

DIVISION: PROGRAMS

Policy #: PROG-315

POLICY NAME
SERVICE DOGS

POLICY STATEMENT

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (“District”) recognizes the importance of the use of specially trained Service Dogs as a strategy to accommodate certain individuals with disabilities, and permits the use of Service Dogs in schools and on school district property as necessary.

BACKGROUND

The District complies with provincial legislation in its delivery of educational services. The provincial [Human Rights Act 2010](#) and the [Service Animal Act](#) provide for the accommodation of individuals with disabilities who use specially trained Service Dogs. Service Dogs may provide assistance for children and adults who are visually and hearing impaired, and/or have other physical and developmental disabilities. They may also serve to alert individuals with impending seizures or other medical crises.

The District also promotes a philosophy of inclusive education and provides school-based services for students with exceptionalities in accordance with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development *Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities*. Students with exceptionalities may require a range of services, depending on their needs and level of functioning. The District establishes procedures and practices that are safe, appropriate and consistent and that enable students with health or medical needs to attend and participate in school.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any student who requires a Service Dog in order to attend and participate in school programs and activities.

This policy also applies to any employee who requires a Service Dog in order to carry out their duties in the workplace.

DEFINITIONS

Approved: March 5, 2016

SERVICE DOGS (INCLUDING GUIDE DOGS, ASSISTANCE DOGS AND SKILLS DOGS)

For the purposes of this policy a Service Dog is one that is trained to assist someone with a disability and that meets the Canadian standard for Service Dogs and their training. The Special Skills Dog (SSD) or National Service Dog (NSD) will have a distinctive harness and leash and/or saddlebag and vest. Examples of Service Dogs are:

- A Seizure Response Dog: Trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder.
- A Social Signal Dog: Trained to assist a person with autism.
- A Guide Dog: Trained to assist a blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing person.

APPROVED SERVICE DOG TRAINING FACILITIES

For the purposes of this policy, Service Dogs must be certified and registered within Canada. Training facilities for any type of service, guide or working dog must be members of, and accredited by either:

- a) 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; or
- b) Assistance Dog International, Inc. (ADI): ADI is a not-for-profit organization that train and place Assistance Dogs.

Dogs used for students with autism must have a certificate of training from Guide Dogs of Canada or National Service Dogs Training Centre.

COMPANION/SUPPORT/THERAPY DOGS

For the purposes of this policy a companion/support/therapy dog is a dog that provides companionship and emotional support to a student who has a developmental, behavioral or physical disability. These dogs may have training but do not have specialized training to provide services for a disabled person, and fall outside the scope of the provincial Service Animal Act.

DOG HANDLER ("HANDLER")

The Handler for a Service Dog is normally the individual who is utilizing the Dog's services. For the purposes of this policy, when a student is not able to handle the Service Dog, the Dog is supervised by an adult who is responsible for both the student and the Dog. The Handler at school for a student will be an employee as designated by the District and trained by an approved Service Dog training facility. Ongoing training will be provided by the student's family. All costs for training the Handler will be the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian.

TETHERING

Tethering is a term used by National Service Dogs to indicate the attachment of the Service Dog to individual with special needs. In this case, the dog is attached to the individual by both a leash and a belt system. The individual is encouraged to control the Dog by the leash but the Dog also responds to adult commands and may direct the individual's movement by means of the belt system. In this manner the individual is "tethered" to the Dog.

DISABILITY

For the purposes of this policy disability is defined as:

- 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: diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
 - A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability.
 - A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
 - A mental disorder.
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POLICY DIRECTIVES

EMPLOYEES

1. Employees must provide documentation as required by the District to the Human Resources Division, in support of a request to use a Service Dog in the workplace.
2. The Assistant Director of Education (Human Resources) or designate must approve the use of any Service Dog in the workplace.

STUDENTS

1. Parents/guardians must provide documentation as required to the school administrator, in support of a request to use a Service Dog in school.
2. The Assistant Director of Education (Programs) or designate must approve the use of any Service Dog in a school.
3. The School Administrator will:
 - Obtain the appropriate documentation from the parent/guardian.
 - Provide parents/guardians with information as outlined in the administrative procedures/regulations.
 - Advise the relevant Assistant Director of Education (Programs) or designate once a request has been received.
 - Arrange a school-based team meeting following approval for the use of a service dog in a school.