dog while on District property and listing the district as an additional insured. The use of District funds for purchasing the liability insurance is not permitted.
- 6.0 If a therapy dog is approved within a classroom, and a student or staff member assigned to that classroom suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy dog, the Handler must remove the therapy dog from the classroom immediately.

- 7.0 A therapy dog shall not be permitted if the therapy dog's presence would disturb the nature of the educational program or activity.
- 8.0 Therapy dogs must be under the control of their Handlers when in District schools, other buildings and/or vehicles. Once inside the building, the Handler must ensure that the therapy dog is on a 6-foot harness, leash, or tether at all times unless it is working in a secured area.
- 9.0 Except for the limited circumstances described in section 5.1.1, staff members and students' parents/guardians must be informed that a therapy dog will be authorized on site. A list of students and staff with allergies and aversions will be acquired. If there is an allergic reaction or signs of aversion, the therapy dog must be removed to a different location within the school or District building, as designated by the building principal/appropriate District administrator.
- 10.0 The Handler is liable for any damage to persons, premises, buildings, or vehicles caused by the therapy dog.
- 11.0 The District shall not be responsible for the care or supervision of the therapy dog, including but not limited to walking the dog, responding to the dog's need to relieve itself or providing any other care or assistance to the dog.
- 12.0 A therapy dog approved for use on District property may be excluded at the sole discretion of the building principal or appropriate District administrator. Exclusions can occur for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:
  - 12.1 the Handler does not have control of the therapy dog;
  - 12.2 the therapy dog is not housebroken;
  - 12.3 the therapy dog presents a direct threat to others in the school;
  - 12.4 the therapy dog's presence interferes with the educational process;
  - 12.5 the therapy dog interferes with the health, safety and/or welfare of the students or staff.
- 13.0 Issues related to the care or supervision of therapy dogs shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Building principals/department administrators are responsible for seeking guidance from General Counsel when a legal issue regarding therapy dogs arises.

## CROSS REFERENCE:

Code: 1220