



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
<i>Approval Date</i> 2015	<i>Replacing</i> All previous policies
<i>Review Date</i> 2020	<i>Page</i> 1 of 12
<i>Contact Person/Department</i> Superintendent of Specialized Services	<i>Identification</i> ES-5031

USE OF SERVICE DOGS, AUTISM SERVICE DOGS, GUIDE DOGS AND HEARING DOGS BY STUDENTS

1.0 PURPOSE

Trillium Lakelands District School Board is committed to ensuring that it meets the educational needs of all students including those students with special needs. Trillium Lakelands District School Board is also committed to maintaining complete compliance with the legal requirements of the *Ontario Human Rights Act*, *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the *Blind Persons Act*. These Acts dictate rights of access for trained service dogs to accompany handlers into public places.

Service dogs are considered to be an accommodation that is required to allow a student to access the Ontario Curriculum. Service dogs must graduate from a recognized training centre and have supporting documentation that defines their role. A Certified Service Dog is a working dog and there are strict guidelines for access, handling and interaction with these dogs.

This procedure provides specific direction to school administrators regarding the admittance and implementation of service dogs, autism service dogs, guide dogs, hearing dogs and other certified working dogs that are supporting students in the school environment.

2.0 REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 *Education Act*
- 2.2 *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*
- 2.3 *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- 2.4 *Blind Person's Rights Act (2007)*
- 2.5 *Individual Education Plan, A Resource Guide (2004)*
- 2.6 TLDSB Anaphylaxis Policy and SO-6509 and Procedure SO-6510

3.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 GUIDE DOGS

Guide Dogs are highly trained working animals that help provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people with vision loss.

3.2 HEARING DOGS

A hearing dog is a type of assistance dog specially selected and trained to assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired by alerting their handler to important sounds, such as doorbells, smoke alarms, ringing telephones, or alarm clocks.

They may also work outside of the home, alerting to such sounds as sirens, forklifts and a person calling the handler's name.

3.3 SERVICE DOGS

A service dog is a type of assistance dog specially trained to help people who have disabilities other than visual or hearing impairment, or to assist with medical responses (for example, assist people with epilepsy).

3.4 AUTISM SERVICE DOGS

Autism service dogs are specially trained dogs trained by a certified training agency that increase safety levels and alleviate bolting behaviours common in children with autism by acting as an anchor when tethered to the child. An autism service dog is a certified service dog that is recognized as a working dog and strict guidelines apply for the access, handling and interaction with these dogs.

3.5 THERAPY OR COMPANION DOGS

A therapy dog visits people in nursing homes and hospitals to bring love and companionship into their daily routine.

3.6 READING DOGS

A Reading Dog is trained by St. John's Ambulance to provide a settled companion for the child's uninterrupted, uncorrected reading.

3.7 ACCREDITATION FOR SERVICE DOGS and GUIDE DOGS

Service dogs must be certified and registered in Canada. The Special Skills Dog (SSD), or National Service Dog (NSD), Autism Dog Services (ADS) and others will have a distinctive harness and leash and/or saddlebag and vest.

Training schools for any type of service, guide or working dog in Ontario must be members and accredited by either:

- a) The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF): Members' purpose is to serve the visually impaired and blind people from around the world by training and providing Guide Dogs;
- b) Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI): ADI is a coalition of not-for-profit organizations that train and place Assistance Dogs.

4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

4.1 SERVICE DOGS AND COMPANION/THERAPY/READING DOGS

4.1.1 For the purpose of this procedure, the term 'service dogs' includes guide dogs, service dogs, hearing dogs, autism service dogs and other certified working dogs. Service dogs are considered to be an accommodation that is required to allow a student to access the Ontario Curriculum.

4.1.2 Service dogs must graduate from a recognized training centre and have supporting documentation that defines their role. A certified service dog is a working dog and there are strict guidelines for access, handling and interaction with these dogs. A certified service dog is allowed full public access in Canada and is trained to perform the skills required to meet the needs of the student with whom it has been partnered.

4.1.3 Companion dogs, reading dogs or therapy dogs include dogs that provide comfort and friendship to students who may have emotional, self-esteem or social problems or are used for therapeutic purposes. Companion dogs are not considered to be an accommodation as they are generally not required to allow the student to access the Ontario Curriculum.

4.2 LEGISLATION

4.2.1 Ontario Law (Blind Persons Act 2007) requires that a specially trained Guide Dog be allowed to accompany a blind person to all public venues and transportation carriers. The Ontario Human Rights Act extends these rights to deaf and hearing impaired as well as disabled persons.

4.2.2 The Ontario Human Rights Act section 10 (1) a) provides a protective provision to ensure the rights of persons who have a “physical or mental disability or related characteristics or circumstances, including reliance on a dog guide or other animal assistance, a wheelchair or any other remedial appliance or device.”

CONSIDERATIONS

4.2.3 When a school is approached with the request for a dog to accompany a student, the school must first determine whether the request is for a service dog or a companion dog. A request for a companion dog may be denied.

4.2.4 Decisions regarding the admittance procedure and implementation of service dogs into the school environment are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All circumstances of a particular case, including the individual needs of the student being assisted by the dogs, and the needs of other students and staff will be considered. Where necessary, the rights and needs of one person may have to be balanced against the rights and needs of another. Other alternative accommodations may be considered for students with special needs.

4.2.5 Plans for entry of service dogs will be developed after extensive consultation. The Principal must consult with the Superintendent of the School.

4.3 PROCEDURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE DOGS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

4.3.1 Parents/Guardians will approach the Principal or Designate regarding the needs of their child and the potential use of a service dog.

4.3.2 Parents/Guardians are required to make a request in writing to the school (see Appendices) and will receive a copy of the information form (see Appendices) outlining the use of service dogs in TLDSB schools.

- 4.3.3 Parents/Guardians will provide the Principal with the following:
- a) A letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons confirming the diagnosis of exceptionality, as well as a recommendation for the use of a Certified Service Dog;
 - b) A letter from National Service Dogs Training Centre or equivalent registered organization (such as Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada or the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guide Programs) stating that a Certified Service Dog has been placed with the child, and the date of formal Certified Service Dog Team Recognition;
 - c) The dog's vaccination record and certification of good health from a qualified veterinarian (updates of both requirements to be provided yearly, by the family at the beginning of each school year);
 - d) Records of re-training and updating, if applicable;
 - e) Proof of yearly municipal licensing for the dog;
 - f) Information about needs, training, liability insurance, handling, etc.
- 4.3.4 The Principal or Designate may contact the (accredited or certified) training centre for the dog to discuss placement in the classroom and training and support if necessary.
- 4.3.5 The Principal will check student database and other records to ensure that no other student has an anaphylactic allergy to dogs and consult the TLDSB Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedure if an allergy exists. Accommodations may need to be made with all families involved if a serious allergy exists.
- 4.3.6 The Principal will schedule a case conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s), a representative from the dog training school, the classroom teacher(s), the SERT for the school and the educational assistant(s) who work with the student. The purpose of the case conference is to review the IEP description of the student's needs, any IPRC recommendations and the required accommodations including type of service that the dog will provide. The service provided by the dog must be consistent with the needs or recommendations of the IEP and/or IPRC process.
- 4.3.7 A Management Plan for the Care of the Service Dog which outlines responsibilities and routines (see Appendices) will be developed.
- 4.3.8 If, in the opinion of the Principal, the dog appears to be in ill health and unable to perform the required duties, the Principal may request that the dog be removed from school and may require verification of good health prior to the dog's return.
- 4.3.9 Other information such as safety (allergies, staff or students with asthma, fear of dogs etc), cultural sensitivity, the potential impact of the dog on the school community, handling routines and responsibilities, guidelines for staff and students, other student issues, transportation to school etc. will be considered.
-

- 4.3.10 All school staff will be informed of the request to have a service dog in place.
- 4.3.11 Plans for transportation must be considered. Under section 6.0 of the Board's Transportation Policy and Procedure, service dogs are allowed access to transportation services; however the Principal will consult with the TLDSB transportation department regarding riders with allergies or fears. A letter will be sent to all riders informing them there will be a Service Dog on the bus (see Appendices). A clear plan outlining where the service dog will be seated, how students on the bus will be trained regarding appropriate interaction with the service dog and how occasional/replacement drivers will be notified should be developed. The Principal will work with the transportation department and copies of documentation will be submitted to the Superintendent of Business or designate.
- 4.3.12 A transition plan for introducing the dog to the school environment will be made. Consistent routines must be established and student and community notification plans put in place. Rules and protocols (such as handling and touching the dog, etc., must be clearly communicated to students) via an assembly or other in-school training.
- 4.3.13 Information should go home to the school community regarding the arrival of the service dog in the school once a firm plan is developed (see Appendices for example).
- 4.3.14 A copy of the parent request and the medical diagnosis will be retained in the documentation section of the OSR.
- 4.3.15 Signs must be placed on the entrance doors of the school to inform visitors of the dog's presence. (Certified Training Agency will often provide these signs).
- 4.3.16 An appropriate fire and emergency exit plan must be developed for the student and service dog.
- 4.3.17 The Administrative Checklist for the implementation of the service dog into the school environment must be completed. (see appendices)
- 4.3.18 As part of the student's IEP, the transition plan will be updated to include the service dog.

4.4 TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.4.1 It is the responsibility of the dog's trainers/handler and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) to:
- a) Walk the dog to/from school or facilitate the use of the bus/loading onto the bus;
 - b) Provide the required equipment and dog care items;
 - c) Assume financial responsibility for the dog's training, veterinary care, and other related costs;
 - d) Work cooperatively with school staff to make this accommodation a success;
 - e) Provide the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion;

- f) Inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect the students and staff.

4.4.2 In the case where a service dog is placed with a person who is unable, due to age, ability or other factors, to act as the primary caregiver or handler, the dog will be trained to work with an adult(s) for the child. An Educational Assistant may take responsibility as a handler or person with primary responsibility for the dog during school hours. Training will be provided by the service organization.

5.0 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting a Service Dog in the School
- 5.2 Appendix 2 – Request for Service Dog Involvement with Student
- 5.3 Appendix 3 – Management Plan for the Care of the Service Dog
- 5.4 Appendix 4 – Checklist for Implementation of Service Dog into a School
- 5.5 Appendix 5 – Sample Parent Communication
- 5.6 Appendix 6 - Sample Parent Communication Regarding Bussing

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS REQUESTING A SERVICE DOG IN THE SCHOOL

1. The success of the implementation of a service dog into a school setting depends on clear communication, a well-informed school community and careful planning. The information you provide will assist the Principal to make the best possible decisions for your child and other students as well as for the staff, volunteers and visitors in the school. The information you provide will be filed in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR).
2. The use of a service dog is considered to be an accommodation to help your child learn and to develop the necessary skills to achieve success at school. The use of a companion dog is generally not considered to be an accommodation under the Ontario Curriculum. If your child already has an Individual Education Plan, it will be reviewed at a case conference, or one will be developed in consultation with you. The Principal will invite you, your child's teacher, a representative from the training centre, the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) in the school, and any other relevant school staff to the case conference to discuss your child's needs, the accommodations that are already in place for your child, as well as the additional assistance provided by a service dog.
3. The information you provide will help the Principal to implement your request. It is important that you provide information that addresses the safety of all students and staff. For example, the Principal needs to know that the dog has no history of nipping, biting or growling at children or adults, nor exhibits aggressive protective behaviours.
4. The well-being of the dog is also very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed, and your input as a trained handler is valuable. The Principal also needs to know what other resources are available to facilitate the transition to school and the implementation of the plan. Strategies for becoming familiar with the building and school grounds, introduction to assemblies/concerts, recess, and informing the staff and students about interacting with the dog will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the dog as possible.
5. After all the discussion and planning is in place, the goal will be to implement the plan as soon as possible.
6. Your responsibilities include:
 - transporting or walking the dog to and from school, or facilitating the use of bus transportation;
 - providing the required equipment and dog care items;
 - assuming responsibility for grooming, health care and annual certification of health by a qualified vet;
 - assuming financial responsibility for the dog's training, veterinary care, and other related costs;
 - working co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success;
 - assisting the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community if requested;
 - providing the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion; and
 - informing the Principal of all relevant information that may affect the students and staff.
7. If, in the opinion of the Principal, the dog appears to be in ill health and unable to perform the required duties, the Principal may request that the dog be removed from school and may require verification of good health prior to the dog's return.
8. Once the necessary information has been discussed, the Principal will consult with the Superintendent of Education prior to the admittance and implementation of the service dog into the school.
9. A series of planning steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the service dog.



REQUEST FOR SERVICE DOG INVOLVEMENT WITH A STUDENT

Name of student: _____ D.O.B. _____

Address: _____

Student Exceptionality: _____

Name(s) of parent(s)/guardians(s): _____

Telephone number(s): _____

I/We request that _____ be allowed to use a service dog at school and at school-related activities.

b) Type of service the dog will provide for the student: _____

c) Length of time the student and dog have worked together? _____

d) Expected duration of this requested intervention? _____

e) Additional information that will assist the Principal (e.g. safety, behavior, temperament)

f) I/We understand that it is our responsibility to:

- transport or walk the dog to and from school, or facilitate the use of bus transportation;
- provide the required equipment and dog care items;
- assume financial responsibility for the dog’s training, veterinary care, and, other related costs;
- work co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success;
- assist the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community;
- provide the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion;
- inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect our child, the other students, and/or staff; and
- assume responsibility for grooming, health care and annual certification of health by a qualified vet.

g) I/we give permission for this information to be shared with the school community.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

For office use only:

Signature of Principal Date

Notice of Collection: Personal information on this form is collected pursuant to the Authority of the Education Act R.S.O., 1990, c.E.2 and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M56 and may be used as necessary for board operations, school programs, education services and student records. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information please contact the Freedom of Information Contact at the Trillium Lakelands District School Board Corporate Office, P.O. Box 420, 300 County Road 36, Lindsay, ON, K9V 4S4, 1-888-526-5552.



MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CARE OF THE SERVICE DOG

Name of student: _____ D.O.B.: _____

O.E.N: _____ School year: _____

Name of dog: _____

School: _____

Person(s) responsible in the school environment: _____

Note: Where possible and feasible, these responsibilities should be handled by the student in the same manner as at home. Care of the animal is also a skill to be taught.

Water needs: (e.g. provision of water bowl, procedures for use, cleaning etc.)

Bladder/Bowel Needs of Dog (e.g. – frequency, location, disposal etc.)

Other considerations (e.g. rest periods away from work, hot and winter weather, etc.)

1. Rest periods away from work _____

2. Hot weather _____

3. Winter weather _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____

Notice of Collection: Personal information on this form is collected pursuant to the Authority of the Education Act R.S.O., 1990, c.E.2 and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M56 and may be used as necessary for board operations, school programs ,education services and student records. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information please contact the Freedom of Information Contact at the Trillium Lakelands District School Board Corporate Office, P.O. Box 420, 300 County Road 36, Lindsay, ON, K9V 4S4, 1-888-526-5552

Checklist for Implementation of Service Dog into a School	Date of Completion /Notes
Advise parent/guardian and student 18 years and older, making the request that TLDSB has a procedure to follow before a decision is made.	
Provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with the form Request for Service Dog Involvement With a Student and Information for Parents / Guardians Requesting a Service Dog in the School.	
Inform School Superintendent of the request.	
Ensure that parent/guardian submits copies of the following documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copy of recommendation for service dog by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons; • copy of dog's registration with a recognized training centre; • copy of current, official vaccination certificate for the dog; • proof the dog is registered in Canada; • documentation from member(s) of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons; • copy of training certification of parent(s)/guardian(s); • proof of municipal dog license, if applicable; • verification of good health. 	
Consider /research implications related to student in the school AND on busses (considering students from other schools) regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies; • Fear of dogs; • Cultural sensitivities and other issues; • Plan for required accommodations. 	
Convene a case conference with the following in attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/Guardians and/or student over the age of 18; • classroom teachers(s); • SERT; • representative from the dog training centre; • Educational Assistant(s) who work with the student. 	
Review the request with respect to its consistency with the IEP and/or recommendations from the IPRC.	
Inform school staff that a request has been made.	
Inform school board transportation department that a request has been made and receive input.	
Principal of the hosting school to inform the Principals of schools where bussing is shared, that there will be a service dog on the bus and share the letter draft in the Appendices.	
Meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student 18 years or older, to inform them of the information you have received, and to review the implementation plan, including the fire and emergency exit plans, and Management Plan for the Care of the Dog.	
Advise the Superintendent of Education of your actions.	
Develop a communication strategy to inform students, staff, community and relevant employee representatives. Include information in registration packages.	
Post signs on the entrance doors, and at any other appropriate places to advise visitors of the dog's presence.	
Monitor and review the implementation on an annual or as needed basis. Review may include certified health check, consultation with trainer/ training centre or school reports (e.g. review IEP and IPRC, safety plans, Management Plan for the Care of the Dog).	
File relevant documentation and correspondence in the documentation file of student's OSR.	

SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION

{SCHOOL LETTERHEAD}

DATE

Dear Parents/Guardians:

RE: Service Dog at School

Beginning on (date) one of the grade () students at our school will attend class with a _____ (Guide, Hearing, Service, Autism Service) dog to support (his/her) special needs.

Successful transition and entry of the dog into the school environment has been planned in accordance with the TLDSB 'USE OF A SERVICE DOG BY A STUDENT' Procedure and with input and consultation from the school and broader community.

The dog has been specially trained and is a Certified Service Dog. This is a working dog and will be easily identified as one by the vest it wears. Students will be introduced to the dog at a school assembly or in school training and rules for interaction will be reviewed. Working dogs should not be petted or approached without the permission of the dog's handler.

Should you wish further information please do not hesitate to contact the school Principal directly.

Sincerely,

Principal Name

cc: Superintendent



SAMPLE PARENT COMMUNICATION REGARDING BUSSING

(SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

DATE

Dear Parents/Guardians:

RE: Service Dog Riding on Bus _____ (insert number)

Beginning on (date) a student on bus (insert bus number) will begin attending a local school with a _____ (Guide, Hearing, Service, Autism Service) dog to support (his/her) special needs.

Successful transition and entry of the dog into the school environment has been planned in accordance with the TLDSB 'USE OF A SERVICE DOG BY A STUDENT' Procedure and with input and consultation from the school and broader community.

The dog has been specially trained and is a Certified Service Dog. This is a working dog and will be easily identified as one by the vest it wears. Working dogs should not be petted or approached without the permission of the dog's handler.

Should you wish further information please do not hesitate to contact the school Principal directly.

Sincerely,

Principal Name

cc: Superintendent