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| Use of Service Animals by the General Public | |
| Adopted: February 2, 2010 | Last Reviewed/Revised: April 2, 2024 |
| Next Scheduled Review: 2026-2027 | |
| Associated Policies & Procedures: I-20 Integrated Accessibility Standards VI-46 (a) Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public VI-46 (c) Use of Support Person by the General Public VI-46 (d) Accessibility Standards - Notification of Disruption of Service VI-46 (e) Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service | |

Purpose

To comply with the Ontario Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education in the area of Accessibility Standards to break down barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the areas of information and communications, employment and transportation.

Application and Scope

This procedure applies to all operation policies and procedures in all facilities within the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB).

References

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#)
- [Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#)
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

Definitions

Service animals are animals that are being used because of a person's disability, which is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a regulated health professional. Examples of service animals include: dogs used by persons who have vision loss; hearing alert animals for persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing; and, animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming

seizure and can lead them to safety. The customer service standard's provisions also apply to animals providing other services to persons with disabilities.

It is "readily apparent" that an animal is a service animal when it is obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is wearing a harness, saddle bags, and/or a sign that identifies it as being a service animal or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. It may also be readily apparent if a person is using the animal to assist them in doing things, such as opening doors or retrieving items.

Service animals are not pets.

Principles

The Halton Catholic District School Board welcomes all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities. Such services incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of service animals.

Requirements

Responsibility:

- Supervisory Officers, Principals and/or designates and other supervisory staff will ensure all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- Students and staff have separate and specific policies and procedures related to the use of service animals.

Access to Board Premises:

- Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed on HCDSB and/or school premises with their service animal. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.
- This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or HCDSB offices where the public does not have access.
- This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal.
- Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff is covered under separate procedures.

Exclusion of Service Animal:

- A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g. kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g. school cafeteria or lunchroom).
- Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal.
- It is the HCDSB's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, e.g. creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.
- A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the Ontario *Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on Pit Bull Terriers.

Alternative Measures if Service Animal Must Be Excluded:

- In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the HCDSB must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to service them, e.g. a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff or volunteer) to guide them.

When it is Necessary to Confirm an Animal is a Service Animal:

- Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or HCDSB staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a physician or other health care professional confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.
- Where, the person using the service animal regularly attends at the school or HCDSB facility, the Principal and/or designate or other supervisory staff may request to keep a copy of the letter on file, but only as long as required by the circumstances.
- Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a letter with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The Principal and/or designate or other supervisory staff shall preserve the confidentiality of the letter and information contained in the letter and shall not use or disclose the letter or information except as provided for the in *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, cM56.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Administrative Council



Procedure No. VI-46 (B) | Use of Service Animals by the General Public

AUTHORIZED BY: _____

Director of Education and Secretary of the Board