

Cache County School District

Policy Series 7000: Community

Policy No. 7450

Animals on School Premises

To ensure student and staff safety while complying with applicable state and federal law, privately owned animals are not permitted on school premises except as expressly authorized in this policy or with prior written approval from the principal, superintendent, or designee.

This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with the ADA, Section 504, IDEA, and Utah Code § 62A-5b.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

Service Animal

A dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, where the work or tasks are directly related to the individual's disability. Service animals do not include animals whose sole function is emotional support, comfort, or companionship.

Disability

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as defined by the ADA, IDEA, and Section 504, including implementing regulations.

Direct Threat

A significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or sufficiently reduced by reasonable modifications to policies, practices, procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services.

Emotional Support Animal (ESA)

A domesticated animal that provides emotional support, comfort, or companionship to an individual with a disability but is not trained to perform specific work or tasks related to the disability.

Service Animal in Training

A dog being trained to become a service animal, whether or not accompanied by an individual with a disability.

General Standards for Animals Assisting Individuals With Disabilities

The District is committed to providing individuals with disabilities equal access to District programs, services, and activities, including access for service animals, as required by law.

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Safety requirements may be imposed only when based on actual risk, not on speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about individuals with disabilities or animals.

Service Animals

A. Access

Service animals shall be permitted on all portions of school premises where the individual with a disability is otherwise allowed to be present, including classrooms, offices, and school events.

B. Handler Responsibilities

1. The service animal must be under the handler's control at all times, using a harness, leash, tether, voice control, signals, or other effective means.
2. The District is not responsible for the care, supervision, feeding, or veterinary needs of the service animal.

C. Removal

A service animal may be required to be removed from school premises if:

1. The animal is out of control, and the handler does not take effective action to control it; or
2. The animal is not housebroken.

If a service animal is removed, the individual shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the program or activity without the animal.

D. Permissible Inquiries

When the need for a service animal is not readily apparent, District staff may ask only:

1. Whether the animal is required because of a disability, and
2. What work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

District staff shall not:

- Ask about the nature or extent of the disability;
- Require medical documentation; or

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- Require proof of training or certification.

E. Fees and Damages

No fee or surcharge may be imposed for the presence of a service animal. However, the District may charge for damage to school property caused by the animal if it charges others for similar damage.

Service Animals in Training

In accordance with Utah Code § 62A-5b-103, service animals in training are permitted on school premises and are subject to the same standards applicable to service animals.

An individual accompanying a service animal in training is liable for any damage or injury caused by the animal.

Miniature Horses

The District shall make reasonable modifications to permit the use of a miniature horse that has been individually trained to perform work or tasks for an individual with a disability.

In determining whether such a modification is reasonable, the District shall consider:

1. The type, size, and weight of the miniature horse, and whether the facility can accommodate these features;
2. Whether the handler has sufficient control of the horse.
3. Whether the horse is housebroken, and
4. Whether the horse's presence compromises legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe school operation.

Emotional Support Animals

A. Legal Status

Emotional support animals are not service animals under the ADA. Requests to bring an emotional support animal onto school premises shall be treated as requests for a reasonable accommodation under Section 504 or the ADA, as applicable.

B. Documentation

Approval of an emotional support animal requires:

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1. Current, reliable, objective documentation from a qualified medical or mental health professional establishing:
 - The existence of a disability; and
 - The disability-related need for the animal; and
2. Documentation sufficient to evaluate legitimate safety concerns.

Only domesticated animals may be considered.

Conditions and Limitations

Approval may include conditions necessary to ensure safety and prevent disruption. Emotional support animals may be denied if they pose a direct threat, create undue administrative burden, or fundamentally alter the nature of the District's programs or services.

Evaluation and Risk Review Prior to Denial

To the extent practicable, before denying access to an animal asserted to be a service animal, service animal in training, miniature horse, or emotional support animal, District staff shall consult with the District Risk Coordinator, who shall consult with State Risk Management.

If immediate consultation is not feasible, staff shall make a determination consistent with this policy and consult as soon as practicable thereafter.

Questions and Administration

Questions regarding this policy or its application shall be directed to the District Risk Coordinator or Student Services.

Relationship to Law

This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with applicable federal and Utah law. In the event of a conflict between this policy and controlling law, the law shall govern.

Legal References

28 CFR § 35.104

28 CFR § 35.136

Utah Code § 26B-6-803(2-3) (2023)

Utah Code § 62A-5b-102-103

Approved by the Board of Education: February 19, 2026