

REGULATION 6163.2: ANIMALS AT SCHOOL**Adopted:** 2/10/2003**Revised:** 6/16/2015**Use of Animals for Instructional Purposes**

Before any student or employee brings an animal to school for an instructional purpose, he/she shall receive written permission from the principal or designee. The principal or designee shall give such permission only after he/she has provided written notification to all parents/guardians of students in the affected class, asking them to verify whether their child has any known allergies, asthma, or other health condition that may be aggravated by the animal's presence. When a parent/guardian has provided notification that his/her child has an allergy, asthma, or other health condition that may be aggravated by the animal, the principal shall take appropriate measures to protect the student from exposure to the animal.

All animals brought to school must be in good physical condition and must be appropriately immunized. The teacher shall ensure that the species of animal is appropriate for the instructional purpose, age, and maturity of the students.

All animals brought to school shall be adequately fed, effectively controlled, humanely treated, and properly housed in cages or containers suitable for the species. The teacher shall ensure that cages and containers are cleaned regularly and that waste materials are removed and disposed of in an appropriate manner.

The teacher shall ensure that students receive instructions regarding the proper handling of and personal hygiene around animals.

Except for service animals, as defined below, all animals are prohibited from school transportation services.

Use of Service Animals by Individuals with Disabilities

For an individual with a disability, a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks related to the individual's disability and for his/her benefit. For example, for an individual who is blind or has low vision, a service animal would mean a dog that helps him/her with vision, navigation, and other tasks; for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, a service animal would mean a dog that alerts him/her to the presence of people or sounds; and for an individual with psychiatric or neurological disabilities, a service animal would mean a dog that assists him/her by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied on school premises and on school transportation by service animals, including specially trained guide dogs, signal dogs, or service dogs.

The Superintendent or designee may ask any individual with a disability to remove his/her service animal from school premises or transportation if the animal is out of control and the individual does not take effective action to control it or the animal is not housebroken. When an individual's service animal is excluded, he/she shall be given an opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal present.

Therapy Dogs

The school district supports the use of therapy dogs by qualified personnel ("Owner") for the benefit of its students subject to the conditions of this policy.

Definition of a Therapy Dog

A “therapy dog” is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Owner to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, motivation or companionship to school district students. Therapy dogs are not “service animals” as that term is used in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The dog must be well-behaved and have a temperament that is suitable for interaction with students and others in a public school. Therapy dogs are the personal property of the owner and are not owned by the school district.

Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures

The following requirements must be satisfied before a therapy dog will be allowed in school buildings or on school grounds.

Request

An Owner who wants to bring a certified therapy dog to school must submit a written request to the superintendent or designee. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy dog will be used.

Training and Certification

The Owner must submit the American Kennel Club’s Canine Good Citizen Certification or its equivalent as determined by the Superintendent. The certification must remain current at all times.

Health and Vaccination

The therapy dog must be clean, well-groomed, in good health, housebroken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs. The Owner must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the therapy dog’s current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian.

Control

A therapy dog must be under the control of the Owner with a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would interfere with the therapy dog’s safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the therapy dog must be under the control of the Owner at all times.

Identification

The therapy dog must have appropriate identification, visibly identifying it as a therapy dog.

No Disruption

The therapy dog must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or any other behavior.

Health and Safety

The therapy dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school. No student will be required to interact with a therapy dog, and the Owner will always act to ensure the safety of students, staff, and the therapy dog.

Supervision and Care for Therapy Dogs

The Owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on school property. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a therapy dog.

Authorized Area(s)

The Owner shall only allow the therapy dog to be in areas within school buildings or on school property that have been authorized by school district administrators.

Insurance

The Owner must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog while on school property.

Exclusion or Removal from School

A therapy dog may be excluded from school property and buildings if a school administrator determines that:

- 1. A handler does not have control of the therapy dog*
- 2. The therapy dog is not housebroken*
- 3. The therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others at the school*
- 4. The animal's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process*

The Owner shall be required to remove the therapy dog from school premises immediately upon such a determination.

Allergic Reactions

If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a therapy dog is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy dog, the Owner of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by an administrator. Students, staff, and parents are the district's top priority. If any person present is allergic to dogs, the Owner will arrange for the dog to be removed from the area or event.

Damages to School Property and Injuries

The Owner of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the therapy dog.