

# Northeastern Catholic District School Board

## STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Administrative Procedure Number: APE022

### POLICY STATEMENT

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The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs and interventions to support student success. It is the policy of the NCDSB, in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services.

### REFERENCES

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Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19  
*Education Act*,

## Adult student

A student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed themselves from



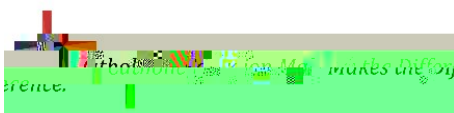
# PROCEDURES



in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

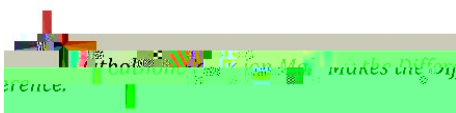
- 2.1 Service animals have traditionally been highly trained dogs that assist individuals with various tasks of daily living (Guide Dog, Hearing and Signal Dogs, Mobility Assistance Dogs, Seizure Response Dogs).
- 2.2 In most circumstances, a Guide Dog will be a highly trained dog provided to support the orientation and mobility needs of a student Handler who has a diagnosis of blindness/low vision, and the Guide Dog will provide the student Handler with greater independence, dignity and opportunity for integration.
- 2.3 The term Service Animal is used in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA)*, to describe an animal that assists an individual with a disability to be able to access goods and services available to the public. A school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to a student's use of a Service Dog/Service Animal when accessing education services in school buildings.
  - a) Pursuant to the Code it is possible that a Service Animal might include different species that provide a therapeutic function (horses), emotional support, sensory function, companionship and/or comfort.
  - b) The determination of whether the animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate a demonstrated disability-related learning need is a



- b) School principals, before admitting a Guide Dog/Service Dog into the school or on school related activities with the student Handler, shall require a parent/adult student to submit a completed application, included in Appendix A of this procedure.
  - c) Before admitting a Service Animal, the school principal shall require the parent/adult student to submit a completed application, included in Appendix B of this procedure.
- 3.1.2 On receipt of an application for a Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal, the school principal shall review the application for completeness and may request any additional information or clarification necessary to assess the request for accommodation.
- 3.1.3 The school principal shall be responsible for communication with the parent/adult student with respect to the accommodation process, and where approved the implementation and management of that accommodation.
- 3.1.4 Where a student supported by a Guide Dog/Service Dog/Service Animal, whose parent is the Handler, seeks only to attend a school excursion with the Guide Dog/Service Dog/Service Animal, which is at a location where the public is customarily admitted, efforts will be made to facilitate the student's participation with the Guide Dog/Service Dog/Service Animal and parent as the Handler. Inquiries may need to be made regarding competing rights and transportation arrangements.

## 3.2 Parents/Adult Students

- 3.2.1 Parents or adult students are required to provide all necessary documentation and engage in the consultation process for the purpose of considering and implementing, if appropriate, the request that the Guide Dog/Service Dog accompany the student at school and/or on schoolrelated activities. The parent or adult student shall be responsible for:
- a) Submission of Appendix A;
  - b) All costs related to the dog, food, grooming, harness, crate and/or mat and veterinary care;
  - c) Obtaining training and maintaining the Guide Dog/Service Dog training to provide the accommodation in a safe manner that does not disrupt student learning;
  - d) Providing confirmation of municipal license for the dog (to be updated annually);
  - e) Providing confirmation of certificates of training not older than 6 months from an Accredited Training Organization attesting that the dog and student Handler have successfully completed training and may safely engage in a public setting without creating a risk of safety or a risk of disruption within a school setting;



- f) Diagnosis from a registered pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist (or other regulated health professional as determined by the NCDSB) with a recommendation for the use of a Guide Dog/Service Dog;
- g) A description of the services provided by the Guide Dog/Service Dog to the student, and how those services will accommodate the student's disability-related needs and assist the student in achieving their learning goals and/or goals of daily living while at school;
- h) A certificate not greater than 3 months old from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario attesting that, the dog is an adult; identifying the age and breed, does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans; has received all required vaccinations; and is in

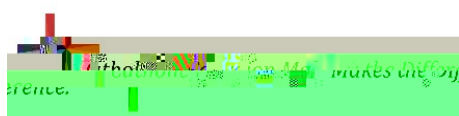




- i) The impact of the accommodation on the learning environment for the student, other students, including health, safety, disruption and distraction;
  - j) Any competing human rights of students, staff, and community members using the school pursuant to a permit.
- 4.4 The process of accommodation, including inquiries regarding competing rights and notice to the school community, shall respect the student's right to privacy regarding their disability and specific learning needs and/or needs of daily living.
- 4.5 Where the student is not the primary Handler, NCDSB staff must be trained as the Handler(s) and accompany the student and dog at all times. As a result, such requests will be individually considered, in accordance with the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship, including consideration of the resources required, alternative accommodations that might meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs and the impact on the staff and other students.
- 4.6 Service Animals shall only be considered when reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student. Parents must complete an application for a Service Animal included in Appendix B of this procedure.
- a) The accommodation process following a request by a parent/adult student for a Service Animal shall be consistent with the process noted above, but shall also include any special considerations that may arise if an animal is a species other than a dog, including the ability to be trained, necessary biological functions, the capacity for the animal to respond to commands, whether the animal may be kept on a leash/harness/crate/mat and how such restrictions might impact accommodation.
- 4.7 The determination with respect to the application for a Guide Dog/Service Dog/Service Animal shall be communicated to the parent/adult student in writing in accordance with Appendix D.

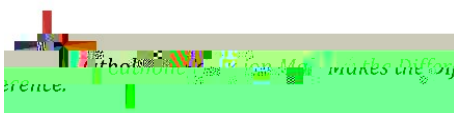
## 5.0 IMPLEMENTING THE ACCOMMODATION

- 5.1 Where approval is granted, the school principal in consultation with the student's educational team, will do the following:
- a) Make changes to the student's IEP goals and/or student's medical plan of care: may provide for the accommodation on an interim trial basis, in which case the indicators of success or lack of success for this form of accommodation will be identified before the trial period begins.
  - b) Organize an orientation session for school staff, students and the student Handler.
  - c) Develop a timetable identifying a bio-break, water break, location/process to be followed during instructional and non-instructional times.





- d) access may be limited to certain activities, areas of the school, or certain times of the day, including but not limited to, where exclusion is required pursuant to the Health Protection and Promotion Act or the Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, which prohibit Service Animals from being in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled.
- e) assessment may be required by and NCDSB official relating to health and safety issues applicable to different areas/activities in the school.
- f) Develop emergency procedures, to include a fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan.
- g) Notice to the community via a letter to parents, posting on the school's website/social media; presentation by the trainer of the Guide Dog/Service Dog during a Catholic school council meeting or association supporting the



Dog/ Service Animal from the classroom immediately and the student's  
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8.2 No animals are allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled such as the kitchen of the school cafeteria or the hospitality classroom.

## 9.0 RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

### Forms

Appendix A: Application Request for Guide Dog/Service Dog

Appendix B: Application Request for Service Animal

Appendix C: Checklist for Principals

### Letters

Sample Letter to Employees and School Permit Holders

Sample Letter to the School Community

Sample Letter to the Parents of Students on the School Bus

Sample Letter to the Parents of Students in the Class(es)

Sample Letter Approving the Guide Dog/Service Dog/Service Animal

Sample Letter Denying the Guide Dog/Service Dog/Service Animal

Director of Education: **Tricia Stefanic Weltz**

Date: January 2023

