

Living Sky School Division No. 202

Administrative Procedure (AP) Manual



Procedure Name: Service Dogs in Schools			
Procedure Type:	School Operations	Implementation Date:	APR. 13, 2016
Procedure Number:	4.46	Last Approval Date:	OCT. 11, 2023
AP Owner:	Superintendent of Learning	Last Reviewed:	OCT. 11, 2023
Legal Reference(s):	<i>Education Act, 1998</i> , Section 191 Policy on Service Animals – Saskatchewan Human Rights Code		

Background

Living Sky School Division (LSKYSD) is committed to the delivery of high quality education programs, supports and services that allow students with diverse needs to maximize their learning and achievement. The division recognizes the diverse needs of some students may require unique accommodation(s). These accommodations, linked to the student's learning profile, may include the use of service dogs in situations where there is a physical disability, such as blindness or low vision, deafness or hearing impairments as well as seizure disorder or autism.

Scope

Students with intensive needs may require accommodation that includes but is not limited to an approved service dog. This administrative procedure does not pertain to the introduction of therapy dogs in schools. Therapy dogs are specifically trained for Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) and under the control of a specially trained animal handler at all times.

Definitions

Service dog refers to a dog that has received specialized training and therefore is accredited to assist a person with a recognized disability or medical restriction. Assistance Dogs International is the recognized and approved entity for training of service dogs

Roles & Responsibilities

The **principal** is responsible to ensure that student accommodation is acknowledged and every effort to put the accommodation in place has been tried.

The **parent or guardian** is required to ensure that all of the necessary documentation has been submitted to the school when inquiring about a service dog accommodation.



Procedures

1. Determination of Need for a Service Dog

If LSKYSD staff receive information indicating that a service dog should be considered as a potential accommodation for a student, the following process will be followed.

- a. The principal shall meet with the parent or guardian to discuss
 - i. the student's needs, medical restriction, and/or learning profile;
 - ii. how existing accommodations or supports could address the student's needs during school hours; and
 - iii. whether the Service Dog would address the student's needs more effectively than other available accommodations.
- b. If the principal confirms that a service dog should be considered to enhance accommodations for the student, the school's superintendent of learning will issue a letter to the parent or guardian requesting medical information attached to a Medical Certificate.
- c. The parent or guardian shall deliver the letter of request and Medical Certificate for completion by their medical doctor.
- d. Upon completion of the Medical Certificate by the doctor, the parent or guardian shall submit the following details to the principal:
 - i. LSKYSD Application for a Service Dog (Appendix B),
 - ii. LSKYSD Medical Certificate indicating the restrictions for the student, and
 - iii. proof of the service dog's accreditation from Assistance Dogs International.
- e. Upon receiving the full application from the parent or guardian, the principal and the school's superintendent of learning shall determine whether the application for a service dog will be accepted. Considerations include, but are not limited to:
 - i. medical restrictions for the student,
 - ii. effectiveness of current accommodations,
 - iii. likelihood that a service dog will best address unmet needs for accommodations, and
 - iv. likelihood that a service dog will represent an undue hardship or impact medical restrictions of other students or staff at the school.
- f. The principal will communicate with the parent or guardian whether the application for a service dog in school was accepted or not.
- g. Prior to a service dog entering the school as part of a student's accommodation plan, the principal will communicate details of any obligations, limitations, and restrictions required to protect the student, parents or guardians, other students, and staff at the school.

2. Obligations of the Parent or Guardian if Application is Accepted

In support of a service dog in school, the parent or guardian is responsible for the following obligations that must be in place prior to the introduction of that service dog at the school.

- a. Provide information in writing from the organization that trained the service dog indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the service dog, including:
 - i. safest and most environmentally sound place for the dog to relieve itself,
 - ii. safe removal and disposal of dog waste, and
 - iii. considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather.
- b. Cooperate with the school administrators to make arrangements for how and when initial and ongoing training will be provided for staff.
- c. Arrange with the training agency for training of school personnel in the use and care of the service dog while at school. Parents and guardians assume all costs for the training.
- d. Arrange for the service dog to visit the school to familiarize it with the school site.



- e. Give permission to school division staff and volunteers acting as handlers to touch, feed or deal with the service dog in any way that may be required to ensure appropriate care of the service dog and the safety of students and staff.
- f. Annually, accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behavior of the service dog while present at school and indemnify the school division in writing.
- g. Annually, provide proof of appropriate insurance coverage (third party liability of not less than \$2,000,000) naming the division as an additional insured arising out of the named insured (for any damages caused by the service dog).
- h. Annually, provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations and licensing of the service dog,
- i. Participate in regular meetings to ensure that the bonding and training are progressing suitably well for the training to agency to recommend the service dog's readiness to be at school;

3. Considerations and Limitations on Service Dog in School

- a. The school division may impose reasonable conditions or restrictions relating to:
 - i. transportation of the service dog to and from school,
 - ii. restricting the presence of the service dog to specific areas in the school, and
 - iii. exclusion from access to specific areas where required by other laws, such as food preparation areas.
- b. The right to be accompanied by a service dog does not apply if the individual is not in control of the behavior of the service dog and no other appropriate and trained handler is available.
- c. The agreement to accommodate a service dog is reviewed annually and may be modified as required following the same process as set out in this administrative procedure.
- d. If the student moves to a different school, the request for a service dog must be resubmitted and initiated in advance, at the new site, with the principal.
- e. The approval of the service dog as an accommodation may be terminated by the division if the dog does not have up to date documentation or licensing, or vaccinations.

Appendices

- 4.46A Service Dog Parent Information Letter Template (*internal document*)
- 4.46B Service Dog Application Form
- 4.46C Medical Certificate Request Letter Template
- 4.46D Medical Certificate Form