

Therapy Dogs at School

Other than an approved Therapy Dog used in the instructional program or the counseling program, the District prohibits Therapy Dogs, non-therapy dogs, or other household pets from entering District buildings or attending school-related events.

Therapy dogs may be brought onto a school campus for instructional or educational purposes or counseling purposes, only in accordance with this regulation.

Therapy Dog Requirements:

- Must be fully trained and certified through an approved Therapy Dog Organization like Therapy Dog International (TDI) or Alliance; and
- Must have all vaccinations current; and
- Must be insured by the handler. Documentation is required and must be filed downtown in the Guidance and Counseling Department if being brought in by an ECISD employee or to the Development office if they are being brought in by a volunteer or non-district employees.

Therapy Dog approval:

- A Therapy Dog handled by a counselor and used for counseling purposes and approved by the Executive Director of Guidance, Counseling and Wellness, Executive Director of Leadership, and the campus principal
- A Therapy Dog handled by an employee, used for instructional purposes only, and approved by the Executive Director of Guidance, Counseling and Wellness, Executive Director of Leadership, and the campus principal.
- A Therapy Dog handled by a VIP who is only using the Therapy Dog for instructional purposes and approved by the Development Office, Executive Director of Leadership, and the campus principal.

Required Approval Only Therapy Dogs approved by the Executive Director of Leadership, Campus Principal, and either the Guidance and Counseling Department or the Development Office are allowed on campus.

Procedure

Procedures for bringing Therapy Dogs to school are as follows:

Departmental approval requirements:

- For a Therapy Dog handled by a counselor and used for counseling purposes, all requests must be approved by the Guidance and Counseling Department. A copy of the TDI

training certification, vaccinations, and insurance must be filed with the Guidance and Counseling Department.

- For a Therapy Dog handled by an employee for instructional purposes only, approval is required by the Guidance and Counseling Department. A copy of the TDI training certification, vaccinations, and insurance must be filed with the Guidance and Counseling Department.
- Therapy Dog handled by a VIP or non-district employee who is using the Therapy Dog for instructional purposes only. Approval is required by the Development Office. A copy of the TDI training certification, vaccinations, and insurance must be filed with the Development Office.

Request and Approval Procedures [See EMG (EXHIBITS)]

1. Prior to seeking permission from the principal, the teacher or counselor must confer with the school nurse regarding any known allergies among students or staff who may come into contact with the Therapy Dog and any other potential health-related concerns associated with the Therapy Dog. The nurse will inform the teacher or counselor, without unnecessarily revealing confidential information, whether an allergy or other health-related problem exists.
2. Once the principal's approval is obtained, the teacher or counselor will inform parents of students likely to come into direct contact with the Therapy Dog in writing of the plan to introduce the Therapy Dog for instructional purposes. The teacher will identify for parents the instructional purpose of the Therapy Dog and request information from parents about any students who have dog fears or allergies.
3. The teacher or counselor will post a notice approved by the principal on the front door of the campus of the presence of a Therapy Dog on site.

Guidelines

The following guidelines will also be observed:

1. All handlers must have their membership cards of the organization that the Therapy Dog is certified through on them while on campus.
2. An approved handler is not allowed to handle more than one Therapy Dog on any campus visit.
3. Therapy Dogs must be clean and well groomed.
4. Only certified handlers may handle certified Therapy Dogs.

5. An adult handler will remain with the Therapy Dog at all times.
6. The teacher or counselor will provide appropriate instruction to students regarding proper behavior around approved Therapy Dogs.
7. Therapy Dog will not be transported on school buses or other District vehicles.
8. If a staff member or student has been bitten by a Therapy Dog and the skin has been pierced, the incident will be immediately reported to the campus principal and the campus nurse. The principal will remove the Therapy dog immediately and notify Odessa animal control and parents.
9. Therapy Dogs will be caged or leashed and under the control of a handler at all times. Therapy Dogs will not be allowed to jump on students or staff and will not be left alone with students or classrooms of students without the handler.
10. Therapy Dogs are not left with other staff or students.

Removal of Therapy
Dog

Any Therapy Dog will be immediately removed from the classroom or other area if:

1. The Therapy Dog causes injury to staff or students.
2. The Therapy Dog causes an allergic reaction to staff or students; or
3. The Therapy Dog behaves aggressively.
4. The Therapy Dog is disruptive to the learning environment.

If a Therapy Dog is removed from the classroom or other area, an incident form will be completed (EMG EXHIBIT) and the Therapy Dog will be safely isolated under humane conditions until the situation is resolved.