

## **Instruction**

### **Animals in Schools and Buildings Procedures**

#### **I. Service Animals**

- A. Service animals are any dog or miniature horse that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks,
- Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds,
- Providing nonviolent protection or rescue work,
- Pulling a wheelchair,
- Assisting an individual during a seizure,
- Alerting an individual to the presence of allergens,
- Retrieving items, such as medicine or the telephone,
- Providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and
- Helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

A student's parent/guardian who believes their child needs to bring a service animal to school must submit a written request to the building principal. The principal will not ask about the nature or extent of a person's disability but may make two inquiries to determine whether an animal qualifies as a service animal. The principal may ask if the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. The principal must not require documentation, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal, or require that the service animal demonstrate its task. The principal may not make these inquiries about a service animal when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability.

Use of a service animal by an employee with a disability will be allowed when such use is necessary as a reasonable accommodation to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their job or to access benefits of employment provided to all employees in the same job classification. An employee who wishes to bring a service animal to school must submit a written request to the building principal. The building principal, in consultation with the Section 504 coordinator or director of special services, as appropriate, will determine whether to permit the service animal in school.

The use of a service animal by an individual with a disability will not be conditioned on the payment of a fee, security deposit, or surcharge.

## **B. Requirements for Service Animal Access**

Before a service animal will be permitted in school, on school property or at school sponsored events, the student's parent or the employee must provide a description of the task(s) the service animal is expected to perform in assisting the person with a disability.

The district will provide access to a person with a disability who needs a service animal provided that the tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the disability; and the animal has been individually trained to perform a task, is housebroken; is free of disease and parasites, has a harness, leash or tether so it cannot run free and is under the control of the person with a disability.

A service animal must be licensed and immunized in accordance with the laws, regulations and ordinances of the City of Snohomish, Snohomish County and the State of Washington.

## **C. Service Animals at School-Sponsored Events**

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals to events or activities open to the public that are held in schools or on school property.

The building administrator may revoke or exclude the service animals for the reasons set forth in paragraph "V" Removal or Exclusion of a Service or Therapy Animal from School or School Property.

## **II. Therapy Animals**

Therapy animals are to only be in authorized areas school building for the times allotted by the principal. Therapy animal oversight will be a collaborative responsibility of the school administrator, the sponsoring staff member, and the team lead to ensure that the integrity and intent of the program are being met. Therapy cats will only be allowed during afterschool activities.

### **A. Therapy Animal Proposal Phase**

Prior to a handler or staff member wishing to have a therapy dog or cat participate at a school or in a program the handler or staff member will:

- 1) Schedule a meeting with the school administrator. Prior to meeting with the administrator, the sponsoring staff member or handler must read the district

policy and procedures for utilizing therapy animals. They must complete the therapy animal proposal form (2030F1) and include the purpose and intended outcomes for the animals visit, the educational goals that will be achieved by the therapy animals' presence, frequency of the visits, how equity of opportunities with the therapy dog or cat will be addressed, dates, times, and educator who will be overseeing the visits. This proposal form must be submitted to the school administrator one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

- 2) During the meeting the handler or sponsoring staff member and administrator will discuss the proposal. The handler must be prepared to satisfactorily answer any questions that the administrator may have.
- 3) Following the meeting, the school administrator will determine if the request should be moved to the application phase. Within (5) school days the school administrator will communicate the decision to the handler or sponsoring staff member.

#### **B. Therapy Animal Application Process**

To apply for permission to use therapy dogs or cats in the Snohomish School District the following process must be completed. The information will be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. Permission must be granted prior to the implementation of the therapy animal coming on to district property.

- 1) The school administrator will write an e-mail to the handler or sponsoring staff member communicating the approval of the proposal, which will begin the application process, to be completed using form 2030F2. Principal approval does not ensure acceptance of the application.
- 2) The lead handler and/or sponsoring staff member must submit an application packet that includes the therapy animal certification, proof of insurance provided by the certifying agency, fecal test results, the proposal form (2030F1) that was shared with the school administrator.

The proposal and application process must be completed each school year.

Approval may be rescinded at any time at the sole discretion of the Superintendent or designee. This will result in the exclusion from all district schools.

#### **C. Prior to the Therapy Animal Starting in the School Setting**

The school administrator will ensure that the following conditions are met:

- 1) Staff and families are given notice that the program or activity will be happening with descriptions, instructional purpose, educational goals and outcomes of the program, dates, and times.
- 2) There are opportunities for all students to access the program or activity.
- 3) Opportunity will be given for students to opt out of the program or activity without disruption of their learning.
- 4) A hold harmless liability waiver (2030F4) will be sent home prior to the activity taking place. The waiver must be signed by a legal guardian. A copy of the waiver will be sent to risk management at the district office. If the activity is happening after school and parents will be present, a permission slip will not be needed.
- 5) Parents will be notified as to who they should contact if they would like more information, have questions or concerns.

#### **D. Therapy Animal Certification**

Animal assisted therapy is a goal driven intervention or activity that is directed and/or delivered by a certified therapy animal handler. The purpose of the certification process is to ensure that the therapy animal has the right temperament for therapy dog or cat work and that the dog or cat and handler have met the criteria by passing the certification test.

- 1) The certification must be updated every two years. The certification must remain current at all times.
- 2) In addition to certification the handler must provide proof that vaccinations are up to date and provide fecal test results. In addition, the animal must be clean, well-groomed and housebroken.
- 3) The district will accept therapy dogs (during afterschool activities therapy cats \*) who can show proof of certification from the following agencies:

Pet Partners  
<https://petpartners.org>

Alliance of Therapy Dogs  
<https://www.therapydogs.com>

Project Canine  
<https://www.projectcanine.org>

Reading with Rover  
<https://www.readingwithrover.org>

\*Note: According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation in the United States, as many as three in 10 people with allergies have allergic reactions to cats and dogs. Cat allergies are about twice as common as dog allergies. Cats may be allowed in after school programs where the therapy cats and dogs can be separated.

Training and certifications by other agencies will not be accepted.

### III. Parents or Animal Handlers

Parents or animal handlers who will be present in school for the purpose of assisting with a service animal or a therapy animal are required to submit to a sex offender registry and criminal background check. In addition, parents and handlers must comply with all standards of conduct that apply to school employees and volunteers and submit their volunteer application through: <https://secure.safevisitorsolutions.com/Safe/Volunteer/snomish/volunteer>

Visitors' badges will be provided when checking in at the main office while on campus and must be visible at all times. Visitors' badges will not be required for after school activities.

### IV. Responsibility/Liability

1. Neither the district, nor its employees, are responsible for the cost, care or supervision of the service or therapy animal.
2. A service or therapy animal must be under the control of its handler. A service animal must also have a harness, leash or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash or other tether, or the use of the harness, leash or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (*e.g., voice control, signals or other effective means*);
3. The animal is to be in the control of the handler at all times. It is the responsibility of the handler to watch for signs of stress in the animal and respond accordingly. Under no circumstances is anyone other than a certificated handler to be put a position to control, supervise or provide care for the animal. Disposal of animal waste is the responsibility of handler and will not be managed by school custodial or maintenance staff.
4. The owner/handler of the service or therapy animal is responsible for any and all damage caused by the service animal at school, on school premises or at school activities. Insurance coverage will be provided by the agency which certifies the therapy dog or cat.

5. Damage to school property will be documented by the school administrator and reported to the business office. Injuries will be documented on the Accident/Incident Report (3418F3) and reported to the school administrator and Superintendent or designee.

#### **V. Removal or Exclusion of a Service or Therapy Animal from School or School Property**

The building principal or district administrator may request an individual to remove a service or therapy animal from school, a school sponsored activity, or school property if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control the animal. Examples of the animal being out of control include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others;
2. The animal significantly disrupts or interferes with the instruction program, school activities or student learning. However, annoyance on the part of the others is not an unreasonable risk to property or others to justify the removal of the service animal;
3. The presence of the animal would result in a fundamental alteration of any school program;
4. The individual in control of the animal fails to appropriately care for the animal, including feeding, exercising, taking outside for performance of excretory functions and cleaning up after the animal;
5. The animal fails to consistently perform the function(s)/service(s) to assist or accommodate the individual with the disability;
6. The animal is ill; or
7. The animal is not housebroken.

If the district excludes a service animal, it will provide the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

#### **VI. Appeals**

A parent, employee, or visitor whose service or therapy animal has been excluded or removed may appeal the decision to the Superintendent or designee.

#### **VII. Animals Used in Instructional Programs**

Prior to granting or denying requests to include animals in the school's instructional program the principal and CTE Director will evaluate and document the following items with the staff

member:

1. Whether there is an educational benefit to be gained by the inclusion of the animal in the instructional program, including the purpose, instructional goals, and student outcomes;
2. Whether there is an appropriate plan for the control and handling of the animal;
3. That any health concerns involving students, staff or other animals have been thoroughly addressed, for instance; allergies, the vaccination status of the animal, indoor air quality concerns, or the transmission of disease from the animal;
4. Notification to families must occur when animals are included in a classroom activity. Should parents/guardians choose to opt their student out of the activity there will be no educational impact to the student;
5. The animal's health, safety and well-being have been appropriately evaluated by a veterinarian or documentation provided to and reviewed by the principal;
6. The employee's plan for sanitary issues, including the treatment of animal wastes, storage and preparation of food, personal protective equipment required, and the personal hygiene of staff who will come in contact with the animal. Disposal of animal waste is not the responsibility of the custodial staff and will be taken care of by the instructor; and
7. The employees' commitment to remove the animal from district property on weekends and school breaks to care for the animal.

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