

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Title</i> SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS	<i>Code</i> IMGA
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HOLLISTON

The School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts and federal laws concerning the rights of individuals with disabilities with service animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a "service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." The regulations further state that "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability."

When an animal is brought to school, the District staff may ask only two specific questions to determine whether the animal qualifies as a service animal: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability. Proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal is not required.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as "seeing eye dogs" or "guide dogs;"
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments;
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

A service animal may be excluded if the School Principal or authorized designee determines that a service animal is not housebroken or if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it. If a service animal is excluded, the person with a disability will have the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without the service animal. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the

animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately upon notification by the School Principal.

If any student or staff member is allergic to dogs or suffers an allergic reaction, then the school will work to accommodate both the individual with a service animal and the individual who experienced an allergic reaction. An alternative plan will be developed by the building principal and District staff, which may include reassignment to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with the appropriate school, District, and transportation staff and will include the involvement of the parents/guardians of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be asked to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of a service animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

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