



Use of Service Animals by the General Public

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Applicable Reference from Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Policy:

The Board will welcome 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 people with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of service animals.

Administrative Procedures

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1 Supervisory Officers, Principals and Managers will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal

2. Expectations

Access to Board Premises

- 2.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with his or her service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. 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 board offices where the public does not have access.
- 2.2 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

- 2.3 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).
- 2.4 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 Board'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.
 - 2.5 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

- 2.6 In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board 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 serve 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

- 2.7 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 board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a physician or nurse 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.
- 2.8 Where the person using the service animal regularly attends at the school or board facility, the principal or manager may request to keep a copy of the letter described in section 1.2 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 or manager 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 in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.

3. Additional Information

- 3.1 The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to the principles of equity and inclusive education, consistent with our Catholic teachings, which value and promote human rights and social justice in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations and practices.

References

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Code
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
Health Protection and Promotion Act
Food Safety and Quality Act
Ontario Dog Owners' Liability Act

Definitions

Disability - any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes:

- a) diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder,
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; ("handicap").

Service Animal - is an animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a medical practitioner.