

Appendix F

SERVICE ANIMAL REQUESTS - TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Accommodation

It is the policy of the Durham District School Board (DDSB) in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and participation, and facilitates the development of independence.

Service Animals shall only be considered when reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

Definition of “Service Animal”

PPM 163 includes the following definition of a service animal: “an animal that provides support relating to a student’s disability to assist that student in meaningfully accessing education.

The PPM further states that, “Due consideration should be given to any documentation on how the service animal assists with the student’s learning need, and disability-related needs (documentation from the student’s medical professionals”).

Service animals are distinct from two other categories of animals for whom permission is often sought to accompany student(s) at school:

Table 3

Service Animal incl. Guide Dog	Support Animal	Visiting Animal
Use of a service animal or guide dog requires that both the animal and the student handler must be certified as having been successfully trained by an accredited training facility.	Use of an animal for emotional support. Important to note that these are animals who are not trained to provide specific supports.	An animal from a service or community group providing support to a group of students, or individual students, to foster inclusion but not as accommodation requirement. e.g., St. John’s Ambulance Therapy Dogs

Consideration Process

It is important to note, for consideration of any animal (service, support or visiting) at school, due diligence and process related to considerations of benefit to student/s and risk to others as well as animal health (proof of vaccination, liability coverage and, potentially, related training) is required.

This may include consideration of what could be considered as competing human rights. Consultation is key. The following document is also a helpful resource in this regard:

Resource Link: OHRC “Policy on Competing Human Rights” [OHRC Competing Rights](#)

Remember to:

- ✓ Engage in the Service Animal Request Procedure (the “Procedure”)
- ✓ Notify the individual making the service animal request that you must engage in the Procedure and provide the relevant information/documentation to the person making the request.
- ✓ Consult with the individual making the request to ensure you obtain adequate information to develop an appropriate accommodation plan.
- ✓ Engage other school stakeholders (parents, staff, DDSB administration) in the search for appropriate accommodation, as set out in the Procedure
- ✓ Request that the individual submit a service animal request in writing using the form at Appendix A
- ✓ If necessary, request a medical certificate from a regulated health professional confirming that the service animal is required
- ✓ Request proof that the service animal is up-to-date on vaccinations and proof of municipal licensing
- ✓ Advise that the person making the service animal request will be responsible for the cost of the animal
- ✓ Make an accommodation decision on the basis of the information gathered from the Procedure, including required consultations and considerations, and document the decision and rationale; if the request is not approved, document alternative accommodation options offered that meet the student’s needs.
- ✓ Communicate the decision to the requester
- ✓ Upon approval, provide notification to the school of the service animal’s presence and place signs at the entrance notifying of the service animals presence; protect confidentiality and respect privacy
- ✓ Review the use of the service animal on an annual basis (within the first 30 school days of each school year)

Important to Not:

- ☐ Ignore the Service Animal Request Procedure (Appendix A)
- ☐ Immediately approve or deny a service animal request without engaging in the Procedure
- ☐ Request the specific diagnosis that requires the person to need/use a service animal
- ☐ Consider information not relevant to the school’s ability to accommodate the service animal
- ☐ Arrive at a decision without consulting all relevant stakeholders
- ☐ Require the person with the service animal to train DDSB employees on service animal interaction

Appendix G

SOME AGENCIES APPROVED BY THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE GUIDE AND SERVICE ANIMAL TRAINING

1. Eye Dog Foundation for the Blind, Los Angeles, California.
2. The Seeing Eye, Inc., Morristown, New Jersey.
3. Guide Dogs for the Blind Inc., San Rafael, California.
4. International Guiding Eyes Inc., Hollywood, California.
5. Eye of the Pacific Guide Dogs Inc., Honolulu, Hawaii.
6. Leader Dogs for the Blind, Rochester, Michigan.
7. Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind Inc., Smithtown, New York.
8. Guiding Eyes for the Blind Inc., New York, New York.
9. Pilot Dogs Inc., Columbus, Ohio.
10. Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Windsor, England.
11. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, Ottawa, Ontario.
12. Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, Oakville, Ontario.
13. National Service Dogs, Cambridge, Ontario.
14. Autism Dog Services, Cambridge, Ontario.
15. Any other animal training facility that the Attorney General or an officer of the Ministry designated by the Attorney General in writing or that corresponds with the expectations of a service animal set out under the terms of the Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Note: List up to date at time of most recent review of procedure; subject to change.