

RANCHO SANTA FE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Policy 6037: ANIMALS ON CAMPUS

A. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish the rules for bringing animals onto District property. These rules are designed to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of students, staff, and the animals involved, and to ensure compliance with the legal requirements for the use of service animals by individuals with disabilities.

B. Employee Use of Classroom Pets for Instructional Purposes

1. The Superintendent or designee may authorize an employee to bring an animal to school as a classroom pet for instructional purposes.
2. A request for a classroom pet shall be submitted in writing using a form prescribed by the District at least two (2) weeks in advance. The request shall include the following: (a) a description of the instructional purpose of the classroom pet; (b) certification and proof of current vaccination status of the animal; and (c) an agreement to defend and indemnify the District against any claim or loss caused by the animal being on campus.
3. The Superintendent or designee's decision to grant or deny a request will be based upon an assessment of the instructional value of the classroom pet, the appropriateness of the species for the students' age and maturity, and any potential disruption and/or risks involved. In all cases the Superintendent or designee's decision shall be final. Any grant of permission shall be subject to revocation at any time within the discretion of the Superintendent.
4. Upon grant of permission, written notification shall be provided to all parents/guardians of students in the affected class, asking them to verify whether their child has any known allergies, asthma, or other health condition that may be aggravated by the animal's presence. When a parent/guardian has provided notification that his/her child has an allergy, asthma, or other health condition that may be aggravated by the animal, the District shall take appropriate measures to protect the student from exposure to the animal.
5. All animals brought to school shall be adequately fed, effectively controlled, humanely treated, and properly housed in cages or containers suitable for the species. The employee shall ensure that cages and containers are cleaned regularly and that waste materials are removed and disposed of in an appropriate manner.

6. The employee shall ensure that students receive instructions regarding the proper handling of and personal hygiene around animals. Except for service animals, as provided in paragraph E, all animals are prohibited on school transportation services.

7. Short-Term Instructional Use of Animals: The Superintendent or designee may also authorize a teacher to bring an animal to school for an instructional activity of limited duration. Any such use is subject to all of the requirements set forth in this paragraph E.

C. Student Use of Animal for Classroom Visit

With prior approval of the Principal, a teacher may authorize a student to bring an animal to campus for a brief, educationally related classroom visit.

D. Facility Dogs

The Superintendent may authorize the use of a facility dog on campus for the purpose of providing physical, social, and emotional benefits to students. A facility dog may only be authorized for use by an employee who possesses a Pupil Personnel Services credential and who is designated as the certified handler of the dog. Only one facility dog is permitted on campus at any given time.

E. Use of Service Animal by Individuals with Disabilities

- A. The District allows service animals that assist individuals with disabilities consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations and California Civil Code sections 51.1 and 54.2. A “service animal” is defined as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. 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. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.
- C. Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied on District property by service animals, including specially trained guide dogs, signal dogs, or service dogs.
- D. If an individual is allergic to the service dog, the dog's handler will keep the dog away

from the person with allergies by having them in different rooms. The use of an air purifier will also be implemented to reduce allergens in the room. Allergies cannot be used to exclude the use of a service dog on campus.

- E. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of the definition of service animal. Therapy, emotional support, or companion animals are not service animals, and therefore, are not permitted on District property or to accompany students or staff during the instructional school day.
- F. The Superintendent or designee may ask any individual with a disability to remove their service animal from school premises or transportation if the animal is out of control and the individual does not take effective action to control it or the animal is not housebroken. When an individual's service animal is excluded, they shall be given an opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal present.

Legal References:

State:

Education Code section 39839

California Civil Code section 51.1, 54.2

California Code of Regulations Title 13 section 1216

Federal:

The Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. section 12101 et seq.,

Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulation

Date Policy Adopted By The Board: November 18, 2025

