

<b>LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION</b>	<b>Last Reviewed: February 22, 2024</b>
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## **SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS**

The purpose of this Lake Forest School Board policy is to establish parameters for the use of Service Animals by students and visitors within school buildings and on school grounds. Individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to bring their Service Animals into school buildings or on school grounds in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and subject to this policy.

### **Definitions Applied to this Policy**

- Service Animal - Service Animal means any dog (regardless of breed or size) that is individually trained to do work or perform "work or tasks" for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained are not Service Animals. Service Animals are working animals that perform valuable functions; they are not considered pets. The work or tasks performed by the Service Animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. An animal accompanying an individual for the sole purpose of providing emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companionship is not considered a Service Animal.
- Handler - A "handler" is an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a Service Animal. In the case of an individual who is unable to care for and supervise the Service Animal for reasons such as age or disability, "handler" means the person who cares for and supervises the animal on that individual's behalf. District personnel are not responsible for the care, supervision, or handling responsibilities of a Service Animal.
- Works or Tasks – Work or tasks are those functions performed by a Service Animal. The "work or tasks" must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include but are not limited to:
  - a. Assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks
  - b. Alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds
  - c. Providing non-violent protection or rescue work
  - d. Pulling a wheelchair
  - e. Assisting an individual during a seizure
  - f. Alerting individuals to the presence of allergens
  - g. Retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities.
  - h. Helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship are not "work or tasks" for the purposes of this policy.
- Trainer - A "trainer" is a person who is training a Service Animal and is affiliated with a recognized training program for Service Animals.

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### **Access to Programs and Activities; Permitted Inquires**

- In general, handlers (i.e. individuals with disabilities) or trainers are permitted to be accompanied by their Service Animals in all areas of District properties where members of the public, students, and employees are permitted. A handler has the right to be accompanied by a Service Animal whenever and to the same extent that the handler has the right. Examples include:
  - a. To be present on District property or in District facilities
  - b. To attend or participate in a District sponsored event, activity, or program
  - c. To be transported in a vehicle that is operated by or on behalf of the District
- When an individual with a disability brings a Service Animal to a District property, District employees shall not ask about the nature or extent of a person’s disability, but may make the following two inquiries to determine whether the animal qualifies as a Service Animal:
  - a. Is the animal required because of a disability?
  - b. What work or tasks has the Service Animal been trained to perform?
- District employees shall not make these inquiries of an individual with a disability bringing a Service Animal to District property when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.
- An individual with a disability may not be required to provide documentation such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a Service Animal.

### **Requirements for All Service Animals**

1. A Service Animal must be required for the individual with a disability
2. The Service Animal must be individually trained to do work or tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability
3. A Service Animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable, because of a disability, to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the Service Animal’s safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the Service Animal must be otherwise under the handler’s control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means)
4. The Service Animal must be housebroken
5. The Service Animal must be under the control of its handler at all times. The handler is responsible for the care and supervision of a Service Animal, including walking the Service Animal, feeding the Service Animal, grooming the Service Animal, providing veterinary care to the Service Animal, and responding to the Service Animal’s need to relieve itself, including the proper disposal of the Service Animal’s waste
6. The school District is not responsible for providing a staff member to walk the Service Animal or to provide any other care or assistance to the animal
7. In the case of a student who is unable to care for and/or supervise his or her Service Animal, the student’s parent/guardian is responsible for arranging for such care and supervision. In the case of an individual who is unable to care for and/or supervise his or her Service Animal, the individual’s authorized representative is responsible for arranging for a Service Animal’s care and supervision
8. The Service Animal must be properly licensed and vaccinated in accordance with applicable state laws and local ordinances

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**Requesting the Use of a Service Animal at School**

- Students with a disability seeking to be accompanied by a Service Animal are requested to submit written request to the building principal of the school the student attends. The principal will notify the superintendent, or designee, with the responsibility to address such requests.
- Students seeking to bring a Service Animal onto District property are requested to identify whether the need for the Service Animal is required because of a disability and to describe the work or tasks that the Service Animal is trained to perform.
- The owner of the Service Animal shall provide written evidence that the Service Animal has received all vaccinations required by state law or local ordinance.

**Removal or Exclusion of a Service Animal**

- A school official may require a handler to remove a Service Animal from District property, a school building or a school-sponsored program or activity, if:
  - a. Any of the requirements described in this policy, are not met
  - b. The handler does not take effective action to control the animal’s behavior
  - c. The presence of the animal would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity
  - d. The Service Animal behaves in a way that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, has a history of such behavior, or otherwise poses a significant health or safety risk to others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodations
- If the Service Animal is properly excluded, the District shall give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without the Service Animal, unless such individual has violated a law or school rule or regulation that would warrant the removal of the individual.

**Allergies; Fear of Animals**

If a student or employee notifies the District that he or she is allergic to a Service Animal, the school District will balance the rights of the individuals involved. In general, allergies that are not life threatening are not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a Service Animal. Fear of animals is generally not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a Service Animal.

**Liability**

- The owner of the Service Animal or non-Service Animal is responsible for any harm or injury to an individual and for any property damage caused by the Service Animal while on District property.

An individual who, directly or indirectly through statements or conduct, intentionally misrepresents an animal in that person’s possession as a Service Animal may be subject to criminal liability.