

***Information for Parents/Caregivers Requesting a Service Animal in a School***

1. The success of the entry of a service animal 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.
2. The use of a service animal is considered to be an accommodation to help your child learn and to develop the necessary skills to achieve success at school. If your child already has a Student-Specific Plan, it will be reviewed, or one will be developed in consultation with you. The Principal will invite you, your child's teacher, a representative from the training facility, the Student Services teacher in the school, and the Student Service Consultant to a meeting to discuss your child's strengths, needs, the accommodations that are already in place for your child, as well as the additional assistance that a service animal may provide.
3. The information you provide will help the Principal to consider your request. The Principal will investigate as to whether any student or member of staff has severe medical or psychological reactions to animals that may prevent or restrict the involvement of the service animal at the school.
4. The well-being of the service animal is also very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed and your input is valuable. The Principal needs to know what other resources are available to facilitate school entry and the implementation of a plan. Strategies for becoming familiar with the building and school grounds, introduction to assemblies/ concerts, recess, and informing the staff about interacting with the service animal will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the service animal as possible.
5. It is imperative that the service animal be ready for school. If the service animal exhibits any behaviours (i.e. growling, scratching, nipping, biting, etc.) or health issues (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea, open wounds, fleas, ticks, etc.) at school it will be removed until the plan is re-evaluated to ensure the safety of staff, students and visitors.
6. An information session may be held for interested school/ community parents/caregivers. Important information shared in this way facilitates understanding and acceptance of new practices at the school. You will be invited to participate in any information sessions.
7. Parents/caregivers' responsibilities include but are not limited to:
  - Provide the Principal with all required documentation, reports, certificates and arrangement for staff training in a timely fashion,
  - Transport or walk the service animal to and from school if needed or request school bus transportation if your child is eligible,
  - Assume financial responsibility for the service animal's training, veterinary care, municipal license and other related costs,
  - Arrange for a representative from the training facility to provide training for school personnel and upgrading as required,

- Participate in a school meeting to inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect your child, other students, staff, and/or visitors to the school,
  - Assist the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community,
  - Work co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success,
  - Provide the required food, equipment and service animal care items,
  - Inform the Principal of the service animal's food, water and "bio-break" needs,
  - Advise the Principal on the removal and disposal of animal waste in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.
8. Once the necessary information has been discussed, the Principal will consult with the Student Service Consultant and the Superintendent or Designate prior to entry of the service animal into the school.
  9. If the request is approved, a series of steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the service animal in a timely manner.
  10. The right of entry of the service animal will be monitored regularly and reviewed on an annual basis.
  11. A Certificate of Training that states the service for which the dog is trained must be available. After September, 2013, only training programs that are members of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or *International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF)* should be eligible for use in Manitoba schools.