

**Administrative Procedures for Policy #1500 (Administration)  
Regarding Safety and Health  
Animals in Schools**

I. Purpose

- A. To promote the safety and health of all students, staff members and school visitors by ensuring that interactions with animals on school property are approved and monitored.

II. Definitions

- A. School property - Any Calvert County Public Schools building and/or grounds, and any CCPS leased or owned vehicles, including school buses when they are in use for official school business.
- B. Field trips - a school-sponsored activity that is directly related to the instructional program. A field trip may be an overnight trip.
- Animals - any member of the kingdom Animalia, including but not limited to birds, reptiles, mammals, fish, amphibians, insects, and micro-organisms.
- C. Curriculum - The central guide for teachers and all instructional staff about what is essential to teach and how deeply to teach it so that every child has access to rigorous academic experiences and instructional support in meeting academic standards. The CCPS curriculum is based on the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and the Maryland State Standards and more clearly translates the content knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills students are expected to learn. All CCPS curriculum is developed, approved, and revised through the process outlined in Policy 2315.
- D. School-sponsored - any activity which has a staff member assigned as an agent of the school and has been approved by the principal and/or other superintendent's designee.
- E. Service animal – a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including but not limited to:
1. guiding people who are blind.
  2. alerting people who are deaf.
  3. pulling a wheelchair.
  4. alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure.
  5. reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications; or
  6. calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack.
- F. Therapy Dog - a dog who has been individually trained, evaluated and registered with his/her handler to provide animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy and animal

assisted interactions within a school. Therapy dogs are not “emotional support animals” or “service animals.” nor are they service animals as that term is defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Therapy dog teams are required to maintain certification through an organization such as Alliance of Therapy Dogs or Therapy Dogs International.

- G. Extra-curricular/co-curricular programs - school sponsored student clubs, activities, and organizations that are coordinated and endorsed by the school and school system. These groups include athletic programs, drama clubs and productions, music and art groups, and other clubs.

### III. General

- A. Unless explicitly permitted by this procedure, individuals may not bring animals onto school property.
- B. Classroom pets are not allowed.
- C. With principal approval, aquariums to contain fish may be set up in classrooms or other areas of the school provided the tank is monitored by staff, cleaned at regular intervals, and food is provided for the fish on a regular basis.
  - 1. The “Animals for use as part of a curricular program” form must be submitted to and approved by the principal prior to installation of an aquarium.
  - 2. The principal will consult with the Director of School Facilities or designee prior to making a final decision regarding the approval and/or removal of an aquarium or any items or animals in the aquarium.
- D. At no time may animals be in food preparation or food serving areas with the exception of service animals as approved in this procedure.

### IV. Animals approved for use in curriculum.

- A. Interactions with animals are a part of some curricula in Calvert County Public Schools.
- B. Except when the use of animals in curricula is approved through a system-wide program such as CHESPAX, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure a specific and appropriate educational purpose when any animal is to be used as part of the curriculum. The teacher must submit the “Animals for use as part of a curricular program” form to their principal for approval prior to bringing any animals to school.
- C. The principal or designee and the appropriate Instructional Supervisor or designee will make a decision upon review of the “Animals for use as part of a curricular program” form.
- D. The principal or designee and the appropriate Instructional Supervisor or designee will consult with the Director of School Facilities or designee to consider facilities issues that may result from allowing animals in classrooms prior to approving an application.
- E. When a Supervisor of Instruction develops curricula for the Calvert County Public Schools that includes animals, that Supervisor of Instruction will ensure appropriate guidelines are developed and communicated to every staff member involved in the implementation of that curriculum. Such guidelines shall include:

1. The type of animal(s)
2. The rationale for including live animals in the classroom with a specific reference to the CCPS approved curriculum.
3. The length of time that animal(s) will be in the classroom.
4. The requirements for student and staff interaction with animals (if any), as well as requirements for safe handling of animals
5. Other appropriate safety precautions to be used when interacting with the animals.
6. Requirements for cleaning animal habitats in the classroom
7. Requirements for feeding animals in classrooms, including how to ensure animals are cared for during extended breaks from school (e.g., holidays or vacations)
8. Other care instructions
9. Designation of person(s) responsible for the care of animals while assigned to the school.
10. Process whereby parents will be notified of the inclusion of animals in the classroom and ensure parents are provided the opportunity to respond with their concerns.
11. These guidelines apply to all in- and out-of-classroom curricular areas.
12. Guidelines 1-5 above apply to trips to approved locations including CHESPAX programs at Kings Landing Park, Flag Ponds, and Cypress Swamp.

#### V. Service Animals

- A. Service animals may be necessary to assist individuals in accessing programs or services on school property.
- B. When an employee requires the assistance of a service animal, the employee must contact the Director of Human Resources prior to bringing the service animal onto school property. The Director of Human Resources will consult appropriate personnel and provide the employee with direction.
- C. When a student requires the assistance of a service animal, the parent will bring this need to the attention of the school principal. The school principal will contact the Director of Student Services for assistance. The Director of Student Services will consult appropriate personnel, including personnel from the Special Education Department as appropriate, and provide the principal with direction.
- D. When a school volunteer requires the assistance of a service animal on school property, he/she will notify the principal of this requirement. The principal will contact the Director of Student Services for assistance. The Director of Student Services will consult appropriate personnel and provide the principal with direction.
- E. The Director of School Facilities or designee will be contacted on any request for approval of service animals.

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- F. Community members with service animals attending special events or functions on a one-time basis must report to the principal or designee prior to entering the event or function.
  - G. Individuals who require the assistance of a service dog must adhere to all guidelines set forth in the document "Guidelines for Service Animals in the School Setting" – see page 6 attached hereto and made a part hereof.
- VI. Extra-curricular/co-curricular programs, classroom presentations and school programs and assemblies
- A. There are times when extra-curricular/co-curricular programs, classroom presentations, and school assemblies may be arranged that are enhanced with the involvement of animals. Principals should take care when considering approval of such activities.
  - B. Principals will refer to the Maryland Science Safety Manual published by the Maryland State Department of Education for a list of animals that are recommended and not recommended for activities in school.
  - C. Notification to parents must be provided as described in X.B. below.
- VII. Field Trips
- A. Animals may be encountered on field trips.
  - B. Notification to parents must be provided as described in X.B. below when interactions with animals are possible.
- VIII. Community use of facilities and inclusion of animals
- A. Community groups are not permitted to bring animals onto school property.
  - B. Individuals are restricted from walking animals on school property, bringing animals to school events, and allowing pets to run loose on school property.
  - C. The only exceptions to this procedure are as outlined in section V. above, section IX.C. below, and in the event of an emergency that requires the opening the Calvert Career Center as a shelter. In this instance, as detailed in Policy 8110, the Calvert Career Center shall be used as an animal shelter.
- IX. Other
- A. When animals that are not approved to be on school property are found on school property without the supervision of their owners, the Calvert County animal control office will be contacted for assistance. School system employees are not required to attempt to confine or capture animals that are running loose on school property.
  - B. Any injury (animal bite, scratch) will be reported to the school nurse. For students, parent notification will be made prior to the student leaving school on the day of the incident. Appropriate health room procedures will be followed.
  - C. The Superintendent or designee may make exceptions to these procedures for unusual or emergency circumstances.
- X. Notification

- A. A sign will be posted on each school property stating that No Dogs/Pets are allowed on property without written permission from the principal.
- B. When approved field trips, extra-curricular/co-curricular activities, classroom presentations and/or school assemblies have the potential to result in interactions between students and animals, the permission slip/notification for that activity will inform parents that interactions with animals are possible. As much detail as possible should be provided to indicate the nature of the interaction and the type(s) of animals that may be encountered.
- C. These procedures will be communicated widely. Methods of communication may include public service announcements, web site postings, and school newsletters.

## GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

### I. Purpose:

- A. To establish parameters for accepting and maintaining a service animal in the school setting, CCPS acknowledges its responsibility to permit students and/or adults with disabilities to be accompanied by a “service animal” in its buildings, classrooms, and at school functions, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR Part 35.

### II. Guidelines:

- A. All requests for an individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be addressed in writing to the Supervisor of Student Services for students with a 504 / Supervisor of Special Education for students with an active IEP and must contain required documentation of annual vaccinations. This written request must be delivered to the appropriate supervisor at least 30 business days prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school function.
- B. The animal must be a dog or, in specific circumstances, a miniature horse. No other species of animal, whether wild or domestic, will be permitted in schools as a “service animal.”
- C. Owners must provide annual proof of appropriate vaccinations.
  - 1. Dog: DHLPPC (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Paroinfluenza, Parvovirus, Coronavirus), Bordatella, and Rabies.
  - 2. Miniature Horse: Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins Test), Rabies, Tetanus, Encephalomyelitis, Rhinoneumonitis, Influenza, and Strangles.
- D. All service animals must be spayed or neutered.
- E. All service animals must be treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks.
- F. All service animals must be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander.
- G. Owners of service animals are liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property, and must provide proof of current liability insurance coverage as required by the Board of Education.
- H. The animal must be “required” for the individual with a disability.
- I. The animal must be “individually trained” to do work or a task for the individual with a disability. The tasks or work that the service animal provides must clearly show the benefit to the individual with a disability in order to qualify as a service animal. A “therapy animal” is not a “service animal” for the purposes of these guidelines.
- J. Requests to permit a service animal to accompany a student or adult with a disability in school buildings, classroom, or at school functions, will be handled on a case-by-case basis, considering:
  - 1. The type, size, and weight of the service animal and whether the facility can accommodate these features.

2. Whether the handler has sufficient control of the service animal.
  3. Whether the service animal is housebroken.
  4. Whether the service animal's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.
- K. Removal of a Service Animal: A school administrator may ask an individual with a disability or his parents to remove a service animal from a school building, a classroom, or from a school function if any one of the following circumstances occurs:
1. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to maintain control.
  2. The animal is not housebroken.
  3. The animal's presence would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the service, program, or activity.
- L. A service animal must 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 a 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.
- M. The owner must be responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal at all times, including walking the animal or responding to the animal's need to relieve itself.
1. The school district is not responsible for providing a staff member to walk the service animal or to provide any other care or assistance to the animal.
  2. Students with service animals are expected to care and supervise their animal. In the case of a young child or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or supervise their service animal, the parent is responsible for providing care and supervision of the animal. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the building administrator and appropriate supervisor. The school district reserves the right, but is not required, to provide care and supervision of a service animal. Such decision will be made by the building administrator and appropriate supervisor on a case-by-case basis.

Reference: ADA Regulations, 28 CFR Part 35 (as amended, 2010).

## **GUIDELINES FOR THERAPY DOGS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING**

### **I. Purpose:**

- A. To establish parameters for allowing a therapy dog in the school setting, CCPS acknowledges the use of therapy dogs for the benefit of its student's physical and emotional well-being can lead to lower blood pressure, decreased anxiety, improved self-esteem and normalization of the environment, increased likelihood of successful academic achievement by the student, improved school attendance and increased prosocial behaviors and social skills.

### **II. Animal Assisted Therapy:**

- A. A goal-driven intervention which is directed and/or delivered by a professional licensed in school social work, psychology or counseling, and is meant to improve physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive functioning of an individual.
- B. Animal assisted therapy can also enhance existing academic and social emotional support programs for one or more students.
- C. Therapy dogs in schools should only be utilized in a team alongside a licensed mental health provider in order to provide therapeutic support and instruction to students.
- D. Therapy dogs in Calvert County Public School district should be tied specifically to Calvert County Public School's curriculum. Student outcome data should be maintained to support the presence and benefits of therapy dog(s) in the school.

### **III. Handler Responsibilities:**

- A. The handler shall assume full responsibility for the therapy dog's care, behavior, and suitability for interacting with students and others in the school while the therapy dog is on school district property.
- B. The handler shall be solely responsible for the supervision and humane care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and cleaning up after the therapy dog while the therapy dog is in the school building or on school property.
- C. When visiting students the therapy dog will be kept on a four foot leash at all times. The handler shall only leave the therapy dog unsupervised or alone on school property in a private, locked, designated office for brief periods of time.
- D. The district bears no financial responsibility for the required therapy dog training, care or feeding of the animal.
- E. Any staff member wishing to bring a therapy animal to school must meet the following criteria and be approved by both the Director of Student Services and the Supervisor of Science after completing the Animals for Use as Part of a Curricular Program form through a written request.

### **IV. Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures**

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- A. **Registration:** The therapy dog shall have registration from an organization that requires an evaluation of the therapy dog and handler and shall remain current and in good standing at all times. A therapy dog must be tested as part of a team through Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Therapy Dogs International or another accepted reputable organization.
- B. **Health and Vaccination:** The handler shall submit proof from a licensed veterinarian that the therapy dog is in good health and has been immunized against disease common to dogs. Such vaccinations shall be kept current and up to date at all times.
- C. **Licensing:** The handler shall submit proof of licensure from the local dog licensing authority.
- D. **Insurance:** The handler must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the work of the handler and the therapy dog while the two are on school property.
- E. **Identification:** The handler and therapy dog shall wear appropriate identification at all times.
- F. **Health and Safety:** The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog does not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school and that the therapy dog is brought to the school district only when properly groomed, bathed, free of illness or injury and of the temperament appropriate for working with children and others in the schools.
- G. **Control:** The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog wears a collar or harness and a leash no longer than four feet and shall maintain control of the therapy dog by holding the leash at all times while the therapy dog is on school district property, including during breaks, unless holding such leash would interfere with the therapy dog's safety, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the handler shall maintain control of the therapy dog at all times and shall not tether the therapy dog to any individual or object.
- H. **Supervision and Care of Therapy Dog:** The handler shall be solely responsible for the supervision and humane care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and cleaning up after the therapy dog while the therapy dog is in a school building or on a school property and shall limit the therapy dog's work to two consecutive days at a time. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision or assistance to the therapy dog.
- I. **Authorized Area(s):** The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog has access to only such areas of the school buildings or properties that have been authorized by school district administrators.
- J. **Allergies and Aversions:** The handler shall remove the therapy dog to a separate area as designated by the school administrator in such instances where any student or a school employee who suffers from dog allergies or aversions is present in an office, hallway or classroom.
- K. **Damages and Injuries:** The handler shall assume full responsibility and liability for any damage to school property or injury to district staff, students or others in the school caused by the therapy dog. Any liability imposed on the handler will be covered by the handler's insurance policy which the handler shall purchase as described above.

- V. **Exclusion or Removal from School District Property**: A therapy dog may be excluded from school district property if a school administrator determines that:
- A. The handler does not have control of the therapy dog;
  - B. The therapy dog is not housebroken;
  - C. The therapy dog team's presence in the school is not tied to CCPS curriculum;
  - D. The therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school;
  - E. The therapy dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational program; or
  - F. The therapy dog bites a person on school grounds or while engaged in therapy work. A bite is defined as the bruising or breaking of the skin.
  - G. The handler shall immediately remove his/her therapy dog from school property when instructed to do so by a school administrator.
- VI. CCPS reserves the right to deny the use of a therapy dog in schools even if the above requirements are met.

**Animals for use as part of a curricular program**

Please complete this form in its entirety and submit to your principal.

Type of animal(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Rationale for including live animals in the classroom: Please make specific reference(s) to the Calvert County Public Schools approved curriculum.

The length of time that animal(s) will be in the classroom.

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_

What interactions will occur (if any) between the animal(s) and:

Students

Staff

What are the requirements for the safe handling of the requested animal(s)?

Please list other appropriate safety precautions that will be used when interacting with the animal(s)

Please describe the requirements for cleaning animal habitats in the classroom.

Please describe the requirements for feeding animals in classrooms, including how to ensure animals are cared for during extended breaks from school (e. g. holidays or vacations).

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Other care instructions:

What Calvert County Public Schools employee(s) will be responsible for the care of animals while assigned to the school?

Please include the parent notification letter that informs parents of the inclusion of animals in the classroom and that provides parents with the opportunity to respond with any concerns.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of CCPS employee requesting permission to bring animals into the classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of CCPS employee requesting permission to bring animals into the classroom.

Director of School Facilities Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved                      \_\_\_\_\_ Denied

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructional Supervisor Signature

## Sample Notification Letter

Date

Dear Parent/Guardians,

According to Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) Procedure 1500.9, parent notification is required when any animal is approved for inclusion in the instructional program. We want to make sure that we are aware of any student allergies or potential phobias before we bring animals into the school and the classroom.

This letter serves as notification that "Teacher Name" has received permission to allow "Type of animal" into the school from "Start Date" to "Start Date". This approval supports the "Content" curriculum, and we believe that it will enhance the learning of all students involved.

If you have concerns or would like to share health information about your child, please contact the "building principal" at "###-###-####" or the school nurse at "###-###-####" prior to the start date noted above.

Sincerely,

Principal