

The District recognizes that specially trained therapy dogs can provide educational and other benefits for District students and may allow such dogs to be used in schools, in accordance with this policy and with Policy 2580 Use of Animals in Educational Programs.

A “therapy dog” is a dog that has been individually trained and certified or registered to work with its handler to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to District students. A therapy dog must have a current American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen certificate to begin working in a school. Therapy dogs are individually trained and certified or registered to provide appropriate interactions with students and others at school. A therapy dog must be well behaved and have a temperament suitable for interaction with students and others in a public school.

A “handler” is an adult who is responsible for caring for and supervising the therapy dog, which includes toileting, feeding, grooming, and veterinary care. Students shall not act as handlers.

The District is not obligated to supervise or otherwise care for a therapy dog. Therapy dogs are the personal property of the handler. Therapy dogs are not owned by the District. Therapy dogs are not “service dogs” as described in Policy 2375 Service Animals in Schools, and they are not emotional support dogs intended to provide comfort to a particular individual. This policy is not intended to, and does not allow students, parents, guardians, caregivers, staff, or others to bring emotional support animals onto any District property.

Therapy Dog Plan

A handler who wishes to have therapy dogs made available to students shall submit a plan to the building principal using Policy [2585P Therapy Dog Plan](#). It must be resubmitted each year and any time a different therapy dog or handler will be used. The plan shall address all of the following topics:

1. The location for the therapy dog to be kept when the therapy dog is on campus
2. The credentials of the proposed therapy dog must include :
 - A. Proof the proposed therapy dog has received the American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen certificate .
 - B. Proof from a licensed veterinarian the therapy dog is in good health.
 - C. Proof from a licensed veterinarian the therapy dog is currently vaccinated against the following:
 - a. Canine Distemper

- b. Adenovirus-2
 - c. Leptospirosis
 - d. Canine Parainfluenza (CPVI)
 - e. Parvovirus, and
 - f. Rabies.
- D. Proof from a licensed veterinarian of a negative fecal examination every six (6) months.
3. Plans for interaction between the proposed therapy dog and students, including:
- A. The student population the therapy dog is intended to serve;
 - B. The anticipated goals for and intended uses of the therapy dog;
 - C. Proposed instruction to be provided to students on the appropriate behavior and treatment of the therapy dog; and
 - D. How will students who are allergic to the therapy dog, fearful of the therapy dog, or whose parents do not give permission for the student to interact with the therapy dog, be accommodated?
4. Plans for care and supervision of the therapy dog, including:
- A. The identity and credentials of the handler;
 - B. Proposed schedule for the handler to provide necessary care for the therapy dog, including exercise, feeding, watering, toileting, and any necessary cleanup; and
 - C. Proof of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog while on District property.

The building principal may reject a proposal for any reason, and shall reject the proposal if:

- 1. It does not meet the requirements of this policy;
- 2. The building principal does not consider the benefit to outweigh the risks and costs;
- 3. The building principal believes that the time required to care for the therapy dog is inconsistent with the assigned duties of the handler; or
- 4. The proposal is otherwise inconsistent with the needs of the school.

The building principal shall submit the proposal to the Superintendent for final review. The Superintendent may approve or reject the proposal.

Approval of any therapy dog program may be suspended or ended at any time by the building principal or Superintendent for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Any violation of District policy;

- An administrator’s determination that the therapy dog’s presence interferes with the educational process; or
- An administrator’s determination that the handler or therapy dog have behaved in an unprofessional or unsafe manner.

District employees shall not receive any additional pay, stipend, or compensation for providing a therapy dog, for being the handler, and/or the owner of the therapy dog. The supervision and care of the approved therapy dog is solely the responsibility of the therapy dog handler when the therapy dog is on District property. The therapy dog handler will assume full responsibility and liability for any damage to District property or injury to District staff, students, or others while the therapy dog is on District property. The therapy dog handler must maintain an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog while on District property.

The therapy dog shall be required to wear a vest, collar, or other article identifying them as a therapy dog and distinguishing them from a service dog. The therapy dog shall be under the control of the handler at all times, and shall be required to be kept on a leash.

The therapy dog shall only be allowed in areas authorized by the building principal. If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom, in which a therapy dog is permitted, suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy dog, the handler will be required to remove the therapy dog to a different location designated by an administrator. Therapy dogs shall not attend field trips.

A student shall not schedule or attend a session with the therapy dog and the student shall not have contact with the therapy dog without a completed Form [2585F Student Permission](#) for Exposure to Dogs on file.

Cross Reference:	2375	Service Animals in Schools
	2580	Use of Animals in Educational Programs
	2580P	District Procedure on Dissection of Animals
	2585F	Student Permission Form

Policy History:
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