Haysville School District, USD 261
1745 W. Grand · Haysville, KS 67060 · (316) 554-2200 · www.usd261.com

Animals and Plants in the School **ING**

Service Animal

Administrative Procedure for Service Animal:
State and Federal law allow an individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal that is
individually trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of an individual. The animal may accompany the individual to all school functions, whether in or outside the classroom.

Service animals are permitted on district property, including district transportation, in accordance with law. The district will make modifications, as necessary, to allow for the presence of service animals.

All service animals must be under the control of their handlers. Service animals must have a tether unless the handler is unable to use one or unless the use of a tether would interfere with the service animals safe, effective performance. Animals that are not tethered must be under the control of the handler through some other means, such as voice commands or hand signals.

The district will not allow service animals to remain on district property if they are not housebroken or are out of control. If a service animal is properly excluded from district property, the individual with a disability served by the animal will be given the opportunity to participate in the program, service, or activity without having the service animal on district property.

District officials may verify that an animal qualifies as a service animal by asking whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Except as otherwise specified in this policy, district officials will not inquire about the nature or extent of the individual's disability or require the individual to provide documentation that the animal is a service animal.

Employees and students may use service animals pursuant to the *"Service Animal"* section of this policy. However, the district may make additional inquiries about the nature and extent of the employee's or student's disability as permitted by law.

The handler will be primarily responsible for the care and control of any service animal used as an accommodation.

General Information:

1. Animals with venom that is harmful to humans will not be allowed on district property.

2. An animal will not be allowed on district property without proof of current vaccinations.

3. Animals are prohibited from being on district property if anyone has been ticketed or charged for the behavior of the animal.

4. Animals will never be maintained in or near an area where outside air is brought into district buildings.

Definitions:

Service Animal - *Federal law defines a service animal as any dog…that is individually trained to perform tasks or work for the benefit of a student with a disability (28 C.F.R. §§35.104 and 35.136). Federal law also explains that other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals.*

Disability - *Under Federal law, disability includes a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The "work or tasks performed" must be directly related to the student's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to assisting a student who is blind or has low vision with navigation and other tasks; alerting a student who is deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds; providing non-violent protection or rescue work; pulling a wheelchair; assisting a student during a seizure; alerting a student to the presence of allergens; retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone; providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to a student with mobility disabilities; and helping a student with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors or performing other duties.*

Handler *is an individual who has and maintains control over the service animal. This individual may be the student using the service animal. Control of the service animal means using a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the handler is unable because of a disability to use one of these devices or their use would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If or when these devices are not used, control of the service animal must be accomplished through voice control, signals, or other effective means.*

Applicable Person(s)	Responsibilities
Parent/Guardian	● Informs the School District of the need for a service animal to accompany their disabled child to school. ● Cooperates with the district to successfully incorporate the service animal into the educational environment.

Applicable Person(s)	Responsibilities
District Coordinator for Animals	● Discusses this procedure with the building administrator, other appropriate administrative and special education staff, and the Board Attorney. ○ The Board Attorney will be a necessary participant in the district's efforts to manage the issues presented by service animals being used in school facilities. ● Contacts the district's insurance carrier(s) to assess appropriate coverage for issues involving service animals, including a handler. ● Informs all building administrators and special education coordinators that any *disabled student* has the right to be accompanied by a service animal *"that is individually trained to perform tasks or work for the benefit of a student"* at any school facility or function. ○ Schools must modify their policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a service animal by a student with a disability (28 C.F.R. §35.136). ● Discusses *USD 261 Animals and Plants in the School Policy*, with building principals and instructs them to: (1) inform their individual building staff of these guidelines when service animals are present in their individual buildings, and (2) use this exhibit as an internal district document to ensure legitimate safety interests of staff and students. This document may not be used as an agreement between the district and its students and their parents/guardians as a condition of the student using a service animal.
IEP and/or 504 Team	● For a student who is not already identified as disabled, follows the district's evaluation procedures for determining whether a student is a student with a disability within the meaning of IDEA or Section 504. ● If a student does not qualify as a student with a disability, consult the District Coordinator for Animals before excluding the service animal from the school. This will ensure that there are not special circumstances that require the school to allow access despite a student's non-disabled status. ● For a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan, or who qualifies for one, determines: 1. Whether the service animal is a required *related service* to ensure the provision of a *"free appropriate public education"* (FAPE), and/or 2. Whether the service animal is an appropriate *reasonable accommodation* for the student's disability. ● Permits the use of the service animal if the answer to either of the above questions is yes (i.e., determines that the service animal will perform tasks for the benefit of a student with a disability).

Applicable Person(s)	Responsibilities
	● Informs the parent/guardian that the student's service animal may accompany the student to school, and explain that the service animal must be under the control of its handler at all times, and must be housebroken (28 C.F.R. 35.136). ● If the school excludes the service animal: 1. Notifies the parent/guardian in writing of the reasons for the exclusion and the right to appeal. Provides any required procedural safeguard notices. See Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (34 C.F.R. Parts 104 and 300). 2. Gives the student with a disability the opportunity to participate in all of the school's services, programs, or activities without having the service animal at the school facility.
Building Administrator	**When notice of the need for a service animal in a school facility is provided:** ● Balances student's need for the service animal and the legitimate safety interests of other students and staff by ensuring the service animal will meet the guidelines listed in *USD 261 Animals and Plants in the School Policy*. ● Takes appropriate steps to inform the student's parent/guardian of any unmet guidelines and what actions must be taken to meet these guidelines and avoid exclusion of the service animal. ● Discusses *USD 261 Animals and Plants in the School Policy* with building staff, and requests to be immediately informed if the animal's behavior does not conform to these guidelines. ● Ensures that the district conducts a criminal background check on any handler(s). ○ The ADA regulation, 28 C.F.R. §§35.130(f) and 35.136(h), and the Kansas White Cane Law, K.S.A. 39-1101 through K.S.A. 39-1113, both prohibit charging a disabled individual a deposit or a surcharge as a condition to allowing a service animal to accompany the disabled individual. ● Creates a plan with the student's parent/guardian and the handler for: 1. Integrating the animal into the classroom and school environment (assemblies, cafeteria, library, etc.). 2. Meeting the service animal's basic needs during the school day.

Applicable Person(s)	Responsibilities
	Any plan depends on the individual student's service animal arrangement, any management issues, and the schedules within each individual building. The school staff is not required to provide care or assistance except in special circumstances (see 28 C.F.R. §35.136(e)). Consider addressing: where the animal will relieve itself, who disposes of the waste, where the animal drinks water, and who provides it, etc. **Note**: While the school is not required to provide staff to take the animal outside, it may need to provide a staff member to accompany a student outside if the student is the animal's handler (see 28 C.F.R. §35.130(b)(7)). ● Checks with the school nurse regarding any known allergies among students attending the school. ● Manages identified students' competing educational interests by: 1. Consulting the District Coordinator for Animals. 2. Minimizing contact between any allergic students and the service animal. 3. Creating a method to monitor identified competing educational interests between students based upon the individual facts of the situation. 4. Responding to future unidentified competing educational interests and managing them immediately. 5. Modifying any other conditions as the individual facts of the situation require. *See The U.S. Department of Education's "Reasonable Accommodation Handbook," Section C10, provides information about balancing competing interests in the context of a service animal's presence in the work environment. It is available at: www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/acshbom3.pdf.* *The U.S. Dept. of Justice's "Commonly Asked Questions about Service Animals in Places of Business," available at: www.ada.gov/qasrvc.htm.* ● Facilitates the dissemination of accurate information about the presence of the service animal at school while respecting privacy rights. ● Considers creating a joint communication from the building administrator and the parent/guardian of the student using a service animal. The communication should inform other students and their parents/guardians about the placement of a service animal in their educational setting.

Applicable Person(s)	Responsibilities
	○ Providing a joint communication allows the school to exchange the information needed to balance competing educational interests without violating Federal or State laws that govern student records. *See Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232g, and its implementing rules at 34 C.F.R. Part 99. FERPA prohibits schools from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible student, unless an exception applies.* *See policy JRB.* ● Prepares a list of answers to anticipated questions. ● Educates students, staff, and the community about the rights of students to use service animals in the school and the consequences for mistreatment of animals. *See Kansas White Cane Law (K.S.A. 39-1103 makes it unlawful to deny or interfere with the exercise of the rights of a disabled person under the act).* ● Contacts the student's parent/guardian if, at any time, the animal fails to meet the guidelines listed in *USD 261 Animals and Plants in the School Policy*. **When a service animal arrives at school without notice**: ● Keeps the animal with the student if the service animal is obviously: 1. Able to perform tasks or work for the benefit of a student with a disability. 2. Able to stay under the control of its handler and, if not, the handler can take effective action to control it. 3. Housebroken. ● Informs staff that the animal may not be taken away from the student. ● Informs the parent/guardian of this procedure and requests their cooperation with the district to successfully incorporate the service animal into the educational environment. ● Excludes the animal and contacts the student's parent/guardian if the animal does not obviously meet the conditions in *USD 261 Animals and Plants in the School Policy*. ● Contacts animal control if the building administrator or designee believes the animal is not properly vaccinated, ~~licensed~~, may be dangerous, or is sick.

Questions Regarding Service Animals:
Please direct any questions to the District Coordinator for Animals: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services, at 316-554-2206.

Therapy Animal

Definition of Roles:

Therapy Animal *is a domesticated animal, typically a dog, that has been trained to interact with many people other than its handler, as part of the handler's occupation or profession, to provide support for social and emotional health or well-being. Additionally, therapy animals are trained to behave safely around a diverse range of people. The Therapy Animals that are permitted in the Haysville School District are "**professional therapy dogs**" and "**professional therapy rabbits**."*

Professional Therapy Dog *is one that has been selected, trained, and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions, under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the dog as a team, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession. Such dogs, with their handlers, perform such functions in institutional settings, community based group settings, or when providing services to specific persons who have disabilities. "Professional therapy dog" does not include dogs, certified or not, which are used by volunteers for pet visitation therapy (legal definition from K.S.A. 38 9-1113.*

Professional Therapy Rabbit *is one that has been selected, trained, and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions, under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the rabbit as a team, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession. Such rabbits, with their handlers, perform such functions in institutional settings, community based group settings, or when providing services to specific persons who have disabilities. "Professional therapy rabbit" does not include rabbits, certified or not, which are used by volunteers for pet visitation therapy.*

Handler *is a certificated/licensed staff member within USD 261 who has been trained and tested as part of a therapy animal team. The handler is responsible for the following:*

- *care for the animal needs*
- *carry a one (1) million dollar liability insurance to cover the animal*
- *ensure the animal is current on all vaccinations*
- *provide building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals with all therapy certification records*
- ~~*display training records*~~
- *train staff and students on the role of the therapy animal*
- *groom and clean up after the animal (inside and outside of the facility)*
- *maintain control of the animal while on district property*

- *report any incidents to the building administrator in a timely manner*

Therapy Animal Team *consists of the handler and the therapy animal.*

Building Administrator *is the first step of the approval of application, and maintenance of ~~training~~ therapy certification and medical records. All concerns regarding the therapy animal team shall be addressed by the building administrator. The building administrator may remove the animal from service at any time.*

District Coordinator for Animals *is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services. The District Coordinator for Animals establishes and reviews policies, procedures, and guidelines. The District Coordinator for Animals is the second and final step of the approval of application, and maintenance of ~~training~~ therapy certification and medical records.*

Therapy Animal Committee *are staff members within USD 261 which provide feedback on policies, procedures, guidelines, and practices, establish new procedures, and review procedures as needed.*

Bite *is defined as the animal's teeth having broken the skin or caused a bruise or mark.*

Clarification of Rights:
Many people are under the mistaken impression that therapy animals and their handlers have the same rights of access as people with disabilities who use service animals.

Service animals are vitally important to those people with disabilities who have one. A therapy animal performs its tasks by permission or invitation. Most facilities, as with USD 261, require paperwork for a therapy animal to begin performing jobs within their facility.

Minimum Requirements for Therapy Animal:
Dogs and Rabbits are the only professional therapy animals that may be employed by a staff member and serve in a USD 261 facility.

1. An annual application must be submitted and approved prior to the professional therapy animal working in the building.
   - ➔ The application must first be submitted and approved by the building administrator.
   - ➔ Upon approval from the building administrator, the application must be submitted to the District Coordinator for Animals, which is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services.

2. ~~The professional therapy animal and handler must have completed all required training as outlined by the USD 261. Training must be conducted by an approved trainer. Please see the list of approved organizations for options.~~

The professional therapy animal and handler must have completed all required therapy certification as outlined by USD 261.

3. The professional therapy animal must be current on all vaccinations, which are as follows. The handler must provide the building administrator with an annual vaccination record prior to the professional therapy animal working in a USD 261 facility.
    - ~~Rabies (every 3 years)~~
    - ~~Distemper / Parvovirus / 5 or 7 Way Parvo (annually)~~
    - ~~Bordetella (Kennel Cough) (annually)~~
    - ~~Heartworm Prevention (monthly-annually)~~
    - ~~Comprehensive DeWormer/Fecal Check (annually)~~
    - ~~External Parasite Control (annually)~~
    - ~~Preventative Parasite for Flea & Tick Control (monthly-annually)~~

    Required list of vaccinations for Therapy Dog:

    - Rabies
    - Distemper / Parvovirus / 5 or 7 Way Parvo
    - Bordetella (Kennel Cough)
    - Heartworm Prevention
    - Comprehensive DeWormer/Fecal Check
    - External Parasite Check (fleas, ticks, mites, etc.)
    - Preventative Parasite for Flea & Tick Control

    Required list of vaccinations for Therapy Rabbit:

    - Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) / Type 2 (RHDV2)
    - External Parasite Check (fleas, ticks, mites, etc.)
    - Preventative Parasite for Flea & Tick Control

    **Please Note: Titer tests will not be accepted for any type of vaccination.*

Costs Associated with Therapy Animal:
The handler is responsible for all costs (e.g. one (1) million dollar liability insurance policy, vaccinations, medical procedures, food, training, grooming, harness, leash, bed, crate, food bowls, etc.) associated with ownership of the animal.

Requirements of a Therapy Animal:

1. Therapy Animal:
    - ➔ Must be at least one year old
    - ➔ May not be a puppy in training
    - ➔ Must be potty trained
    - ➔ Needs to reside with the animal handler a minimum of six (6) months before initiating work within the district
    - ➔ Must have a calm, friendly, and non-aggressive temperament

- ➔ Must be well-socialized and comfortable around children, large groups, and noise
- ➔ Zero Bite Policy – any therapy animal that bites a person or an animal will not be allowed back on any USD 261 premises
- ➔ Always needs to wear a leash and must be under control of the handler
- ➔ Handler must always be in control of the leash while in the hallways and commons areas
- ➔ Injured or sick animals (within the last 24 hours) will not be brought to school
- ➔ Should be clean and well groomed, including teeth and nails
- ➔ Females in heat are not allowed at school

Requirements and Responsibilities of the Handler:

1. The professional therapy animal must arrive and leave with the handler each day, be collared and/or harnessed and leashed (on a ~~4~~ 6 foot or shorter leash), and under the control of the handler at all times while working in the building. The animal must be on a short leash or in a stroller while moving through the halls and common areas of the building. Retractable leashes and choke chains as well as pinch, prong, decorative spiked, or electronic collars are not allowed.

2. Animals are prohibited from being on district property if anyone has been ticketed or charged for the behavior of the animal.

3. The professional therapy animal must be groomed and bathed, teeth brushed, nails trimmed, and ears cleaned regularly, as well as brushed daily.

4. All care duties such as walking, feeding, watering, and waste cleanup and disposal are the responsibility of the handler and may not be delegated or reassigned to another staff member or student. Waste must be cleaned up and disposed of immediately.

5. When treats are given, this should be done only by the handler.

6. A crate is to have a secure latch in use for when the animal handler is not present with the animal. If the handler is out of the room, the ~~animal crate and~~ classroom/office door is to be locked.

7. Professional therapy animal vaccination records and ~~training documentation~~ therapy animal certification must be on file with the building administrator and the District Coordinator for Animals, while the animal is working on school property.

8. All costs related to the therapy animal are the responsibility of the handler. No funds from USD 261 will be utilized for purchasing, licensing, upkeep or maintenance of a therapy animal.

9. Liability Insurance of a one (1) million dollar policy will be carried by the handler and provided to the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals yearly, prior to the animal being brought on school property.

10. The handler or therapy animal organization agrees to hold the school harmless from any claims or damages resulting from the therapy animal's presence.

11. The handler shall be responsible for any property damage caused by the therapy animal.

12. Professional therapy animal is allowed to work in the same USD 261 facility in which the ~~trainer~~ handler is assigned, and the building administrator has approved the animal to work. The professional therapy animal shall not attend meetings or other school functions outside of the handlers assigned building, unless pre-approved by that district or building administrator.

13. Handler and building administrator shall provide annual training for staff and students on how to appropriately interact with the professional therapy animal. Students will be taught proper etiquette when interacting with therapy animals, such as not approaching without permission and not engaging in rough play.

14. Handlers should evaluate their animal's health and attitude before each working day. If an animal is injured, it should stay home. If an animal has been sick in the last 24 hours, it should stay home.

15. Handlers ~~and building administrators~~ should be aware of the ~~following~~ signs of stress ~~(this list is not exhaustive):~~
    ~~(a) Excessive panting~~
    ~~(b) Animal jumps or climbs on handler for security~~
    ~~(c) Animal hides or cowers behind handler or furniture~~
    ~~(d) Shaking, tremors, or ears and tail pressed close to body~~
    ~~(e) Yawning and changes in facial expression; tension in body~~
    ~~(f) Animal looks for doorway or other escape route~~
    ~~(g) Snapping and growling~~
    ~~(h) Noticeable change in behavior and/or decreased desire to socialize~~

    **Note: When these behaviors become noticeable and/or on-going, the handler ~~and/or administrator should call a trainer to come to the school site and observe the animal. Too much stress in the animal can lead to aggressive behavior. Being proactive can prevent a potentially dangerous situation~~ must assess the animal, notify the building administrator, and determine if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises. The building administrator may make the final decision regarding if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises.*

16. In the event of an emergency involving the therapy animal, such as an illness or injury, the handler must remove the animal from the school premises immediately and notify the building administrator.

17. Building administrator and handler shall meet annually to discuss the advantages of having a professional therapy animal in the school setting, concerns about the therapy animal that have been expressed to the building administrator, future training needs, and any other information deemed appropriate to the therapy animal's role in a school setting.

18. All therapy animal applications are to be updated along with copies of the required records on an annual basis. All records are to be submitted to the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals.

19. If a therapy animal handler has more than one therapy animal, he/she must complete an application process for each animal.

Requirements and Responsibilities of the Building Administrator:

20. Checks with the school nurse regarding any known allergies among students attending the school.

21. Signage stating a professional therapy animal is working in the school building must be posted at the entry of the facility.

22. Building administrator shall inform parents, annually, that a professional therapy animal is working in the school.

23. *Professional therapy animal vaccination records and ~~training documentation~~ therapy animal certification must be on file with the building administrator and the* District Coordinator for Animals*, while the animal is working on school property.*

24. *Liability Insurance of a one (1) million dollar policy will be carried by the handler and provided to the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals yearly, prior to the animal being brought on school property.*

25. *Handler and building administrator shall provide annual training for staff and students on how to appropriately interact with the professional therapy animal. Students will be taught proper etiquette when interacting with therapy animals, such as not approaching without permission and not engaging in rough play.*

26. Handlers ~~and building administrators~~ should be aware of the ~~following~~ signs of stress ~~(this list is not exhaustive):~~
    ~~(a) Excessive panting~~
    ~~(b) Animal jumps or climbs on handler for security~~
    ~~(c) Animal hides or cowers behind handler or furniture~~
    ~~(d) Shaking, tremors, or ears and tail pressed close to body~~

~~(e) Yawning and changes in facial expression; tension in body~~
~~(f) Animal looks for doorway or other escape route~~
~~(g) Snapping and growling~~
~~(h) Noticeable change in behavior and/or decreased desire to socialize~~

**Note: When these behaviors become noticeable and/or on-going, the handler ~~and/or administrator should call a trainer to come to the school site and observe the animal. Too much stress in the animal can lead to aggressive behavior. Being proactive can prevent a potentially dangerous situation~~ must assess the animal, notify the building administrator, and determine if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises. The building administrator may make the final decision regarding if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises.*

27. *Building administrator and handler shall meet annually to discuss the advantages of having a professional therapy animal in the school setting, concerns about the therapy animal that have been expressed to the building administrator, future training needs, and any other information deemed appropriate to the therapy animal's role in a school setting.*

Please Note: Items listed in **BLUE are duplicate items that are the responsibility of both the handler and the building administrator.*

Requirements when a Therapy Animal is Approved in a Building:

28. Animal must be used for therapy purposes.

29. The presence and needs of the therapy animal should not disrupt or interfere with the expected duties of the staff member/handler. Disruption or interference may result in immediate revocation of the therapy animal application.

30. If a student/staff allergy, phobia, and/or fear exists for any reason, the therapy animal should not be present in that same space.

31. The building administrator and/or the District Coordinator for Animals has the right revoke approval for the animal's presence or supplement with additional restrictions if the animal's behavior is deemed to be distracting, counterproductive to a positive school climate, or for concerns of health and safety of the therapy animal or others.

Bite and Injury Policy:

1. If a professional therapy animal bites a person, the animal shall be immediately removed from the facility, and not allowed to return. The handler and building administrator shall document the incident in detail, provide the victim with a copy of the animal's vaccination records, and the one (1) million dollar liability insurance policy. The building administrator shall notify the District Coordinator for Animals. The building administrator will keep all animal bite documentation in the school file,

and will also forward a copy to the District Coordinator for Animals.

2. All other injuries that occur as a result of the professional therapy animal working with students, staff, or patrons shall be reviewed by the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals. The sole discretion as to the animal's ability to return to the school facility shall rest with the District Coordinator for Animals. As outlined in the Zero Bite Policy, any therapy animal that bites a person or an animal will not be allowed back on any USD 261 premises at any time.

   **Please Note: A handler should be very aware of the animal and its level of stress, the situations where inappropriate handling may occur, if the animal may not be feeling well that day, etc. and be able to remove the animal and allow it rest or a respite as needed. They are a team, and much responsibility is on the handler to anticipate problems before they arise.*

~~Training~~ Certification Requirements for Therapy Animal and Handler:

~~All professional therapy animals must be certified by an approved training. The handler shall provide the building administrator with all documentation that supports that the professional therapy animal has successfully passed the requirements of the certified therapy animal training program.~~

~~Approved certification organizations include:~~

- ~~Alliance for Therapy Dogs~~
- ~~American Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)~~
- ~~Canine Assistance, Rehabilitation, Education, & Services (CARES)~~
- ~~Family Dog Training and Behavioral Center~~
- ~~Hands and Paws Inc. (Hapi)~~
- ~~KSDS Assistance Dogs~~
- ~~Love on a Leash~~
- ~~PAWS for Freedom Inc~~
- ~~Therapy Dogs International, Inc (TDI, Inc)~~

All professional therapy animals must be certified by an approved therapy animal organization. The handler shall provide the building administrator with all documentation that supports that the professional therapy animal has successively passed the requirements of the therapy animal organization.

~~Other agencies for consideration shall be submitted by prospective handlers to the District Coordinator for Animals for consideration.~~

Questions Regarding Therapy Animals:

Please direct any questions to the District Coordinator for Animals: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services, at 316-554-2206.

Classroom and Visiting Animal

Definition of Roles:

Classroom Animal *is a small domesticated animal that a teacher owns and provides for their students to observe, and sometimes care for in the classroom.*

Visiting Animal *is an animal that is brought into the classroom or school for students to observe.*

Handler *is a certificated/licensed staff member within USD 261. The handler is responsible for the following:*

- *care for the animal needs*
- *carry a one (1) million dollar liability insurance to cover the animal*
- *ensure the animal is current on all vaccinations (if applicable)*
- *train staff and students on the role of the classroom animal*
- *groom and clean up after the animal (inside and outside of the facility)*
- *maintain control of the animal while on district property*
- *report any incidents to the building administrator in a timely manner*

Building Administrator *is the first step of the approval of application, and maintenance of any applicable records. All concerns regarding the classroom and visiting animals shall be addressed by the building administrator. The building administrator may remove the animal at any time.*

District Coordinator for Animals *is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services. The District Coordinator for Animals establishes and reviews policies, procedures, and guidelines for Service and Therapy Animals, as well as for Classroom and Visiting Animals. The District Coordinator for Service and classroom and visiting animals is the second and final step of the approval of application, and maintenance of any applicable records.*

Bite *is defined as the animal's teeth having broken the skin or caused a bruise or mark.*

Introduction:

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information to promote safety for handlers and students when animals are brought into the classroom. Animals are part of our daily lives; they can be used effectively as teaching aids, and the positive benefits of the human-animal bond are well established. However, the special situation of classrooms necessitates certain safeguards. Inadequate understanding of animal disease and behavior can lead to unnecessary risks for children and animals alike. These guidelines are designed to promote a better understanding of:

1. Which animals may represent a health hazard and are not safe to bring in classrooms,

2. Health considerations when handling animals which have the potential to transmit disease,

3. Safety precautions for introducing animals into classrooms,

4. How to properly handle animal wastes to limit the spread of disease from animals to humans.

Animals that are Unacceptable for School Classrooms and Visits:

1. Wild Animals

For the purposes of these guidelines, a wild animal is any mammal that is NOT one of the following:

a. Domestic dog
b. Domestic cat
c. Domestic ferret
d. Domestic ungulate (e.g. cow, sheep, goat, pig, horse)
e. Domestic rabbit
f. Pet rodent (e.g. mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas)

Wild animals pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic diseases (i.e. diseases which can be transferred from animals to humans) and should never be brought into schools or handled by children.

Wild animals' behavior also tends to be unpredictable. A wild animal that has been raised in captivity is still a wild animal.

Exceptions to this recommendation include those instances when the wild animals are presented at schools by a professional who has experience handling wildlife, and are displayed in enclosed cages which prevent contact between the animal and students. At all times, the wild animal should be either contained or controlled by the presenter. Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, and wild carnivores (such as lions, tigers, and bears), these animals should not be permitted on school grounds under any circumstances.

2. Poisonous Animals

Spiders, venomous insects, poisonous reptiles, and poisonous amphibians should be prohibited from being brought onto school grounds.

Exceptions to this recommendation include those instances when these animals are presented at schools by a professional who has experience handling them, and are displayed in cases which provide a physical barrier between the animal and the children (e.g. animal is enclosed behind sturdy glass or plastic). Poisonous animals are not to be handled by children.

3. Wolf-Dog Hybrids

These animals are crosses between a wolf and a domestic dog and have shown a

propensity for aggression, especially toward young children. Therefore, they should not be allowed on school grounds.

4. ***Stray Animals***
   Stray animals should never be brought onto school grounds because the health and vaccination status of these animals is unknown.

5. ***Aggressive Animals***
   Animals, which are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression towards humans or other animals, or animals, which have demonstrated such aggressive behavior in the past, should not be permitted on school campuses. Aggressive, unprovoked, or threatening behavior should mandate the animal's immediate removal.

Special Consideration for Specific Animals:

1. ***Reptiles (Including non-poisonous snakes, lizards, and iguanas) and Amphibians***
   Non-poisonous reptiles, iguanas, turtles, and amphibians are acceptable with appropriate hygiene for students and employees.

2. ***Baby Chicks and Ducks***
   The chick incubation project is a worthwhile, educational project; but it is strictly up to the principal and teacher to choose to participate. Those choosing to participate must follow these guidelines:
   a. Students should have limited contact with the eggs or chicks. If by chance students touch the eggs or chicks, they should wash their hands with soap and water.
   b. Teachers/adults are encouraged to wear disposable gloves when handling the eggs/chicks. If gloves are not available, teachers/adults should wash their hands with soap and water before and after handling the eggs and chicks.
   c. Teachers/adults should clean animal cages and dispose of animal wastes. Animal wastes should be disposed of where students cannot come into contact with the animal wastes.
   d. After the chick incubation project, chicks should be given to the Extension Service or placed on a farm. Only adults should transport chicks.
   e. Do not give the chicks to the students.

3. ***Demonstration Canines***
   Sentry or canine corps dogs used for demonstration are permitted under the control of trained military or law enforcement officials.

Special Conditions For Specific Animals:
Specific recommendations should be observed for the following animals because of zoonotic diseases that they may carry or because of certain tendencies:

1. ***Psittacine birds***
   Because psittacine birds such as parrots, conures, and parakeets carry zoonotic diseases such as psittacosis (Chlamydia psittaci, parrot fever), such birds (parrots, parakeets, budgies, and cockatiels) should not be handled by students. Birds showing any signs of illness should not be brought into school. Psittacine birds may be brought to school as long as their cages are clean and the bird's wastes can be contained, such as within a cage. Psittacine birds temporarily housed on school property in cages should be treated prophylactically with appropriate tetracyclines for psittacosis for 45 days prior to entering the premises.

2. ***Ferrets***
   Ferrets can be allowed to visit school classrooms, but the person responsible for them must handle them. Because of their propensity to bite when startled, ferrets are not to be handled by students and are not to be permanently housed at the school building.

3. ***Fish***
   Disposable gloves should be worn when cleaning an aquarium. Used tank water should be disposed of in sinks that are not used for food preparation, or for obtaining water for human consumption.

4. ***Law Enforcement Dogs***
   Law enforcement dogs may be allowed on school grounds provided they are part of a recognized school activity or part of a law enforcement investigation.

5. ***Service Animals***
   Service Animals can be used in school buildings. Specific guidelines for Service Animals may be found in the USD 261 Service and Therapy Animal Policy.

6. ***Therapy Animals***
   Therapy Animals can be used in school buildings. Specific guidelines for ~~Service~~ Therapy Animals may be found in the USD 261 Service and Therapy Animal Policy.

Suggested Animals for Use in Schools:
The following is a list of animals that are appropriate pets to be housed in schools:

1. Small pet rodents (e.g. mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, chinchillas)
2. Pet rabbits
3. Aquarium fish (salt or freshwater)
4. Non-psittacine cage and aviary birds (e.g. canaries, finches mynahs, diamond doves)

All animals housed in schools should be provided an appropriate environment (e.g. secure housing, suitable temperature, adequate exercise) and a proper diet. In addition, there should be a plan for the continued care of these animals during the days that school is not in session. Consultation with a veterinarian is advised to help with environmental and nutritional needs and provide care in the event of illness or injury to the animal.

General Guidelines for Animals That Are Permitted to Visit Schools:
It is important that animals that are brought onto school campuses be clean and healthy so that the risk of transmitting diseases is minimal. Children tend to be more susceptible to zoonotic diseases and parasitic infections than adults also because of their lack of handwashing and greater propensity for putting hands in their mouths. Therefore, animals that are brought to school should be clean and free of disease and external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites, to decrease the likelihood of the animal transmitting these agents or vectors to the students. Visiting animals should be restricted to an area designated by the principal. Kittens and puppies are appropriate only for short classroom visits.

The following are requirements for Classroom Animals and commonly Visiting Animals:

1. ***Verified Rabies Vaccination***
   Current rabies vaccination by a licensed veterinarian should be documented for all dogs, cats, and ferrets brought onto the school campus for instructional purposes. Dogs and cats under three months of age or not vaccinated against rabies should not be handled by children.

2. ***Health Certificates for Dogs***
   A health certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian showing proof of current vaccination against Rabies, Distemper / Parvovirus, Bordetella (Kennel Cough), Heartworm Prevention (monthly-annually), Comprehensive DeWormer/Fecal Check, External Parasite Control, and Preventative Parasite for Flea & Tick Control should be available. Animals must have had a negative fecal exam or proof of successful treatment for internal parasites in the past year. The animal should be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites and free of obvious skin lesions. Animals must be housebroken. Female dogs and cats should be determined not to be in estrus (heat) at the time of the visit.

3. ***Health Certificates for Cats***
   A health certificate which is signed by a licensed veterinarian showing proof of current vaccination against Feline Panleukopenia (feline distemper), Rhinotracheitis Calicivirus, Chlamydia, Feline Leukemia, and Rabies should be available. Animals must have had a negative fecal exam or proof of successful treatment for internal parasites in the past year. The animal should be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites and free of obvious skin lesions. Animals must be housebroken. Female dogs and cats should be determined not to be in estrus (heat) at the time of the visit.

4. ***Health Certificates for Ferrets***
   A health certificate, which is signed by a licensed veterinarian showing proof of current vaccination against Canine Distemper and Rabies, should be available. Animals must have had a negative fecal exam or proof of successful treatment for internal parasites in the past year. The animal should be free of external parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites and be free of obvious skin lesions. Animals must be housebroken.

Proper Restraint of Animals:
Because animals may react strangely to classroom situations, it is important to have an effective way to control them. Fear may cause an animal to attempt to escape or even act aggressively in situations, which are unusual to them (the "flight or fight" phenomenon). Appropriate restraint devices will allow the holder to react quickly and prevent harm to students or escape of the animal.

Collars and Leashes:
Dogs, cats, rabbits, and ferrets should be wearing a proper collar, harness, and/or leash when on the school campus or in the classroom so they can be easily controlled. Household rope or string is not an appropriate restraint tool. The owner or responsible person should stay with the animal during its visit to the school. No animal should be allowed to roam unrestrained on the school campus or in the classroom.

Pet birds should never be allowed to fly free in a classroom.

Designated Areas:
All animals should be restricted to the area designated by the principal. In school facilities in which the common dining area is also used as an auditorium, gymnasium, or multi-purpose room, animals may not be in that area.

Student Contact with Animals:
Increased activity and sudden movements can make animals feel threatened, so all student contact with animals should always be supervised and conform to a few basic rules. Even very tame animals may act aggressively in strange situations.

1. Animal bites can usually be avoided if students are kept in small groups.
2. Rough play or teasing should absolutely not be allowed.
3. Students should not be allowed to feed pets directly from their hands.
4. Small animals such as rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, and mice should be handled very gently. Rabbits rarely like to be held and will struggle to free themselves. Rodents may bite when they feel threatened, but rabies post exposure prophylaxis is almost never warranted with small rodent bites.
5. Students should be discouraged from "kissing" animals or having them in close contact with their faces.
6. Education with animals should be used to re-emphasize proper hygiene and handwashing recommendations. All children who handle animals should be instructed to wash their hands immediately after handling them.
7. Animals should not be allowed in the vicinity of sinks where students wash their hands, in any areas where food is prepared, stored, or served, or areas used for cleaning or storage of food utensils or dishes.
8. Animals should not be allowed in nursing stations or sterile and clean supply rooms.
9. Animals are not allowed in sandboxes where children play.

10. Immunocompromised students (e.g. children with organ transplants, children currently receiving cancer chemotherapy or radiation therapy) may be especially susceptible to zoonotic diseases; therefore, special precautions may be needed to minimize the risk of disease transmission to these students. Consultation with the child's parents about precautionary measures is required.

Student Cleaning of Cages and Aquaria:
High school and middle school students may clean animal cages and aquaria using appropriate protocols provided that the work is under the supervision of a professional. Elementary students should not be utilized to clean cages and aquaria.

School Health and Hygiene:
It is important that all areas where animals are housed are free of nuisance odors and do not present an indoor air quality concern for building occupants.

Responsible Use of Live Animals and Dissection in the Science Classroom:
Teachers are expected to follow established curriculum guidelines when using animals as part of the educational process. The following associations are recommended sources of guidance: National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), National Science Education Standards (NSES), and National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT).

Costs Associated with Classroom Animal:
The handler is responsible for all costs (e.g. one (1) million dollar liability insurance policy, vaccinations, medical procedures, food, training, grooming, harness, leash, bed, crate, food bowls, etc.) associated with ownership of the animal.

Requirements and Responsibilities of the Handler:

1. Animals are prohibited from being on district property if anyone has been ticketed or charged for the behavior of the animal.

2. The classroom or visiting animal must be groomed and bathed, teeth brushed, nails trimmed, and ears cleaned regularly, as well as brushed daily.

3. All care duties taking place outside of the classroom such as walking, feeding, watering, and waste cleanup and disposal are the responsibility of the handler and may not be delegated or reassigned to another staff member or student. Waste must be cleaned up and disposed of immediately.

4. When treats are given, this should be done only by the handler.

5. A crate is to have a secure latch in use for when the animal handler is not present with the animal. If the handler is out of the room, the ~~animal crate and~~ classroom/office door is to be locked.

6. Classroom or visiting animal vaccination records must be on file with the building administrator and the District Coordinator for Animals, while the animal is on school

property.

7. All costs related to the classroom or visiting animal are the responsibility of the handler. No funds from USD 261 will be utilized for purchasing, licensing, upkeep or maintenance of an animal.

8. Liability Insurance of a one (1) million dollar policy will be carried by the handler and provided to the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals yearly, prior to the animal being brought on school property.

9. The handler agrees to hold the school harmless from any claims or damages resulting from the animal's presence.

10. The handler shall be responsible for any property damage caused by the animal.

11. Classroom or visiting animals are allowed to be in the same USD 261 facility in which the handler is assigned, and the building administrator has approved the animal to be present. The classroom or visiting animal shall not attend meetings or other school functions outside of the handlers assigned building, unless pre-approved by that building administrator.

12. Handler and building administrator shall provide annual training for staff and students on how to appropriately interact with the classroom or visiting animal. Students will be taught proper etiquette when interacting with animals, such as not approaching without permission and not engaging in rough play.

13. Handlers should evaluate their animal's health and attitude before each working day. If an animal is injured, it should stay home. If an animal has been sick in the last 24 hours, it should stay home.

14. Handlers ~~and building administrators~~ should be aware of the ~~following~~ signs of stress ~~(this list is not exhaustive):~~
    - ~~(a) Excessive panting~~
    - ~~(b) Animal jumps or climbs on handler for security~~
    - ~~(c) Animal hides or cowers behind handler or furniture~~
    - ~~(d) Shaking, tremors, or ears and tail pressed close to body~~
    - ~~(e) Yawning and changes in facial expression; tension in body~~
    - ~~(f) Animal looks for doorway or other escape route~~
    - ~~(g) Snapping and growling~~
    - ~~(h) Noticeable change in behavior and/or decreased desire to socialize~~

    **Note: When these behaviors become noticeable and/or on-going, the handler ~~and/or administrator should call a trainer to come to the school site and observe the animal. Too much stress in the animal can lead to aggressive behavior. Being proactive can prevent a potentially dangerous situation~~ must assess the animal, notify the building administrator, and determine if it is necessary to remove the animal from working*

with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises. The building administrator may make the final decision regarding if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises.

15. In the event of an emergency involving the animal, such as an illness or injury, the handler must remove the animal from the school premises immediately and notify the building administrator.

16. Building administrator and handler shall meet annually to discuss the advantages of having a classroom or visiting animal in the school setting, concerns about the animal that have been expressed to the building administrator, future training needs, and any other information deemed appropriate to the animal's role in a school setting.

17. All Classroom or Visiting Animal applications are to be updated along with copies of the required records on an annual basis. All records are to be submitted to the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals.

18. If a handler has more than one classroom or visiting animal, he/she must complete an application process for each animal.

Requirements and Responsibilities of the Building Administrator:

19. Checks with the school nurse regarding any known allergies among students attending the school.

20. Signage stating a classroom or visiting animal is working in the school building must be posted at the entry of the facility.

21. Building administrator shall inform parents, annually, that a classroom animal is in the school. Building administrator shall inform parents, as applicable, that a visiting animal is in the school.

22. Classroom or visiting animal vaccination records must be on file with the building administrator and the District Coordinator for Animals, while the animal is on school property.

23. Liability Insurance of a one (1) million dollar policy will be carried by the handler and provided to the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals yearly, prior to the animal being brought on school property.

24. Handler and building administrator shall provide annual training for staff and students on how to appropriately interact with the classroom or visiting animal. Students will be taught proper etiquette when interacting with therapy animals, such as not approaching without permission and not engaging in rough play.

25. Handlers ~~and building administrators~~ should be aware of the ~~following~~ signs of stress ~~(this list is not exhaustive):~~
    ~~(a) Excessive panting~~
    ~~(b) Animal jumps or climbs on handler for security~~
    ~~(c) Animal hides or cowers behind handler or furniture~~
    ~~(d) Shaking, tremors, or ears and tail pressed close to body~~
    ~~(e) Yawning and changes in facial expression; tension in body~~
    ~~(f) Animal looks for doorway or other escape route~~
    ~~(g) Snapping and growling~~
    ~~(h) Noticeable change in behavior and/or decreased desire to socialize~~

    **Note: When these behaviors become noticeable and/or on-going, the handler ~~and/or administrator should call a trainer to come to the school site and observe the animal. Too much stress in the animal can lead to aggressive behavior. Being proactive can prevent a potentially dangerous situation~~ must assess the animal, notify the building administrator, and determine if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises. The building administrator may make the final decision regarding if it is necessary to remove the animal from working with students, staff, and/or removed from the school premises.*

26. *Building administrator and handler shall meet annually to discuss the advantages of having a classroom or visiting animal in the school setting, concerns about the therapy animal that have been expressed to the building administrator, future training needs, and any other information deemed appropriate to the therapy animal's role in a school setting.*

    Please Note: Items listed in **BLUE are duplicate items that are the responsibility of both the handler and the building administrator.*

Requirements when a Classroom or Visiting Animal is Approved in a Building:

27. The presence and needs of the classroom or visiting animal should not disrupt or interfere with the expected duties of the staff member/handler. Disruption or interference may result in immediate revocation of the classroom or visiting animal application.

28. If a student/staff allergy, phobia, and/or fear exists for any reason, the classroom or visiting animal should not be present in that same space.

29. The building administrator and/or the District Coordinator for Animals has the right revoke approval for the animal's presence or supplement with additional restrictions if the animal's behavior is deemed to be distracting, counterproductive to a positive school climate, or for concerns of health and safety of the classroom or visiting animal or others.

Bite and Injury Policy:

1. If a classroom or visiting animal bites a person, the animal shall be immediately removed from the facility, and not allowed to return. The handler and building administrator shall document the incident in detail, provide the victim with a copy of the animal's vaccination records, and the one (1) million dollar liability insurance policy. The building administrator shall notify the District Coordinator for Animals. The building administrator will keep all animal bite documentation in the school file, and will also forward a copy to the District Coordinator for Animals.

2. All other injuries that occur as a result of the classroom or visiting animal working with students, staff, or patrons shall be reviewed by the building administrator and District Coordinator for Animals. The sole discretion as to the animal's ability to return to the school facility shall rest with the District Coordinator for Animals. As outlined in the Zero Bite Policy, any therapy animal that bites a person or an animal will not be allowed back on any USD 261 premises at any time.

   **Please Note: A handler should be very aware of the animal and its level of stress, the situations where inappropriate handling may occur, if the animal may not be feeling well that day, etc. and be able to remove the animal and allow it rest or a respite as needed. They are a team, and much responsibility is on the handler to anticipate problems before they arise.*

Questions Regarding Classroom or Visiting Animals:
Please direct any questions to the District Coordinator for Animals: Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services, at 316-554-2206.

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