

Administrative Procedure 341

GUIDE AND ASSISTANCE DOGS

Background

Guide or Assistance Dogs are trained to assist children and adults who have a physical or developmental disability with their daily living activities. The use of Guide and Guide or Assistance Dogs is an intervention strategy that is recognized as an aid to children with Special Needs. Use of a Guide or Assistance Dog by a student with a disability will be allowed in school or on Division property when it has been determined that the student's disability requires such use for the student to have equal access to the services, programs or activities offered by the school, and when the Division's requirements have been met to the satisfaction of the Superintendent.

A "Guide or Assistance Dog" means a working dog specifically trained to undertake more than one task to mitigate an individual's disabilities, and which has the qualifications prescribed by Guide or Assistance Dogs International or the International Guide Dog Federation Guide or Assistance Dogs include, but are not limited to:

- "Autism Support Dogs" which are dogs trained as assistants for persons with autism.
- "Hearing Dogs" which are dogs that alert individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to specific sounds.
- "Seizure Response Dogs" which are dogs trained to provide emergency response for individuals with epilepsy.
- "Service Dogs" which are dogs trained to assist individuals who utilize a wheelchair.
- "Guide Dogs" which are dogs trained as a guide for a blind or visually impaired person.

Procedures

The following procedures will be put into place prior to the admittance of a "Guide or Assistance Dog" to the school.

1. Parent Responsibilities

- 1.1 Provide a letter of notification to the Division that the child will be attending school with their Guide or Assistance Dog.
- 1.2 Provide a Certificate of Training for the Guide or Assistance Dog from the appropriate agency.
- 1.3 Pay for all financial implications incurred by the school or Division as well as providing proof of a municipal dog license, proof of annual re-certification from the appropriate agency and proof of up to date vaccinations provided by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine confirming that the Guide or Assistance Dog is in good health.
- 1.4 Arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the Guide or Assistance Dog, including appropriate bedding (e.g. bed or blanket) and water bowl.

- 1.5 Work with the school Principal to establish an agreed upon plan that includes at least one bio-break procedure per day.
2. The Division shall not be responsible for the training, feeding, grooming or care of any Guide or Assistance Dog permitted to attend school or ride on school buses under this policy. The school Division must approve any person who is authorized to assist in the care and supervision of the Guide or Assistance Dog while on school property. That person must complete the Volunteer/Volunteer Coach Registration and Confidentiality Form.
3. The Principal of the school will work with the Director of Student Services to:
 - 3.1 Ensure that the use of a Guide or Assistance Dog is consistent with the needs of the student's Individual Program Plan (IPP)
 - 3.2 Arrange a case conference with parent/guardians, classroom teacher(s), appropriate Student Services staff, a representative from the appropriate agency, the student (when appropriate), other consultants, if necessary, and the Director of Student Services to discuss and develop a plan to determine:
 - 3.2.1 The purpose and function of the Guide or Assistance Dog;
 - 3.2.2 Who will accompany and handle the Guide or Assistance Dog outside;
 - 3.2.3 The personal care and physical needs of the Guide or Assistance Dog including:
 - Establish a bio-break that incorporates the safest and most environmentally sound place for the Guide or Assistance Dog to relieve itself,
 - Removal and disposal of animal waste,
 - Provision of a suitable container for waste,
 - Considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather;
 - 3.2.4 Classroom considerations such as seating arrangements;
 - 3.2.5 Any necessary changes in routine and procedures and program changes;
 - 3.2.6 Arrangement for the Guide or Assistance Dog to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site prior to commencement of services;
 - 3.2.7 A transition plan for the Guide or Assistance Dog and the student;
 - 3.2.8 A timetable for the introduction of the Guide or Assistance Dog to the school and class and for the training of the student's school team (Principal, teacher(s), educational assistant(s), etc.);
 - 3.2.9 Rules of conduct around the Guide or Assistance Dog for students, staff and the public; and
 - 3.2.10 Disseminating and regulating such rules
 - 3.3 Notification Letters
 - 3.3.1 The following letters shall be forwarded home to inform:

- The school community of the arrival of the working Guide or Assistance Dog, its purpose, rules and regulations regarding the existence of the Guide or Assistance Dog at the school;
- The students in any of the classes where the Guide or Assistance Dog will be present to elicit information concerning allergies or extreme phobias from the students' parents/guardians;
- The students who will be sharing transportation where the Guide or Assistance Dog will be present; and

3.3.2 Retain all letters regarding the Guide or Assistance Dog in the student's confidential file.

3.4 Inform all staff including teachers, educational assistants, custodians; all support staff, volunteers, school council and the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) officer of the presence of the Guide or Assistance Dog(s).

3.5 Resolve any specific concerns or issues raised regarding the presence of a Guide or Assistance Dog.

3.6 Arrange for demonstrations from the appropriate agency or another certified Guide or Assistance Dog organization for the student body, staff and the community as required to provide education and awareness of Guide or Assistance Dogs in schools.

3.7 Work with the Transportation Department regarding any transportation requirements.

3.8 Revise emergency procedures as required to include the Guide or Assistance Dog, such as evacuations, and notify the Fire Department regarding the existence of the Guide or Assistance Dog.

3.9 Develop an alternative dog handler for instances when the primary dog handler is absent.

4. Limiting, Removing or Excluding Guide or Assistance Dogs From School

4.1 The Division may limit, remove or exclude a Guide or Assistance Dog where the Guide or Assistance Dog poses a direct threat to the health or safety of an employee or student or others at school, causes a significant disruption of school activities or otherwise jeopardizes the safe operation of the school. Examples of such include, but are not limited to:

4.1.1 The Guide or Assistance Dog does not urinate or defecate in appropriate/designated locations;

4.1.2 The Guide or Assistance Dog vocalizes unnecessarily (e.g. barking, growling or whining);

4.1.3 The Guide or Assistance Dog shows aggression towards people or other animals;

4.1.4 The Guide or Assistance Dog solicits or steals food or other items from the student body or school personnel;

4.1.5 The Guide or Assistance Dog is unable to perform reliably the service the service for which it has been approved;

- 4.1.6 The Guide or Assistance Dog is not under the full control of the student with the disability or the designated employee;
- 4.1.7 The Guide or Assistance Dog is a public health threat as a result of being infested with parasites or having a communicable disease of the skin, mouth or eyes;
- 4.1.8 The Guide or Assistance Dog is unclean and unsanitary;
- 4.1.9 The student or the student's parents/guardians fail to provide or maintain current documentation required by these regulations; and
- 4.1.10 The student or the student's parents/guardians fail to abide by any additional conditions of the terms of an IPP regarding their Guide or Assistance Dog.

5. Transportation of the Guide or Assistance Dog

In determining the necessity of a Guide or Assistance Dog for a student with a disability at the school, the Division may need to provide directions for transporting the student and the Guide or Assistance Dog.

5.1 Training

- 5.1.1 The bus driver should meet with the Guide or Assistance Dog's owner. The owner is responsible for providing information to the driver regarding critical commands needed for daily interaction and emergency/evacuation;
- 5.1.2 The Guide or Assistance Dog's owner should provide an orientation to students riding the bus with the Guide or Assistance Dog regarding the dog's functions and how students should interact with the animal; and
- 5.1.3 The Guide or Assistance Dog should practice the bus evacuation drills with the student.

5.2 Loading/Unloading

- 5.2.1 The Guide or Assistance Dog should board the bus by the steps, not on a lift.

5.3 Seating Location

- 5.3.1 The Guide or Assistance Dog should be positioned on the floor at the student's feet.

5.4 Cessation of Transportation

- 5.4.1 Situations that would cause the cessation of transportation of the Guide or Assistance Dog include;
 - The Guide or Assistance Dog's behaviour poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
 - The Guide or Assistance Dog urinates or defecates on the bus;
 - The Guide or Assistance Dog does not remain in the designated area.
- 5.4.2 If transportation is suspended due to any of the above reasons, transportation may be reinstated after additional training or medical issues

are resolved. The Guide or Assistance Dog's owner should be informed of these consequences prior to the first day of transportation.

6. Restrictions and Off Limits for Guide or Assistance Dogs

The Division imposes some restrictions on Guide or Assistance Dogs for safety reasons. Guide or Assistance Dogs may be excluded or have limited access to certain areas of school facilities or certain programs for safety reasons. Areas or programs which may be considered off-limits for Guide or Assistance Dogs include, but are not limited to:

- 6.1 Laboratories, mechanical rooms, custodial closets, food preparation areas, areas where protective clothing is necessary, areas which have exposed sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects that may pose a threat to the Guide or Assistance Dog's safety, areas with high levels of dust or noise and areas where there is moving machinery.
- 6.2 The determination to deny or limit the access of a Guide or Assistance Dog to specific programs or areas of that school facility will be on a case-by-case basis.

7. Conflicting Disabilities

- 7.1 Employees, students, parents/guardians of students with medical issues that are impacted by dogs (such as respiratory diseases) should contact the school Principal immediately if they have a concern about exposure to a Guide or Assistance Dog. The employee, student, parent/guardian of the student, will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the disability and the need for an accommodation. The school Principal will facilitate a process to resolve the conflict that considers the conflicting needs/accommodations of all persons involved.

8. Appeals

- 8.1 Any student or parent/guardian of a student with a Guide or Assistance Dog who is aggrieved by the school Principal's decision to remove, limit or exclude a Guide or Assistance Dog may appeal that decision to the Superintendent. That appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.

Reference: Autism Support Dogs
Guide or Assistance Dogs International Inc
BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services
Service Dogs Act
Lions Foundation of Canada

Form: 490-1, Volunteer/Volunteer Coach Registration and Confidentiality