

# Stafford Township Board of Education Policy

PUPILS  
5337  
Service Animals

## 5337 SERVICE ANIMALS

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, it is the Policy of the Board of Education to permit use of a service animal by an individual with a disability in all areas of the district where the public is normally permitted: in district buildings; on district property; and on vehicles owned, leased, or controlled by the district in accordance with 28 CFR §35.136.

### A. Definitions

1. "Act" means the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.
2. "Designated administrator" means Principal or person designated by the Principal to coordinate these activities.
3. "District" means this school district.
4. "Handler" means the animal's owner who is an individual with a disability or a person, such as a trainer, assisting the owner with control of the service animal.
5. "Service animal" means a dog individually trained to do work or perform a specific job or task for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability in accordance with 28 CFR §36.104.
  - a. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.
  - b. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability (e.g. navigation, alerting physical support and assistance, preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors).
  - c. Work or tasks for the purposes of this definition do not include the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, therapy, companionship, or crime deterrence.

### B. General Rules

1. The district shall permit the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability unless:

# Stafford Township Board of Education Policy

PUPILS  
5337  
Service Animals

- a. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it;
  - b. The animal is not housebroken.
2. A student with a disability, including autism, shall be permitted access for a service animal in school buildings, including the classroom, on school buses, and on school grounds.
3. The service animal shall be under a handler's control at all times by use of a leash, tether, voice control, signal, or other suitable means in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.3 and 28 CFR §35.136(d).
4. If an animal is properly excluded, the district shall give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises in accordance with 28 CFR §35.136(b).
5. If there are places in the district where it is determined to be unsafe for a handler and service animal, reasonable accommodations will be provided to assure the individual with a disability has equal access to the activity.
6. A school official may inquire as to whether the service animal is required due to a disability and what task or work the service animal has been trained to perform, unless the student's disability and the work or task that the service animal will perform are readily apparent in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.3.
7. The district will require documentation, including proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal; and that the dog demonstrates its ability to perform the work or task in accordance with 28 CFR §35.136(f).
8. Individuals with a disability who have service animals are not exempt from local animal control or public health requirements.
9. A school official may require:
  - a. Certification from a veterinarian that the service animal is properly vaccinated and does not have a contagious disease that may harm students or staff; and
  - b. Documentation that any license required by the municipality in which the student resides has been obtained for the service animal.

# Stafford Township Board of Education Policy

PUPILS  
5337  
Service Animals

## C. Delegation of Responsibility

1. The school shall not be responsible or liable for the care or supervision of the service animal.
  - a. The district is not responsible to pay for or provide a handler to aid the individual with a disability in the control of the service animal.
  - b. The school shall provide reasonable accommodations to allow the handler to provide for the care and feeding of the service animal while on school grounds or at a school function.
2. If the district normally charges individuals for damage they cause, an individual with a disability may be charged for damage caused by their service animal in accordance with 28 CFR §35.136(h).
3. The district will designate relief areas for the service animal which will be included in mobility training and orientation of students and animals new to the school.

## D. Notification and Responsibilities

1. In the event a service animal will be introduced as part of the school community, the designated administrator will develop a comprehensive implementation plan prior to introduction of the service animal into the school to include:
  - a. Notification to parents of students who may be in contact with the service animal;
  - b. Appropriate accommodations:
    - (1) For students who are allergic to the service animal; and/or
    - (2) For students who have fears regarding the service animal.
  - c. Appropriate etiquette regarding service animals to include:
    - (1) Never pet a service animal while it is working;
    - (2) Never feed a working service animal;
    - (3) Do not deliberately startle, tease, or taunt a service animal; and

# Stafford Township Board of Education Policy

PUPILS  
5337  
Service Animals

- (4) Do not hesitate to ask the handler if they would like assistance regarding directions for navigating the facility.
  2. The use of a service animal introduced as part of the school community will require inclusion into the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or the student's Section 504 Accommodation Plan.
  3. The district may request, but cannot require, the owner of a service animal introduced as part of the school community and, as included in the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan, maintain liability insurance for the service animal. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary will ensure the school district has appropriate insurance in the event a service animal is introduced as part of the school community.
- E. Miniature Horses
  1. Miniature horses, although not included in the Act under the definition of "service animal," may only be permitted if individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability and if they meet the assessment factors outlined in 3. below in accordance with 28 CFR §35.136(i).
  2. Ponies and full size horses are not considered miniature horses.
  3. Assessment factors to determine whether the district can reasonably modify its policies, practices, and procedures to allow for the use of miniature horses on its property, facilities, or vehicles include:
    - a. Type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate those features;
    - b. Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;
    - c. Whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and
    - d. Whether the miniature horse's presence compromises legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation.
  4. All requirements for the use of service animals also apply to the use of miniature horses.

# Stafford Township Board of Education Policy

PUPILS  
5337  
Service Animals

N.J.S.A. 18A:46-13.3  
28 CFR §35.136  
28 CFR §36.104

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