Decision-Making Process for Entry of Service Animals In Schools and Other TCDSB Premises

Important Considerations and Reminders about what is needed:

- ✓ a clearly articulated process for a parent/guardian to follow when making a request for a student to be accompanied by a service animal in school, including:
  - a primary point of contact;
  - supporting materials for initiating requests (e.g., templates);

- ✓ information around the process through which a determination is made about whether or not a service animal is an appropriate accommodation. This could include:
  - a meeting or meetings for all appropriate parties (e.g., parents, school staff) to discuss the request for a service animal;
  - a list of documentation that a parent must provide;
  - a list identifying who must be consulted in making the determination;

- ✓ information about the factors the board will consider when making a case-by-case determination, including:
  - any documentation on how the service animal supports the student's learning needs and/or disability-related needs, including documentation from the student's medical professionals;
  - the disability-related needs and learning needs of the student;
  - other accommodations available;
  - the rights of other students and the needs of the school community;
  - any training or certification of the service animal;
  - any special considerations that may arise if the animal is a species other than a dog;

- ✓ consideration of privacy rights of the student seeking to bring a service animal to school;

- ✓ information about how the school board will document its decision regarding a request. For example, if a school board approves a request, that information will be recorded in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), if one exists;

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- ✓ if the school board approves a request for a service animal: a process for developing a plan that addresses:
  - the ongoing documentation required for the animal (e.g., annual vaccination records);
  - the type of support the service animal will provide to the student;
  - who will be the handler of the service animal while at the school;
  - a plan for how the care of the animal will be provided (including supporting the safety and biological needs of the animal);
  - how the animal will be readily identifiable;
  - transportation of the animal to and from school;
  - timeline for implementation;

- ✓ if the school board approves a request for a service animal: strategies for sharing information with members of the broader school community who may be impacted by the decision (e.g., other students, parents, educators, school staff, volunteers, Special Education Advisory Committee - SEAC) and organizations that use the school facilities (e.g., licensed child-care providers operating in schools of the board), while identifying how the student's privacy will be considered;

- ✓ if the school board denies a request for a service animal: a statement that the school board will provide, in a timely manner, a written response to the family that made the request.

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Appendix I

Decision-Making Process for Entry of Service Animals In Schools and Other TCDSB Premises

Request for a Service Animal to Enter a School

- ✓ Parent/student makes a request in writing to the school Principal

Response:

- ✓ Principal notifies Superintendent of Education (Schools) and Superintendent of Education (Special Services)
- ✓ Principal to set up a parent meeting to discuss the IEP, or programming for a new student and whether a service animal is needed to meet the student's needs
- ✓ Principal to convene a case conference to review the information and make recommendations

Service Animal **is not** designated as an accommodation

- ✓ Accommodations are being met through the IEP
- ✓ Additional accommodations are not required

Service Animal **is** designated as an accommodation

- ✓ Additional accommodations are required for safety or access to the school environment.

Documentation Required for a Service Animal to Enter a School

- ✓ Parents must provide original certification from a recognized trainer for the service animal and all immunization

When no Service Animal Certification is Available

- ✓ Accommodations are provided as described in IEP with no service animal

Parent's Responsibilities for the Service Animal

- ✓ Provision of a trained handler
- ✓ Financial responsibility for all animal needs
- ✓ Daily needs and ongoing care of the animal

The School's Responsibility for the Service Animal

- ✓ Communication to class and school community
- ✓ Inform school staff and respective affiliates
- ✓ Inform Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC)
- ✓ Post signage alerting visitors of presence of animal
- ✓ Inform Student Transportation Group Services
- ✓ Notify Fire Department and modify fire plan, if required*

School-Level Considerations

- ✓ Medical needs of students and staff (i.e. allergies)
- ✓ Children with fear of animal type
- ✓ Cultural sensitivity to animal type

Acknowledgments:
York Catholic District School Board
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(ver. 190930)