



SPRING GROVE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Book	Policy Manual
Section	700 Property
Title	Facility Dogs
Code	719 - PROPOSED NEW POLICY
Status	Second Reading
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Purpose

Facility dogs can provide support to students' wellbeing. The Board adopts this policy to help facilitate a positive, supportive school environment. For purposes of this policy, the District shall own the facility dog; the handler and/or co-handler shall assume ownership duties and responsibilities as outlined in this policy. [1]

Definitions

Facility dog: A dog specially trained and directed by qualified staff within a designated facility which utilizes the dog's special skills and training to meet the needs of an organization. A facility dog has been certified by an accredited assistance dog organization and is not synonymous with a service animal, guide animal, or therapy animal. [1][2]

A facility dog is trained to model good behavior, tolerance, and acceptance around persons and, when introduced to a school environment, can perform functions that support and positively influence students.

Handler: The handler is a designated school employee who has successfully completed training and certification through an accredited assistance dog organization and shall be fully responsible for the supervision, care, custody, and control of the facility dog at all times when the facility dog is on school grounds or a school activity of District. Feeding and care of the facility dog is the handler's sole responsibility.

The District assumes ownership of the facility dog. However, the District shall not be responsible to pay the handler for the time spent tending to the facility dog's needs for food, water, grooming, health care, and other daily needs. The District shall not be responsible to pay for the costs associated with feeding and veterinary care for the facility dog. [1]

Co-handlers: Co-handlers are secondary handlers, or a volunteer, who may be assigned care, oversight, and supervision of a facility dog, pursuant to an established training procedure.[1]

Authority

The Board will permit a facility dog to be used in district buildings, on district property, and in vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school district, upon request and approval of the Superintendent or their designee.

The School Nurse shall notify the handler of any student and staff health-related concerns. The facility dog will be restricted and/or removed from any location in which aversion or allergies are known/made known.

Training

A facility dog shall maintain a high level of training in order to maintain its behavior and skills. Co-handlers shall undergo training, in some cases (depending on the agency from which the facility dog was obtained) pass an examination, and continue to work with the facility dog on its training, on an ongoing basis.

Supervision

A facility dog shall be supervised by the handler or a co-handler when in the school building or outside of the school building at all times. The facility dog must remain with, be under the direct supervision and control of its handler or co-handler at all times.

Transportation

Facility dogs are not allowed on school buses or any other District transportation without explicit approval of the Superintendent or designee.[4]

Requirements

Prior to the introduction of any facility dog to a school community, notification shall be sent to all staff and families of students in each building where the facility dog may be requested to frequent. (5)

For each facility dog, *and* for each school year a facility dog is placed in a District school, the District shall ensure that the assigned handler or a co-handler has submitted the following to be retained on file in the Office of the Superintendent or his/her designee:

1. Proof of certification/necessary training, including a copy of the Public Access certificate of completion; and a copy of the annual facility dog Compliance Test.
2. Proof of insurance. The handler must maintain liability insurance for the facility dog and co-handlers.
3. A dog or similar license (as required by or available from the municipality).
4. Proof of the necessary training for the handler.
5. Dates, method, and participants for sharing any guidelines and procedures with staff and students regarding the facility dog (minimum of once a year). The guidelines and procedures shall address responses and approaches to accommodating students and/or building staff with allergies and/or fears of dogs.
6. A "plan of the care" for the facility dog, in terms of when each co-handler will be responsible for the facility dog. The "plan of care," which must be approved by the building administration and the Superintendent, or designee, must include procedures for when a scheduled co-handler is not able to perform their co-handler responsibilities because of the needs of their role as an employee.

7. Any other documentation the Superintendent, or designee, deems appropriate.
8. The handler shall provide a record of vaccinations, signed by a veterinarian. These health records shall be kept on file at the District by the Superintendent or his/her Designee.

The health records shall minimally include the following, in addition to any treatments recommended by the facility dog's veterinarian:

1. Annual comprehensive wormer or fecal check for worms; examination for external parasite control; Bordatella vaccination; and
2. Rabies and five-way parvo/distemper (DHPP) every three years, except that a dog receiving rabies and parvo vaccination in the facility dog's first year shall receive a follow-up vaccine in the dog's second year, with vaccinations every three years thereafter.[6]

The handler shall give the facility dog preventative parasite (fleas and ticks) control and heart worm medication year-round.

To the extent not immune under applicable law, the District will assume liability for personal injury caused by, or related to the presence of the facility dog, while on District premises, provided all of the procedures in this policy were followed. The District shall ensure that the District's insurance covers:

1. Such liability for personal injury liability with an amount of coverage not less than One-Million Dollars (\$1,000,000)
2. Prior to approving a facility dog, the District shall ensure that the District's insurance will cover the facility dog's particular breed of dog.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent, building administration, or designee retain sole discretion to approve the presence of any facility dog and to limit the number of facility dogs present at any time.

The Superintendent shall develop Administrative Regulations for the implementation of this policy to ensure the safety of the facility dog and all staff, students, district residents, visitors on premises.

The facility dog will be housed at a designated school building. Ultimate responsibility for meeting the facility dog's needs for safety, care, companionship, exercise, health, and training must reside with the handler (or co-handler). While joint *supervision* of the facility dog among qualified staff members is permissible, joint ownership is not. The District owns the facility dog; the handler assumes ownership duties. [1]

Exclusions

A facility dog may be excluded at the discretion of the Superintendent, building administration, or designee for any reason, including but not limited to the following:

1. The Superintendent, building administration, or designee believe, in their sole discretion, that the co-handler does not have control of the facility dog.

2. The presence of the facility dog significantly interferes with the education process. The facility dog is not housebroken or shows signs of illness.
3. The presence of the facility dog poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.

Complaints or Concerns

Issues or concerns related to facility dogs should be taken seriously and dealt with promptly to maintain a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors.

Below are guidelines for addressing complaints or issues [7]:

All issues or concerns should be reported immediately. Students should report issues or concerns to a staff member.

Staff members should report issues or concerns, including those reported to them, to the building administration, or designee.

The building administration should be informed of all reported issues or concerns.

All issues or concerns must be reported to, and documented by, the Superintendent, or designee. It is the responsibility of the building administration to ensure appropriate actions are taken to address substantiated issues or concerns.

Decisions or actions by the building administration may be appealed to the Superintendent or designee.