

Appendix E

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS IN THE COMMUNITY REGARDING THE ADMITTANCE OF A SERVICE ANIMAL INTO THE SCHOOL

Date

Dear Parents/Caregivers:

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in order to accommodate the student's needs under the *Human Rights Code*.

The Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

Service animals are included in many aspects of the handler's life. A person's right to have a service animal is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code, and as such, it has the right to be with their handler wherever the handler goes (e.g., public buildings, transportation).

The School Community Council will be informed at the SCC meeting about the role of a service animal and to answer questions that you may have. You are cordially invited to attend the meeting.

An orientation session will be provided for all students, to explain the role of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns or needs regarding the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog in our school.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

c: *Superintendent of Education, Family of Schools*
Superintendent of Education - Inclusive Student Services
Inclusive Student Services System Lead
Classroom Teacher

Appendix E

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE FAMILIES OF STUDENTS IN THE CLASS(ES)

Date

Dear Parents/Caregivers:

On [date] the school forwarded a letter home to all parents advising that a Guide Dog / Service Dog would be introduced to our school community.

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in your child's class / [insert course] in order to accommodate the student's needs under the *Human Rights Code* beginning [insert date].

The Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

Your child has participated in an orientation session to explain the role of Guide Dogs / Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or me. Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

c: *Superintendent of Education, Family of Schools*
 Superintendent of Education - Inclusive Student Services
 Inclusive Student Services System Lead
 Classroom Teacher

Appendix E

SAMPLE LETTER TO THOSE SHARING TRANSPORTATION

Sample Letter to the Parents/Caregivers of Students on School Bus

Date

Dear Parents/Caregivers:,

On [date] the school forwarded a letter home to all parents advising that a Guide Dog/Service Dog would be introduced to our school community.

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will riding with a student to and from school to accommodate the student's needs under the *Human Right Code* beginning [insert date].

The Guide Dog/Service Dog and student will be assigned a specific seating area on the bus, and the Guide Dog/Service Dog is trained not to be disruptive while riding on school transportation. It will be identifiable by its vest or harness.

Your child will be participating in an orientation session to explain the role of Guide Dogs/Service Dogs as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog/Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in providing safe and inclusive services for education. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a Guide Dog/Service Dog on your child's bus.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal

C: *Superintendent of Education, Family of Schools*
Superintendent of Education - Inclusive Student Services
Inclusive Student Services System Lead
Classroom Teacher
Durham Student Transportation Services for sharing with Driver

Appendix E

Sample Letter Decision Letter Approving Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal

Date

Dear Parents/Caregivers/ Adult Student (Personalize Salutation)

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child/you attend school with a Guide Dog/Service Dog to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs/acts of daily living.

I wish to confirm approval of your request.

As we have discussed, your/your child's ability to perform the responsibilities of a Handler, and assessment of benchmarks established for evaluating the effectiveness of the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal in meeting your / your child's accommodation needs will take place on a regular basis.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal is groomed, has a vest or harness and crate [if necessary], as well as a water bowl. All costs associated will be your responsibility. If concerns arise regarding the integration of the Guide Dog / Service Dog into the school community and your/your child's class(es), a meeting will be scheduled to review how the issues might be resolved.

In the event that the Guide Dog / Service Dog engages in behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping, you/your child / the Handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog/Service Dog from the classroom immediately and you will be required to arrange for the Guide Dog/Service Dog to be removed from the school. In such a case, alternative options for accommodation will be reviewed.

Sincerely,

Principal

c: OSR
 Superintendent of Education, Family of Schools
 Superintendent of Education - Inclusive Student Services

Appendix E

Sample Letter Decision Letter re: Alternative Accommodation Identified [Note: letter may have to be adjusted depending on the specific circumstances; for example, if the medical docs don't support the need for service animal]

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian / Adult Student (Personalize Salutation)

I am writing regarding your request dated *[insert date on request form]* that your child attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Dog/Service Animal to accommodate learning needs or disability-related needs.

As we have discussed through the accommodation process, we have identified an alternative accommodation that respects your child's dignity, encourages independence, participation and integration, supports your child's learning and disability related needs, and facilitates meaningful access to educational services.

If you wish to discuss alternative accommodation measures to support your child while at school, or if you have new medical or other information, please contact me to arrange for a meeting.

Sincerely,

Principal

c: OSR
 Superintendent of Education, Family of Schools
 Superintendent of Education - Inclusive Student Services