

USE OF ANIMALS IN DISTRICT SCHOOLS & IN CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

The Jamestown Public School Board believes recognizes there are medical and physical dangers associated with allowing interaction with and/or use of animals in the educational program and in district schools. The Board, however, also recognizes that animals may be an effective teaching aid and/or their presence may be required to reasonably accommodate students and staff with disabilities.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

- *Disability* is defined in 28 CFR Part 35.108 with respect to an individual, as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.
- *Service animal* is defined in NDCC 25-13-01.1 as any dog, signal dog, or other animal trained to do work, perform tasks, or provide assistance for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The term includes a dog trained to provide assistance or protection services to an individual with a disability, pull a wheelchair, lend balance support, retrieve dropped objects, or provide assistance in a medical crisis
- *School property* is defined in NDCC 15.1-19-10(6)© as-all land within the perimeter of the school site and all school buildings, structures, facilities, and school vehicles, whether owned or leased by a school district, and the site of any school-sponsored event or activity.

Therapy Dogs

The Jamestown School Board, in recognizing the educational uses of dogs in the classroom, requires that permission be obtained from the Building Principal before animals (other than service animals) are brought to the school or classrooms. It is the Building Principal's responsibility to confirm that there is an appropriate education purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom. Animals, other than service animals, are not to be transported on school buses.

Animals in school must be properly supervised, handled, and cared for and only the teacher or those students designated by the teacher are to handle animals.

It shall be the responsibility of the Principal or his/her designee to develop a plan of care for those animals housed in school in the event of an emergency school closing. Animal-specific guidelines established by the Center of Disease Control shall be followed at all times.

The Jamestown Public School District supports the implementation of a Therapy Dog for the academic, social and, emotional benefit of its students.

Therapy dogs are not considered trained service dogs as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Guidelines for Therapy Dogs

The following minimum standards shall be in effect for all therapy dogs approved to serve in the Jamestown Public School District.

- A. A good therapy dog must be friendly, patient, confident, at ease in all situations, and gentle.
- B. Therapy dogs must enjoy human contact and be content to be petted and handled.
- C. A therapy dog is expected to be clean, well groomed, and not have an offensive odor.
- D. A therapy dog is expected not to urinate or defecate in inappropriate locations.
- E. A therapy dog is expected to not annoy any member of the student body or school personnel by seeking attention.
- F. A therapy dog is expected to not vocalize unnecessarily.
- G. A therapy dog is expected to show no aggression towards people or other animals.
- H. A therapy dog is expected to not solicit or steal food or other items from the student body or school personnel.
- I. A therapy dog is expected to not in any way interfere with the educational process of any student.
- J. A therapy dog is expected to not pose a health or safety threat to any student, personnel, or other persons.

A therapy dog may be excluded from school property if a school administrator determines any of the above are being violated. Owner shall remove the dog immediately if so.

Responsibilities of Therapy Dog Owner

Therapy dogs are independently owned by school employees and must meet standards of health as prescribed by veterinarians at the owner's expense. Required training for accreditation must be at the owner's expense. The school district bears no financial responsibility for the care or feeding of the animal. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance of the therapy dog.

The owner of the dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others that is caused by the therapy dog while on school grounds.

Therapy dogs in the school setting shall be recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and approved by the School Board annually. Prior to recommendation and approval, owners shall provide.

1. Proof of current inoculations
2. Proof of Health, such as a current health certificate from a veterinarian.
3. Visible cleanliness of the dog with no sign of fleas/ticks.
4. A visually healthy, alert and not grossly over or under weight dog.
5. Proof of physical and stool sample.
6. Proof of heartworm test.

7. A copy of the owner's homeowner's insurance policy that provides liability insurance for injuries or damages that arise from the dog while on school property.
8. Proof of current licensure from local licensing authority.
9. Therapy dog must have appropriate identification.
10. All therapy dogs and owners shall be tested and accredited by a nationally recognized dog therapy certification/registration program.

The building principal shall notify parents on an annual basis regarding the presence of a therapy dog in the school building.

Use of Animals for Educational Purposes

Before a teacher may use an animal as part of the educational program or participate in an activity involving animals (e.g., a field trip), the teacher must submit a request to the building principal in accordance with administrative regulations. The principal shall consider such requests on a case-by-case basis based upon criteria established by the Superintendent.

Use of Service Animals by the Disabled

A qualified individual with a disability may be granted use of a service animal on school property, provided the work or tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the individual's disability. The Superintendent shall make such determinations on a case-by-case basis based on the following criteria:

Would the presence of the service animal:

1. Impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the District;
2. Require a fundamental alteration to an educational program;
3. Impact legally protectable rights of others.

A disabled student's parent may be given the option of changing the student's educational placement if alternative placement will remedy the infringement of other's rights.

The individual with a disability or designated handler is responsible for the proper care and supervision of the service animal while on school property.

Revocation of Animal Use

The decision to allow any type of animal in school may be revoked if:

1. The animal poses a direct health and/or safety threat to others;
2. The animal is not properly controlled;
3. The animal's presence has fundamentally altered an educational program or activity.

The District may offer alternatives to using a service animal (such as employing an aide), provided the alternatives effectively meet the student's needs.

Animal Related Injuries

The principal and parent/guardian (if a student is involved) must be notified as soon as possible if an animal bites an individual on school property or if an animal-related incident occurs on school property that could have an adverse effect on an individual's physical or emotional health. An accident report must be filed with the principal in accordance with district policy and regulations (ACAC).

Complementing:

- ACBC-AR, Use of Animals in Curricular Programs Regulations

End of Jamestown Public School District Policy ACBC Amended 1/20/2025