

1 **Great Falls School District**

2
3 **NON-INSTRUCTIONAL**

8426

4
5 Therapy Animals

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7 The District supports the use of therapy dogs and other animals by teachers or other qualified
8 school personnel (“Owner”) for the benefit of its students, subject to the conditions of this
9 policy.

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11 Therapy dogs and other animals are family pets that are trained and registered through a certified
12 therapy organization. They are only half of the therapy team. The handler is the other half.
13 Therapy teams enter the school by invitation or prior approval.

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15 A therapy animal is not a service animal, and unlike a service animal, a therapy animal does not
16 assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany a person
17 with a disability at all times. Therapy animals do not have legal rights.

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19 Requirements of Therapy Animals and User/Owners

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21 Individuals with disabilities using therapy or companion animals are responsible for their animal
22 at all times and must comply with the following requirements:

- 23
- 24 1. **Health and Safety:** The therapy animal must not pose a health and safety risk to any
25 student, employee, or other person at the school.
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27 2. **Request:** An owner must submit a written request to the Superintendent or designee. The
28 request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy animal will be
29 used
 - 30
31 3. **Registration, Training and Certification:** The owner must register the therapy animal and
32 provide documentation of the registration, certification, and training to the
33 Superintendent or designee. The registration and certification must remain current at all
34 times.
 - 35
36 4. **Health and Vaccination:** The therapy animal must be clean, well groomed, in good
37 health, house broken, and immunized against common diseases. The owner must submit
38 proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the therapy
39 animal’s current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian.
 - 40
41 5. **Control:** A therapy animal must be under the control of the “Owner”, at all times,
42 through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would
43 interfere with the therapy animals’ safe, effective performance of its work or tasks.
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45 6. **Identification:** The therapy animal must wear appropriate visible identification that
46 identifies in writing that the animal is a therapy animal.
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48 7. **Behavior:** The owner must take responsibility for the behavior of the animal in private
49 and public places, and for due care and diligence in the use of the animal on school
50 district property.
- 51

- 1 8. Supervision and Care of Therapy Animals: The owner is solely responsible for the
2 supervision and care of the therapy animal, including any feeding, exercising, and clean-
3 up while the animal is in the school building or on school property. The school district is
4 not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a therapy animal.
5
- 6 9. Authorized Areas: The owner shall only allow the therapy animal to be in areas in school
7 buildings or on school property that are authorized by the school administrators.
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- 9 10. Insurance: The owner must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability
10 coverage for the therapy animal while on school property.
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- 12 11. Exclusion or Removal from School: A therapy animal may be excluded from school
13 property and building if a school administrator determines that:
14 a. A handler does not have control of the therapy animal;
15 b. The therapy animal is not house broken;
16 c. The therapy animal presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school;
17 or
18 d. The therapy animals' presence otherwise interferes with the educational process.
19

20 The owner shall be required to remove the therapy animal from school premises immediately
21 upon such a determination.
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- 23 12. Allergic Reactions: If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a
24 therapy animal is permitted, and suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy animal, the
25 Owner of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location
26 designated by an administrator.
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- 28 13. Damages to School Property and Injuries: The owner of a therapy animal is solely
29 responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students,
30 or others caused by the therapy animal.
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- 32 14. Therapy Animals in Training: This policy shall also be applicable to therapy animals in
33 training that are accompanied by a bona fide trainer.
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35 Cross References

36 Policy 2520 Animals-Pets in School
37 Policy 3418 Life Threatening Allergies-Medical Conditions
38 Policy 8302 Indoor Air Quality
39 Policy 8425 Service Animals Inquiries
40 Policy 8426F Therapy Animals Form
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42 Policy History

43 Adopted On: September 9, 2019
44 Revised On:
45 Reviewed On:
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