

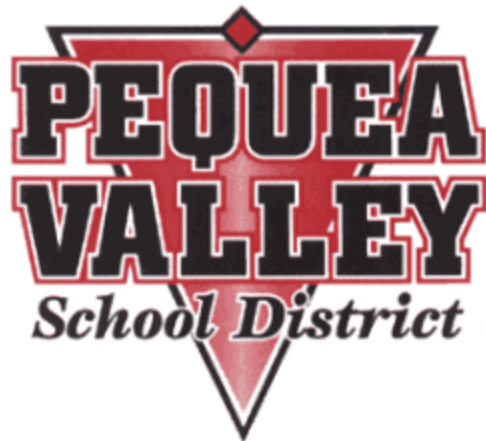
Paradise Elementary School Facility Dog Program

SSD Houdini



Certified through Susquehanna Service Dogs

Established August 2020



Superintendent: Dr. Erik Orndorff
Assistant to the Superintendent: Richard Eby
Director of Student Services: Cathy Koenig

Paradise Elementary School

Principal: Rick Esche
Assistant to the Principal: Jodi Houck
School Counselor: Kelly Loder

Pequea Valley School District

**Facility Dog
Administrative Practices
And Procedures**

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Pequea Valley School District Facility Dog Program

General Policy and Procedures

History of the Facility Dog Program:

January 2019: The School Counselor from Paradise Elementary, Kelly Loder, brought a presentation before the PVSD school board to explain the need for a Facility Dog Program. Evidence has shown that service dogs can enhance children's psychological development, improve social skills, and increase self-esteem. A service dog can be used to assist in teaching responsibility, compassion, and respect. Perhaps more importantly, a service dog can be trained to provide support to a person who is struggling with strong emotions such as anxiety, fear, and sadness.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

- 7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have diagnosed anxiety.
- 3.2% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have diagnosed depression.

Many more children and adolescents are facing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and anger which have not reached a level considered "diagnosable" by a mental health professional. Within Pequea Valley School District, there are learners who struggle with mild to severe forms of mental health concerns. While some learners have been identified and provided services within the school and community, many go unidentified.

February 2019: Paradise Elementary's application for a Facility Dog was submitted to Susquehanna Service Dogs.

July 2019: Kelly Loder, Trey Marsh, and Cathy Koenig attended the interview with Susquehanna Service Dogs.

October 2019: The Facility Dog initiative was formally announced to Paradise Elementary staff, learners, families, and community.

June 2020: Paradise Elementary was tentatively matched with SSD Houdini.

August 2020: Paradise Elementary handler team attended advanced training with SSD Houdini at Susquehanna Service Dogs facility in Grantville, PA.

Primary Goal of the Program:

Facility Dogs will be utilized with learners and staff within the assigned building, many of whom experience challenges during the school day. Some learners face mental illness (ex. Anxiety & Depression), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Autism, English Language Development, Intellectual Difficulties, and more mild forms of mental health issues within the educational setting. The goal of the Facility Dog Program is to lessen their stress and anxiety during activities occurring during the school day. With decreased anxiety, learners will be able to focus and engage in classes better, feel more comfortable opening up to counselors and facilitators, and find comfort and connection within the school environment. This will potentially improve overall feelings and allow for more effective progression through the learning process.

Benefits:

Overall: Research has demonstrated that the use of Service Animals used in Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) has had tremendous benefits. For the purpose of the school, however, the Facility Dog will be used for Animal Assisted Activities (AAA). Per Kelly Loder, M.Ed., additional goals for successful AAA visits include:

- Increasing communication skills
- Fostering trust
- Reducing anxiety and easing stress
- Reducing isolation and loneliness
- Providing pleasure and affection
- Improving self-esteem and feelings of self-worth
- Improving socialization
- Increase in attentiveness and engagement
- Acquiring skills of acceptance and being non-judgemental
- Reduction in inappropriate social behavior

Mental health benefits for individuals: In a study by M. Morrison (2007) entitled “Health Benefits of Animal-Assisted Interventions”, it was noted that the areas most improved by AAAs are mood, motivation, self-esteem, and physical and psychological well-being, especially those with autism, chronic diseases, mental disorders, and neurological disorders (Allen, et al., 2001; Filan & Lewellyn-Jones, 2006; Kaminski et al., 2002; Macauley, 2006; Richeson, 2003; Sams et al., 2006).

Physical benefits for individuals: Scientific studies show people benefit from interacting with canines. Simply petting a dog can decrease levels of stress hormones, regulate breathing, and lower blood pressure. Research also has shown that petting releases oxytocin, a hormone associated with bonding and affection, in both the dog and the human (Beetz et al., 2012). In addition, petting a dog or caring for a pet helps people become less frightened, more secure,

and diverts their attention away from their own fears or anxieties (Christensen, 2013).

Social benefits for individuals: Issacs (1998) reported that the use of a dog seemed to "greatly enhance" social interaction of children with autism through petting and touching, increasing eye contact, attention span, affect and affection. Utilizing facility dogs in schools helps incorporate an attitude of kindness, compassion, and empathy. Animals can also be a catalyst for learning cooperation, patience, responsibility, and respect for others (Chandler, 2001)

Public Access:

The Paradise Elementary Facility Dog (and others who may join the PVSD team) is not a traditional service dog, in that he is not providing services to one particular person. As such, he has more limitations to public access than traditional service dogs. He has public access to the facilities with which he is connected; that is Pequea Valley School District. He may only access other public establishments if in training (i.e. to learn a new cue) or when accompanying a learner(s) from the school.

All service dogs may be denied access to the following: Churches, weddings, funerals, private clubs (including country clubs, VFWs, Amvets and Legions), private properties, and parts of hospitals (such as ICUs and operating rooms).

Services Provided by the Facility Dog:

Scheduled classroom visits:

Each Facility Dog will have an assigned building and will maintain a schedule throughout the school day. Any facilitator/staff member may request the presence of the Facility Dog during an individual or group meeting/classroom session. However, the Facility Dog must be accompanied by a primary or secondary handler. Within the classroom setting, the Facility Dog may be used simply as a calming presence or may be used to interact with learners and assist with educational material. The Facility Dog will only be permitted to interact with those participants who feel comfortable, keeping in mind the possibility of fear and/or allergies.

Counseling/testing/special situations:

The Facility Dog will be best utilized with learners/staff who are particularly withdrawn, depressed, and anxious or otherwise experiencing some heightened emotions. With the Facility Dog's presence, he/she may experience a decrease in stress levels which may allow the individual to remain calm, feel more at ease, and potentially be more willing to discuss issues and needs; this allows the staff member to better identify appropriate resources and solutions. Due to the safety of the Facility Dog, he shall NOT be used in instances where an individual is currently in a state of escalation and aggression.

Public events:

Attendance at public events will always be dependent upon a primary or secondary handler being available to accompany the Facility Dog. The Facility Dog will be available for public events within Pequea Valley School District, including, but not limited to, sporting events, after-school clubs, and off-campus learning experiences. The Facility Dog may attend events designed to educate the public on the benefits of a Facility Dog and raise awareness of mental health issues impacting children and teenagers. Through these events, it will show that Pequea Valley School District is invested in not just educating students, but also in addressing their mental health.

Handling and Care:

Facility Dog Team:

At Paradise Elementary, a team consisting of Kelly Loder (School Counselor/Owner & Primary Handler), Rick Esche (Principal, Secondary Handler), and Jodi Houck (Assistant to the Principal/Second Handler) will provide the framework for programming and scheduling that involves the Facility Dog.

Certification/Handlers:

A full time Certified Facility Dog has been purchased through Susquehanna Service Dogs (SSD), a fully accredited member of Assistance Dogs International. Certified Facility Dogs are bred for optimal temperament to work with children, in public settings and in facilities where stress levels run high. Paradise Elementary has one primary handler and two secondary handlers who can accompany the dog to scheduled/requested classrooms and school settings. Additional secondary handlers can be facilitators/staff members interested in using the Facility Dog as a tool within their classroom/school settings. The Facility Dog will only be handled by trained handlers and will wear a vest indicating his status as a working dog.

Handlers/Owner at Paradise Elementary are as follows:

Primary Handler and Owner: Kelly Loder, School Counselor

Secondary Handler: Rick Esche, Principal

Secondary Handler: Jodi Houck, Assistant to the Principal

Training:

The primary handler, Kelly Loder, has been trained and certified through Susquehanna Service Dogs in Grantville, PA. Rick Esche and Jodi Houck received secondary handler training through the "Orientation and Training-Secondary Handlers" process. In addition, staff/volunteers from SSD can provide training to secondary handlers at Paradise Elementary per the training curriculum entitled "Orientation and Training-Secondary Handlers." SSD will recertify the primary handlers after the first six months, after the first year, and then annually ongoing. The primary handler will provide training to the secondary handlers upon completion of each of their own

recertifications.

Harness:

The Facility Dog should wear his harness any time he is working in public. It should be clean and well maintained, and must have an SSD logo patch. Patches and replacement harnesses can be purchased through SSD.

Living Accommodations:

The Paradise Elementary Facility Dog will live with his owner-primary handler, Kelly Loder.

** Pam DiPreto and Courtney Rafter have agreed to be emergency contacts for vacations and/or emergency situations. Contact information can be found on the emergency contacts and information page, to be kept private among PVSD staff (pg. 13).

Health Care and General Maintenance:

Veterinary care for the Facility Dog will be provided by:

VCA Smoketown Animal Hospital
2497 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602
(717) 394-5542
<https://vcahospitals.com/smoketown>

Susquehanna service Dogs requires the Owner-Primary Handler to maintain the health of the dog. This means daily exercise and good nutrition, as outlined in the SSD Partner's Manual. The dog's health will be evaluated by SSD during the recertifications of the primary handlers; his weight may not fluctuate above or below 3lbs. of his original weight.

Ownership/Administration/Liability Insurance/Funding:

Ownership of the Facility Dog is through a staff member of Pequea Valley School District, Kelly Loder. The Facility Dog Program will be administered under the auspices of Pequea Valley School District. The liability insurance is covered through Pequea Valley School District's insurance with no rate increase. The projected expenses, including training, supplies, and veterinary and grooming costs, will be at Kelly Loder's expense with assistance from funds raised under the Pequea Valley Education Foundation specific to this cause. There is no cost to Pequea Valley School District.

School Accommodations:

1. Facilitators and staff of Pequea Valley School District shall be trained on the proper use and purpose of the Facility Dog. This will include the potential for encountering the Facility Dog throughout their workday and proper behavior in the school while the Facility Dog is in "work" mode.
2. Facilitators and staff of Pequea Valley School District shall be informed of the difference between "work" mode and "social" mode.
 - a. Work mode shall be indicated by the presence of the leash and vest worn by the dog indicating its position as a Pequea Valley School District Facility Dog. During this mode, personnel will be asked to check with the handler before petting or interacting with the Facility Dog in order to assist in allowing the Facility Dog to focus on the job at hand.
 - b. Social mode shall be indicated by the absence of the leash. Social mode shall occur when the Facility Dog is not working on a specific task. The primary handler, with assistance and coordination from the backup and secondary handlers, shall ensure the Facility Dog has ample social time as well as work time throughout the work day.
 - i. During social mode, personnel will be encouraged to interact with the Facility Dog.
 - ii. Due to the health and maintenance of the Facility Dog, personnel are asked to refrain from providing treats to the dog.
 - c. The handler shall not allow the Facility Dog to enter any area designated as a No Dog Zone. No Dog Zones will provide spaces in the building that are free of allergens and respect the fears of learners/staff.
 - d. Certified handlers shall not relinquish custody of the Facility Dog at any time during the workday to an individual except a backup or secondary handler.
 - e. The Facility Dog shall not be permitted to have "free reign" of the office or school during social mode.
3. If any personnel would like to provide a treat or toy for the Facility Dog, please request a list of acceptable items from any handler, as provided by Susquehanna Service Dogs.

Please note that rawhides of any kind, BBQ bones, soft, latex squeaky toys, flimsy stuffed toys, rope toys, and frisbees are prohibited.

4. A crate and/or dog bed will be located in the primary handler's office for use during off duty time. The crate/bed will be maintained for cleanliness and structural soundness by the primary handler. A secondary dog crate/bed will be located in the secondary handlers' rooms to provide for an additional space for the Facility Dog to have down time.
5. The Facility Dog will be fed in the morning prior to the work day; he will only require a water bowl in the primary and backup handlers' offices, maintained on trays to catch any spills. This will be available throughout the day to provide proper hydration to the Facility Dog. These bowls and trays shall be emptied and cleaned on a daily basis.
6. Toileting will be done by a trained handler in a designated grassy area. The handler is required to clean up waste left by the Facility Dog and dispose of it properly. Other suitable and appropriate areas may be utilized as long as the area is cleaned up.
7. The primary handler will take the Facility Dog for a walk on a daily basis.
8. Any handler who has control of the Facility Dog will have with them a clicker and a treat pouch at all times. The handler is responsible for cleaning up and proper disposal of dog waste, using bags included with the treat pouch.
9. The primary handler/owner shall take proper hygienic measures to ensure the cleanliness of the Facility Dog in order to minimize any dander or residual hair that may be left by the Facility Dog and to maintain overall good health. This shall include:
 - a. Non-entrance into a designated No Dog Zone
 - i. ie: specific classrooms where a learner/staff member has a severe allergy or fear
 - b. On a daily basis:
 - i. Brushing of the Facility Dog's coat to minimize shedding.
 - c. On a weekly basis
 - i. Brushing of the Facility Dog's teeth with a toothbrush and paste formulated for dogs.
 - d. On a monthly basis:
 - i. Shampooing of the Facility Dog with dander treating products.
 - ii. Provide heartworm medication and flea and tick treatment.
 - iii. Cleaning of ears and trimming of nails; however, ears should be checked weekly for cleanliness, and cleaned as needed at a minimum of monthly.
 - e. Special pet wipes can also be utilized to refresh the Facility Dog's coat in between bathings.
 - f. Regular vacuuming of the certified handler's office and any other area frequented by the Facility Dog.
10. The primary handler shall utilize the VCA Smoketown Animal Hospital in Lancaster, PA to maintain proper hygiene of the Facility Dog as well as immunizations and any other health concern(s) related to the dog. Regular grooming can occur at any animal grooming facility.
11. An Outlook Calendar will be created to allow access and scheduling of the Paradise

Elementary Facility Dog. All requests and reservations must have the approval of the Facility Dog team consisting of Kelly Loder, Rick Esche, and Jodi Houck.

12. The Facility Dog team will also have final authority regarding the use of the Paradise Elementary Facility Dog. All use and handling of the Facility Dog will be approved by the team. Kelly Loder, acting in the role of both handler and owner of the dog, has the ability to override the team's decision if she feels it is not in the best interest of the dog.
13. The Superintendent, Dr. Erik Orndorff, will be updated on the use of the Facility Dog within the school setting. He reserves the right to make final determinations regarding the proper use of the Facility Dog within the school setting. The certified handlers shall adhere to all rules and procedures set forth by the Superintendent.

Public/Visitors Accommodations:

1. The certified handlers will take appropriate actions to minimize contact with those who express their fear or show distress in the Facility Dog's presence. *Always ask a person first if they want contact with the dog.*
2. In the event any party enters an area where the Facility Dog is present and expresses a fear or that he/she is allergic, the Facility Dog will be removed from the area.

Riding the Bus:

1. If the Facility Dog is riding a school bus, check with Dawn Dixon, Transportation Coordinator, ahead of time.
2. Have the Facility Dog enter the bus first, giving the cue "Go on through."
3. With the dog turning around at the top of the steps, cue "Back."
4. After the dog backs down the aisle and the handler finds his/her seat, cue "Down" to have him lay in front of the handler, at the handler's feet.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING - SECONDARY HANDLERS

Secondary handlers may not take control of the Facility Dog until they have completed the Orientation and Training and individual Public Access Test (#8 and #9 below) conducted by a primary handler or staff person/volunteer from Susquehanna Service Dogs. Extra clickers, treat pouches (including bags for dog waste) and a portable water dish will be available to secondary handlers.

Orientation Packet for Secondary Handlers:

- Emergency Contacts
- Pequea Valley School District Facility Dog Program - Policy and Procedure Manual
- Reading Your Dog-Stress and Body Language
- How to Hold a Leash
- Fifteen Tips for Getting Started with the Clicker
- Toys and Treats

Training Agenda

1. Emergencies
 - a. Contacts
 - b. Location of First Aid Kit
2. Review of Policy and Procedure Manual
3. Reading Your Dog - Stress and Body Language
4. Holding a Leash
5. Clicking/Treating
6. Feeding/Treating/Handling by Non-Handlers
7. Access to Water
8. Using Elevators
9. Cues - Verbal and Hand

Basic Tasks:	Get busy	Off	Special Tasks:
All the way up	Go on through	Sit	Lap
Attention (Houdini)	Greetings	Stand	Place
Back	Heel	Stay	Pressure
Car	Kennel	Under	Squish
Come	Leash	Up (front paws)	Visit
Down	Leave it		
Fix	Let's go		

10. Greetings

Supplies List-Start Up

- Folding Crate (for office and travel)
- Dog food
- Dog beds
- Extra clicker and treat pouch for secondary handlers
- Poop bags
- Poop bag holders (one for each treat pouch)
- Water dishes
- Portable/fold up water dishes
- Trays for under water dishes
- Pet wipes for dog's coat
- Toys
- Container to act as a facility dog first aid kit including:
 - Rubber gloves
 - Cotton balls
 - Gauze
 - Vet wrap
 - Hydrogen Peroxide
 - Eye wash
 - Antibiotic ointment/Neosporin
 - Quick Stop powder
 - Leash
 - Poop bags
 - Benadryl - 1mg/lb every 12 hours for pain/inflammation/fever
 - Urine sample jar
 - Pepto Bismol - 1 ml/10 lbs. Every 6-8 hours
 - Blanket - large enough to carry dog like a stretcher
 - Syringe
 - Tweezers
- Lint brushes
- Gloves
- Training pads
- Dog brushes for handler offices/classrooms