



REPORT TO

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY
COMMITTEE

POLICY ON SERVICE ANIMALS

“And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” (Gn 1:20)

Created, Draft

October 7, 2019

First Tabling

November 12, 2019

Review

Linda Maselli-Jackman, Superintendent of Education, Special Services
 Peter Stachiw, Chief of Autism
 Rachelina Macchia, Chief of IPRC and Assessments

RECOMMENDATION REPORT**Vision:**

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



Rory McGuckin
 Director of Education

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 Associate Director
 of Academic Affairs

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 Associate Director of Facilities,
 Business and Community
 Development, and
 Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends the adoption of a new policy on Service Animals to conform with the legal mandate that all Ontario school boards have a policy in effect by January 2020.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 30 hours.

B. PURPOSE

This Recommendation Report is on the Order Paper of the Governance and Policy Committee as it recommends the adoption of a new policy.

C. BACKGROUND

1. The Policy on Service Animals has been created in response to the legal mandate that all school boards institute a policy by January 2020.
2. This policy aligns with PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals, 2019 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
3. Stakeholder consultations are currently in progress and have previously taken place to include the following:
 - a. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC);
 - b. Parents/Guardians outside of SEAC (Parent Delegate-March 25, and April 16, 2019);
 - c. Principal and Vice Principal school administrators in the elementary and secondary panels;
 - d. Teachers in the elementary and secondary panels; and
 - e. Students through the Board student trustees.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

This policy has been created in consultation with staff from the Facilities and Communications Departments, Field Superintendents, Legal Services, Special Services, and the Equity and Indigenous Education Department.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Recommendations in this report will be monitored by policy development staff.
2. Further reports will be brought to Board in accordance with the policy review schedule.

F. IMPLEMENTATION

The policy as approved will be posted on the TCDSB policy register.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the newly created Policy on Service Animals provided in Report Appendix A, and the accompanying Operational Procedures provided in Report Appendix B, be adopted.



POLICY SECTION:

SUB-SECTION:

POLICY NAME: Service Animals

POLICY NO:

Date Approved:	Date of Next Review:	Dates of Amendments:
<p>Cross References: Bill 48: the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, 2019 PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals, 2019 OHRC Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, 2018 Special Education in Ontario K-12 Policy and Resource Guide, 2017 Learning for All, 2013 PPM 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, 2013 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001 Ontario Blind Person's Rights Act (BPRA) 1990 Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O 1990 Blind Persons Rights Act 1990 Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990 Education Amendment Act (Bill 82), 1980</p>		
<p>Appendix: TCDSB Operational Procedures – Service Animals</p>		

Purpose:

This policy on service animals has been developed in accordance with Policy and Procedures Memorandum (PPM) 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals, 2019, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). It is intended to maximize the integration and full participation of all stakeholders in the TCDSB. This policy allows students to be accompanied by a service animal in school when doing so would be an appropriate accommodation to support one's learning needs, and would meet the school board's duty to accommodate students with disabilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code. It further establishes



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consistent and transparent processes that allow for meaningful consideration of requests for service animals to accompany students in school.

Scope and Responsibility:

This policy applies to all TCDSB elementary and secondary schools, facilities, and programs including extended-day programs operated by the TCDSB. However, it does not apply to licensed child-care providers operating on TCDSB premises.

Alignment with MYSP:

Living Our Catholic Values
Enhancing Public Confidence
Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being
Achieving Excellence in Governance

Policy:

This policy provides direction for schools when a parent requests on behalf of a student, or a staff member does so on his/her own behalf, the entry and use of a service animal on Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) premises. Decisions regarding the entry and use of service animals shall be made on a case-by-case basis following consultation with all appropriate stakeholders. All requests pertaining to the use of service animals on TCDSB premises shall be reviewed by the Principal in consultation with the Parent(s)/Guardian(s), School Based Support Learning Team (SBSLT), Field Superintendent, and Superintendent of Special Services.



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Regulations:

1. Accreditation and Training of Service Animals:

Service animals must be certified and registered in Canada. The accreditation of Service Dogs, the most common form of service animal, must be provided by one of two nationally certified accreditation agencies (See **Definitions**).

Training schools for any type of service, guide or working dog in Ontario must be members and accredited by one of two internationally recognized agencies (See **Definitions**).

2. Procedure for a Request Regarding the Entry of a Service Animal in a School:

Upon initial written request by a parent/guardian for a service animal to accompany the child during the school day, the parent will be directed to complete the *Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student* form along with the items outlined in Article 2 in the **Appendix: Operating Procedures – Service Animals**.

3. Communication Plan:

School Board staff will communicate with Teachers, Support Staff, Parent(s)/Guardian(s), and students in schools/classes where there is a service animal. Furthermore, there will be regular communication with other community stakeholders such as professional associations, the Toronto Student Transportation Group, and parent/community organizations such as the Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC) and Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) regarding this policy's regulations and updates.

4. Responsibilities of the Principal:

The Principal will ensure that all stakeholders are apprised of the reasons for the use of a service animal, the benefits to the student in the school environment, and that the description of activity are consistent with the needs. If the student has an IEP, the need and role of the service animal should be included in the IEP.



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5. Responsibilities of Students with Service Animals and their Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

The successful entry of a service animal into the school environment is dependent upon the joint co-operation of the school staff with the parent and student.

6. Responsibilities of the Handler:

The student or Handler of the service animal plays a pivotal role in the care and suitability of the service animal for its intended environment. If the student him/herself is unable to manage the animal, a staff member or third-party handler will be required to provide assistance. The school must determine which of the two above types of support is the most appropriate for its circumstances, taking into consideration Board vulnerable sector screening and privacy regulations.

7. Exclusion of Service Animals

A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law.

Where there is a risk to the health and/or safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal.

Definitions:

1. Accreditation and Training Organizations: The Special Skills Dog (SSD) or National Service Dog (NSD) are two nationally recognized organizations with oversight for the accreditation of service dogs. Dogs accredited by those associations will have a distinctive harness and leash and/or saddlebag and vest.

Training schools for any type of service, guide or working dog in Ontario must be members and accredited by one of two internationally recognized agencies.

- a) The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF): Members' purpose is to serve the visually impaired and blind people from around the world by training and providing Guide Dogs;



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b) Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI): ADI is a coalition of not-for-profit organizations that train and place Assistance Dogs.

2. Disability:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005) provides a broad definition of the term *disability*:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) a mental disorder; or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;

Schools are required to accommodate people with disabilities and their disability-related needs to ensure equal access. However, where the accommodation needed by the person would cause the school undue hardship, the school is not required to offer accommodation.

The AODA requires that a school allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a guide dog or service animal, and requires a school to permit people with guide dogs or service animals to enter its premises (the school, buses etc.) with the animal and to keep the animal with the person, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by



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law. Whether a service animal is otherwise excluded from the premises by law will be determined using Board procedures outlined in this policy.

3. Handler: The term refers to the individual who has received training and guides, instructs and looks after the animal. In the situation where the student is unable to look after the animal's needs due to physical and/or cognitive challenges, a second individual is required and that person is deemed to be the Handler.

4. Parents: The term "Parents" refers to Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s).

5. Service Animal: Refers to any animal that provides support to a person with a disability. Traditionally, service animals have been dogs, and dogs remain the most common species of service animal; however, other species may also provide services to individuals with disabilities. The types of functions performed by service animals are diverse, and may or may not include sensory, medical, therapeutic, and emotional support services. Service animals allow individuals to achieve independence in daily tasks and promote safety, mental well-being, and learning.

As defined by the AODA, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- (a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- (b) the person provides documentation from a regulated health professional, such as one of the following, confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - (i) A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
 - (ii) A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

A service animal is engaged to provide support relating to a student with a medically documented disability to assist that student in meaningfully accessing education. Due consideration should be given to any documentation on how the service animal assists with the student's learning needs, and disability-related needs (e.g., documentation from the student's medical professionals).



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TCDSB staff will make a determination, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether a service animal may accompany a student taking into account all the circumstances, including the needs of the student and the school community and a school board's obligation to provide meaningful access to education.

6. Guide Dog: The Ontario Blind Persons' Rights Act (BPRA) 1990 states that no person shall be denied accommodations, services, or facilities available in any place to which the public is customarily admitted, for the reason that the person is blind and accompanied by a guide dog.

Evaluation and Metrics:

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

1. Data collection on a regular basis including, but not limited to:

- total number of requests for students to be accompanied by service animals;
- whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students;
- the number of requests approved and denied;
- if denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and/or services provided to the student to support their access to education;
- species of service animals requested and approved;
- types of needs being supported (e.g., medical, physical, emotional).



Operational Procedures

Service Animals

DRAFT for CONSULTATION

1.0 Purpose

Service animals are trained to provide assistance to children and adults with disabilities. Service animals allow an individual to attain independence in his/her daily tasks and assist with safety, mental well-being, and learning.

This policy provides directions for schools to follow when a parent requests the entry of a service animal for a student in a Toronto Catholic District School Board. Decisions regarding the entry of service animals shall be made on a case-by-case basis. The request will be reviewed by the Principal in consultation with the Superintendents of Schools and Special Services. The entry of service animals into schools will be determined following consultation and through a school based team meeting.

2.0 Background

Section 10(2) of the Ontario Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c H.19 (the “Code”) and section 2 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005 c 11 (the “AODA”) provide a broad definition of the term “disability:”

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;

Schools are required to accommodate people with disabilities and their disability related needs to ensure equal access. However, where the accommodation needed by the person would cause the school undue hardship, the school is not required to offer accommodation.

The AODA (Accessibility For Ontarians For Disabilities Act, 2005) requires that a school allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a guide dog or service animal, and requires a school to permit people with guide dogs or service animals to enter its premises (the school, buses etc.) with the animal and to keep the animal with the person, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

As defined by the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians for Disabilities Act), an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- (a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- (b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - (i) A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
 - (ii) A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

3.0 Accreditation of Service Animals

Service animals must be certified and registered in Canada. For the accreditation of Service Dogs, the most common form of service animal, the Special Skills Dog (SSD) or National Service Dog (NSD) are two organizations with such oversight. Dogs accredited by those associations will have a distinctive harness and leash and/or saddlebag and vest.

Training schools for any type of service, guide or working dog in Ontario must be members and accredited by either:

- a) The International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF): Members' purpose is to serve the visually impaired and blind people from around the world by training and providing Guide Dogs;
- b) Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI): ADI is a coalition of not-for-profit organizations that train and place Assistance Dogs.

4.0 Procedure for a Request Regarding the Entry of a Service Animal in a School

A Parent/Guardian must notify the school in writing that they are requesting a service animal to accompany the child during the school day. The Principal will then provide the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) with the **Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student** form (**Appendix A**).

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must complete, along with the form above, the following items and return the entire package to the Principal before the implementation process can begin. The following must be included in the package:

- A letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons or the College of Psychologists confirming the diagnosis of a recognized special need as well as a recommendation for the use of a certified service animal;
- A letter from an accredited registered Service Animal Training Centre stating that a certified service animal has been placed with the student and the date of formal certification;
- Provide the school with proof of up-to-date vaccinations;
- A municipal Service Animal license;
- Confirmation that the animal is in good health (a letter from the Veterinarian);
- Provide proof of liability insurance.

The Principal will inform and consult with the Superintendent of Schools and Superintendent of Special Services prior to planning the implementation process.

The Principal will schedule a School Based Support Learning Team Meeting with the Parent(s)/Guardian(s), a representative of the animal training centre, and appropriate school staff who work with the student. The Superintendent may be invited to this meeting.

Discussions may include:

- Safety considerations (e.g., severe allergies, staff or students with asthma, fear of animals, etc.);
- The potential impact of the involvement of the service animal on the school community;
- Animal care requirements, handling routines and responsibilities including who will act as the Handler at school;
- Guidelines for staff and students;
- The role of and communication with the Parent(s)/Guardian(s).

5.0 Responsibilities of the Principal:

The Principal will ensure that all stakeholders are apprised of the reasons for the use of a service animal, the benefits to the student in the school environment, and that the description of activity are consistent with the needs of the student. If the student has an IEP, the need and role of the service animal should be included in the IEP.

1. Complete Principal Checklist for the Entry of a Service Animal into the School (See **Appendix B**).
2. Place a copy of the parent letter and the medical diagnosis in the OSR. Any further documentation relating to the use of the Service Animal is to be housed in the OSR.
3. Consult with the Superintendent of Education and Superintendent of Special Services upon receipt of a parental request for the use of a Service Animal in the school.
4. Set up an SBSLT involving the Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Principal, classroom Teacher(s), Special Education staff, a representative from the relevant and accredited Service Animal facility of Canada, the student (when age-appropriate) along with the Superintendent of Education and Superintendent of Special Services to discuss and develop a plan to determine the following:
 - a. Purpose/function of the service animal, both through discussion, as well as through an observation of the student with the Service Animal.

- b. Review of the student's strengths and needs and the IEP to determine if the support of a Service Animal can provide accommodations for learning, independence and/or safety not yet provided by the school.
- c. Personal care of the animal, including:
 - i. Who will be the person (handler) responsible for the animal?
 - ii. What is the backup procedure if the person (handler) is not available?
 - iii. Where is the safest and most environmentally sound place for the animal to relieve itself?
 - iv. If the student is able to maintain the personal care of the service animal, who will accompany the student outside, if needed?
 - v. Is there a suitable disposal container that the handler can reach?
 - vi. How will the handler "clean up" after the animal?
 - vii. What considerations have been made for winter conditions and inclement weather?
 - viii. What considerations have been made for where the animal's water bowl is to be kept?
 - ix. Who will fill the water bowl?
- 6. Ensure classroom teacher(s) and support staff are informed.
- 7. Consider any necessary change in routine and procedures, as well as any programming changes that may be required.
- 8. Examine the seating arrangements and traffic flow patterns in the classroom(s).
- 9. Forward the following letters:
 - a. A letter to inform the school community regarding arrival of the animal, its purpose and the rules and regulations regarding the



Operational Procedures – Service Animals



existence of the Service Animal. Sample Letter to Parents In The Community Regarding The Entry Of A Service Animal Into The School (**Appendix C**)

- b. A specific letter to the students in any of the classes where the animal will be present in case of allergies, extreme phobias from the students' Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Caregiver(s). Sample Letter To The Parents of the Students In Class(es) with a Service Animal (**Appendix D**)

Note: In cases where the accommodation of a Service Animal is required and there are medical or sensitivity issues in the class or school, alternate provisions might have to be investigated. Where necessary in the decision making process, the rights and needs of one person might have to be balanced against the rights and needs of others. For example, in the case of severe allergies, some of the options to consider may be creating distance between two individuals, eliminating contact, etc.

- c. A letter to the students who will be sharing transportation where the Service Animal will be present including students from another school or school board. Sample Letter to Parents of Students Sharing Transportation with Service Animal (**Appendix E**).

Note: All letters regarding the Service Animal must be retained in the student's OSR for a period of one year, or until superseded.

10. Inform all school staff and health and safety representatives of the presence of the Service Animal.
11. Inform all school volunteers of the presence of the Service Animal.
12. Inform the Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC) of the presence of the Service Animal.
13. Create a Management Plan for the Care of the Service Animal (**Appendix F**) for the student and Service Animal, including:
 - a. Making arrangements for the animal to visit the school after or before students are present in order to become familiar with the school environment;

- b. A timetable for the introduction of the Service Animal to the school and to the class;
 - c. Rules of conduct around the Service Animal for students, staff, and the school community, as well as how the information will be disseminated;
 - d. An assembly for the student body, staff, and the community involving representatives from the Service Animal Association to provide education and awareness of the Service Animal in school.
- 14. Place a sign (generally provided by Service Animal Associations) on the doors of the school alerting visitors to the animal's presence.
 - 15. Revise Student School Emergency Evacuation Response Plan and to include the Service Animal (**Appendix G**).
 - 16. Inform the Transportation Services and make transportation arrangements, as needed.
 - 17. Complete the Procedures for the Transportation of Service Animals on Bus Routes. (Refer to **Appendix H**).
 - 18. If the bus carrier is transporting students from other Boards on the same bus while the animal is present, then the other Board must be notified so that they can in turn notify the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of that child/those children riding on that bus.

6.0 Responsibilities of Students with Service Animals and their Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The successful entry of a Service Animal into the school environment is dependent upon the joint co-operation of the school staff with the parent and student.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must adhere to the following:

- Be responsible for any financial implications regarding the use and care of the Service Animal, including the provision of a fully trained/certified animal handler to provide for bio-breaks, in cases where the student is unable to meet the needs of the animal;

- Annually, must provide the school/board with proof of up-to-date vaccinations, licenses and confirmation that the animal is in good health;
- Inform school administration and teachers of the Service Animal's visiting schedule or approximate schedule;
- Provide a mat (not a cushion) or soft crate for service animals. This will act as a marker of where the animal is required to stay;
- Keep the animal clean and well groomed;
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should report immediately any incidents involving their Service Animal to the Principal or Vice Principal;
- Address immediately any medical issues of the Service Animal;
- If requested Parent(s)/Guardian(s) or the student must provide proof that the Service Animal is permitted in the city or town where the school is located or in the municipality they are visiting on a school trip, or in any other jurisdiction whose laws might pertain to their entry there;
- The Toronto Catholic District School Board recommends that Parent(s)/Guardian(s) or (where applicable) students review their insurance coverage (home and content insurance as it relates to liability coverage), and provide proof to the Board of adequate liability coverage.

7.0 Responsibilities of the Handler

The student or Handler of the Service Animal plays a pivotal role in the care and suitability of the Service Animal for its intended environment.

The term "Handler" refers to the individual who has received training and guides, instructs and looks after the animal. In the situation where the student is unable to look after the animal's needs due to physical and/or cognitive challenges, a second individual is required and that person is deemed to be the Handler.

The student or Handler of the Service Animal must adhere to the following:

- ✓ Demonstrate that the animal is suitable for educational settings (e.g. it will not interfere with school routines and activities) and will not pose a risk to health and safety;
- ✓ Keep the animal in control at all times;
- ✓ Ensure the animal does not vocalize unnecessarily, e.g. barking, growling or whining;
- ✓ Keep the Service Animal on a leash or contained as appropriate at all times;
- ✓ Responsibility for bio breaks, cleaning up after the animal, for its feeding and other care;
- ✓ Make certain the animal's behaviour is not aggressive or threatening;
- ✓ Maintain full responsibility of the Service Animal at all times and do not leave the animal unattended;
- ✓ Respect the rights and feelings of others;
- ✓ If the student/handler notice any aggressive behaviour involving their Service Animal such as, growling or biting they must remove the Service Animal from the situation immediately;
- ✓ Students or their Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should report any incidents involving their Service Animal to the Principal or Vice principal immediately.

Note: Guide Dogs: Guide Dog handlers (i.e. users) are responsible for caring for their dogs, and the dogs are with them at all times for navigational purposes. Most Guide Dog schools have a minimum age requirement 16 or 18 years old.

8.0 Exclusion of Service Animals

1. A Service Animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Food Safety and Quality Act. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g., kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although Service Dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g., school cafeteria or lunchroom).
2. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a Service Animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the Service Animal. It is the Board's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered (e.g., creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.).
3. A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law.

9.0 Cross References:

Bill 48: the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, 2019
PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals, 2019
OHRC Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, 2018
Special Education in Ontario K-12 Policy and Resource Guide, 2017
Learning for All, 2013
PPM 119: Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies
in Ontario Schools, 2013
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001
Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990
Blind Persons Rights Act 1990
Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990
Education Amendment Act (Bill 82), 1980



10.0 Attachments:

Appendix A: Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student

Appendix B: Principal Checklist for the Entry of a Service Animal Into a School

Appendix C: Sample Letter to Parents in the Community Regarding the Entry of a Service Animal into a School

Appendix D: Sample Letter to Parents of Students in Classes with a Service Animal

Appendix E: Sample Letter to Parents of Students Sharing Transportation with a Service Animal

Appendix F: Management Plan for the Care of A Service Animal

Appendix G: Student School Emergency Evacuation Response Plan

Appendix H: Transportation of Service Animals

Appendix I: Decision-Making Process for Entry of Service Animals in Schools and Other TCDSB Premises

**Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student**

Name of Student:	Date of Birth:
Address:	
School:	Grade:
Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s):	
Home Telephone:	Work Telephone:

I/We request that permission be granted for _____ to use a service animal in school and at school related activities.
Length of time the student and service animal have worked together:
Additional information that will assist the Principal: _____ _____ _____

I/We understand that it is our responsibility to:

- Transport or walk the service animal to and from school, or work with the school to arrange busing, if the student qualifies for transportation;
- Provide a certificate of training from an accredited service animal training facility;
- Documentation from member(s) of the College of Physicians and Surgeons or from a member of the College of Psychologists confirming a diagnosis as well as a recommendation for the use of a service animal;
- Provide the required equipment and animal care items;
- Assume financial responsibility for the animal's training, veterinary care, and, other related costs;
- Work co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success. Assist the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community;
- Provide the Principal with required documentation in a timely fashion;
- Inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect the child, the other students and/or staff;
- Provide proof of vaccination for the service animal.



Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student



We acknowledge that the Toronto Catholic District School Board is considering this request under the terms of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005), and that schools are required to accommodate people with disabilities and their disability related needs to ensure equal access to education as per PPM 163.

Schools are responsible for protecting the safety, health and emotional needs of the entire school community, and this protocol has been developed in order to facilitate the entry of a service animal into a school.

Where necessary, in the implementation and accommodation process, the rights and needs of one person might have to be balanced against the rights and needs of others. The TCDSB reserves the right to request additional information and/or documentation to ensure that the animal's presence in school does not present an increased risk of harm to the animal, the student, and/or other members of the school community.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:	Date:
Signature of Principal:	Date:

cc: Parent/Guardian
OSR
Superintendent of Schools
Superintendent of Special Services



Principal Checklist for the Entry of a Service Animal into A School

Task	Date Completed
Provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with the Toronto Catholic District School Board Appendix A – Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student	
Inform Superintendent of Education (Schools) and the Superintendent of Student Services of the request	
Receive copies of the required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Completed copy of Appendix A – Request for Service Animal Involvement with a Student➤ Copy of service animal's registration with an accredited training facility➤ Copy of current, official vaccination certificate for the animal➤ Documentation from member(s) of the College of Physicians and Surgeons or from a member of the College of Psychologists confirming a diagnosis as well as a recommendation for the use of a service animal➤ Copy of training certification from parent(s)/guardian(s)	
Convene a School Based Support Learning Team (SBSLT) meeting with the following in attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and/or student over the age of 18➤ Classroom teacher(s)➤ Members of the School Based Support Learning Team (SBSLT)➤ Representative from the animal training facility	
Ensure that the reasons for the use of the Service Animal, the benefits to the student in the school environment and descriptions of activity are consistent with the student's needs; and if the student has an IEP the need and role of the Service Animal must be included.	
Inform school staff	
Inform Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC)	
Inform Transportation Services and make transportation arrangements, as needed. (Refer to Appendix H)	
Send letter to inform school community. (Refer to Appendix C)	



Principal Checklist for the Entry of a Service Animal into A School

A letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) of students in any of the classes where the service animal will be present. (Refer to Appendix D)	
A letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who will be sharing transportation. (Refer to Appendix E)	
Create Management Plan for the Care of the Service Animal. (see Appendix F)	
Revise Student School Emergency Evacuation Response Plan and to include Service Animal. (see Appendix G)	
Post signs on the entrance doors to advise visitors of the service animal's presence.	
The use of the service animal shall be reviewed annually (within the first 30 days of the school year) or as deemed necessary by the school Administration or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student 18 years or older.	

Signature of Principal:	Date:
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Sample Letter to Parents in the Community Regarding the Entry of a Service Animal into a School

Appendix C



(Insert School Letterhead)

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a Certified Service Animal in our school helping one of our students to access the Ontario Curriculum and assist with their learning.

This Certified Service Animal is highly trained and recognized by an accredited Canadian training facility, and is able to assist with many of the routine activities which pose challenges for the student. The student's right to have a Service Animal is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code legislation and other laws.

There will be an upcoming information session for parents at the school on (insert date) to assist with your understanding of how the Certified Service Animal will be integrated into the school. As well, a school-wide assembly will be held for all students to help them identify with the Service Animal and how it will fit into the daily routines of all students. They will be instructed as to the proper procedure regarding the animal and that the animal is a 'working' Service Animal and not a pet while at school.

We anticipate the Certified Service Animal being of benefit to the student's learning and we look forward to this new addition to our school and school community.

Thank you for your understanding and support. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school's main office.

Sincerely,

Principal

cc: Superintendent of Schools
Superintendent of Special Education
Classroom Teacher(s)
OSR



Sample Letter to Parents of Students in Classes with a Service Animal

Appendix D



(Insert School Letterhead)

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a Certified Service Animal in our school helping one of our students to access the Ontario Curriculum and assist with their learning. The Certified Service Animal will be in your child's classroom effective (date).

This Certified Service Animal is highly trained and recognized by an accredited Canadian training facility, and is able to assist with many of the routine activities which pose challenges for the student. The student's right to have a Certified Service Animal is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code legislation and other laws. An upcoming information session for parents will offer more information on how the animal will be integrated into the school setting.

Students will participate in a school-wide assembly to assist with the integration of the Certified Service Animal and how the animal will fit into the daily routines of all students. The students in this classroom will also receive more direct instruction and training as to the proper procedure and conduct when around the Certified Service Animal. They will be informed that the Certified Service Animal is a working animal and not a pet while at school.

We anticipate the Certified Service Animal being of benefit to the student's learning and we look forward to this new addition to our school and school community.

Sincerely,

Principal

cc: Superintendent of Schools
Superintendent of Special Education
Classroom Teacher(s)
OSR



Sample Letter to Parents of Students Sharing Transportation with a Service Animal

Appendix E



(Insert School Letterhead)

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a Certified Service Animal in our school and on your bus helping one of our students to access the Ontario Curriculum and assist with their learning. The Certified Service Animal will be travelling on your child's bus effective (date).

This Certified Service Animal is highly trained and recognized by an accredited Canadian training facility, and is able to assist with many of the routine activities which pose challenges for the student. The student's right to have a Certified Service Animal is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code legislation and other laws, as listed in our TCDSB Service Animal Policy. An upcoming information session for parents will offer more information on how the service animal will be integrated into the bus.

Students will participate in a school-wide assembly to assist with the integration of the Certified Service Animal on the bus. The students on this bus will also receive more direct instruction and training as to the proper procedure and conduct when around the Certified Service Animal. They will be informed that the Certified Service Animal is a working animal and not a pet.

We anticipate the Certified Service Animal being of benefit to the student's learning and we look forward to this new addition to our school and school community.

Thank you for your understanding and support. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school's main office.

Sincerely,

Principal

cc: Superintendent of Schools
Superintendent of Schools
Classroom teacher(s)
OSR



Management Plan for the Care of a Service Animal

Appendix F



(Insert School Letterhead)

Name of student:	D.O.B.:
School:	School Year:
Name of Service Animal:	Service Animal Handler:

Please note the following:

- Where possible and feasible, these responsibilities should be handled by the student in the same manner as at home;
- Make arrangements for the service animal to visit the school after or before students are present in order to become familiar with the school environment;
- Create a timetable for the introduction of the Service Animal to the school, the class and for the training of the student's school team (Administration, Teachers(s), Support Staff, etc.);
- Establish rules of conduct around the Service Animal for students, staff and the public school community, as well as how the information and rules will be disseminated;
- Have an assembly for the student body, staff, and the school community involving representatives from the Service Animal Training Association to provide education and awareness of Service Animals in schools, and to explain specifically the role of the service animal's assistance in their particular school.

Water needs: (e.g. provision of water bowl, procedures for use, cleaning etc.):
Bladder/Bowel Needs of Service Animal (e.g. – frequency, location, disposal etc.):
Other considerations (e.g. rest periods away from work, hot and cold weather, etc.):

Signature of Parent/Guardian:	Date:
Signature of Principal:	Date:



STUDENT SCHOOL EMERGENCY EVACUATION RESPONSE PLAN

1. Student INFORMATION

Name:	EA Name(s) (if applicable):
Grade:	CYW Name(s) (if applicable):

Daily Schedule and Classroom Locations (*attachment if necessary*):

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSESSMENT

Does the student experience any of the following that could impede the ability to quickly evacuate the workplace?

a. Mobility limitations; interference with walking, using stairs, joint pain, use of mobility device (i.e. wheelchair, scooter, cane, crutches, walker, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

b. Vision impairment/loss ☐ Yes ☐ No

c. Hearing impairment/loss ☐ Yes ☐ No

d. Other (please specify): ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. COMMUNICATION NEEDS & ACCOMMODATIONS

Indicate the student's preferred method of communication in an emergency situation. List any assistive communication devices and/or accommodations required. *Example: student with hearing impairment may require assistive device to receive emergency evacuation information.*

4. CONDITIONS, SENSITIVITIES, DISABILITIES & ACCOMMODATIONS SUMMARY

Indicate any temporary or long-term conditions, sensitivities and/or disabilities that may affect the well-being and safety of the student during emergency response.

Emergency Assistance Required:**5. STUDENT PERSONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT**

Student Personal Emergency Preparedness Kit required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

List Contents (i.e. emergency supply of medication, food for specific dietary needs, personal assistive equipment and batteries, emergency health & contact information, etc.):

Location of Student's Personal Emergency Preparedness Kit:

6. EMERGENCY EVACUATION ROUTES

Indicate primary accessible evacuation route from workplace, noting any accessibility accommodations required. Where applicable, attach site map/fire safety plan and identify meeting location.

Indicate alternative evacuation route from classroom, noting any accessibility accommodations required. Where applicable, attach site map/fire safety plan and identify meeting location.

7. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE NETWORK

Establish staff to assist the student with a disability during emergencies. Staff should:

- be physically and mentally capable of performing the task and not require assistance themselves
- share the same hours in the same area as the student they will be assisting

The student requiring a School Emergency Evacuation Response Plan should be aware of those who will be notified to assist them during an emergency. **A minimum of 2 people is recommended for the Emergency Assistance Network.**

Network Leader Name:	Name:
Classroom/Department:	Classroom/Department:
Contact Info:	Contact Info:
Name:	Name:
Classroom/Department:	Classroom/Department:
Contact Info:	Contact Info:

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RELEASE

Reason for review: ☐ new admission ☐ change in classroom location ☐ change in student's condition

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____

I acknowledge that the information contained on this form is accurate and hereby authorize Toronto Catholic District School Board to release applicable personal information contained within the Student School Emergency Response Plan to designated individuals within my son's or daughter's Emergency Assistance Network and emergency/first responders, in the event of a school emergency evacuation situation.

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE ORIGINAL COMPLETED STUDENT SCHOOL EMERGENCY EVACUATION RESPONSE FORM (WITH ATTACHMENTS) IS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL STAFF IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AND A COPY FILED IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

All personal information collected on this form and any attachments herein will be used for Student School Emergency Evacuation Response purposes only and will remain confidential as per MFIPPA unless written consent is obtained from the student's parent(s) or guardians (completion of Section 8).

Protocol Name: Transportation of Service Animals

In the event a service animal is required to be transported with a student the following protocol is to be enacted.

Service Animals: other than dogs:

1. All service animals will have documentation from a governing body that is responsible for the training and development of the animal.
2. Specific directions in regards to the care and transport of these animals must be communicated to the Transportation consortium as part of the students 'Independent Transportation Plan'
3. When transporting animals all families and drivers must be notified ahead of service starting indicating what type of animal is being transported.
4. Documentation must be provided to all families and drivers outlining the service animal's responsibilities to the student and a fact sheet detailing information about dealing with service animals.
5. The bus company will post this information in their dispatch office and identify routes with service animals and only assign drivers that are aware of and trained to deal with service animals.
6. In the event an animal is required (and is not a registered service animal) as approved by the Special Education Department as a means to placate or calm a student as part of their transportation routine then the School Board will be responsible for providing the documentation and fact sheet in a similar fashion to those for service animals.

Protocol Name:
Date Enacted:
Date Amended:

Service Animals: Dogs

1. The same protocols as above will be enacted for service dogs. Specific directions are highlighted below:

- The service animal should NEVER ride on the wheelchair lift to prevent injuries.
- Driver should always wait for or ask for instruction from the service dog owner.
- Drivers should avoid petting and talking to the service dog.
- If the student needs assistance loading into a vehicle, he/she may tell the dog to board the vehicle and wait inside, the driver should make sure all other doors are closed behind the dog, except for the one that the student will be using to board the vehicle. Same thing for unloading.
- The student may ask the driver to hold on to the dog's leash and lead the dog into the vehicle and wait there (for example, on a TTC bus), and then the student board the bus by wheeling up the ramp on their own. The driver should do so and should NOT let go of the dog's leash for the dog's safety.
- When securing the wheelchair in the vehicle and the service dog is in the way, the driver should ask the student to reposition his dog.
- Drivers should not give commands to the service dog, ALWAYS ask the service dog owners to deal with the dog.
- If the student is to exit the vehicle by wheeling down the ramp on their own, again the driver may be asked to hold on to the service dog and hand the leash over ONLY when the student has safely arrived on the sidewalk.
- If Driver is asked to hold on to the service dog's leash, they should make sure their shoulders are square and back is straight to establish leadership. Also avoid direct eye contact with the dog, so the dog's focus is still on his owner.

In case of a student is incapacitated:

If a student is incapacitated and he has a service dog with him at that time, and you think that the dog will be bothered by you touching their partner then try to pet the dog with confident hands. Crouch down with your shoulders back and turn the side of your body toward the dog. Try to lead him to a separate room and shut the door. Drivers should carry dog treats with them to make friends and use to help lure the dog to a desired position.

Paramedics need to deal with the injured and will not be able to take the service dog in an ambulance. C.O.P.E. dogs carry emergency cards in their back packs or capes. If they are not found there, or the dog is not wearing his pack then the emergency card should be on the person. The card states emergency phone numbers for people who could take care of the dog. Please remember to call COPE (705-734-COPE (2673)) if you cannot find any emergency contacts.

Protocol Name:

Date Enacted:

Date Amended:

If the service dog belongs to a different organization, then please contact the respective organization.

If someone is willing to care for the dog until the emergency contact arrives but they need to transport the dog to a different location, then the dog can be transported on the floor of a vehicle.

All C.O.P.E. Service Dogs are trained not to act aggressively in any situation. However, in times of extreme stress it is possible that a dog may rely on his instincts rather than his training. IF this does happen, it is important for drivers to not act aggressively toward the dog (i.e. raising their arms over their head and yelling) and try to talk to the dog in a confident, friendly and calm voice. Something like "Hi puppy. You're a good dog. We are taking your friend to the hospital now." If you keep your shoulders back and explain things so that your voice appears confident and "as a matter of fact" to the dog then this will decrease stress and therefore the instinct to be aggressive.

The most important point is to appear confident and friendly.

In the case of an emergency evacuation of the vehicle:

- If the student and their service dog are both conscious and not injured, then ask for instruction from the student as to whether they need assistance with the dog.
- If the student is incapacitated but the dog is conscious, not injured but appears fearful, then you should approach dog in a confident manner. That is, shoulders back, turn the side of your body toward the dog and talk to the dog in a confident, friendly and calm voice, then lead the dog to safety. Call OSPCA or Humane Society for help if the dog appears fearful aggressive.
- If the dog is conscious and INJURED, you should approach in a confident and calm manner. Muzzle the dog with a muzzle or using a shoe lace or dog leash (make sure it is tied at the back of the dog's neck as well as around the snout). Transport the dog to safety with care and call a vet immediately.
- If the dog is unconscious and injured, muzzle the dog with a muzzle or using a shoe lace or dog leash (make sure it is tied at the back of the dog's neck as well as around the snout). Transport the dog to safety with care and call a vet immediately.

Protocol Name:

Date Enacted:

Date Amended:



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

Appendix I



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;



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

Appendix I



- ✓ 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.

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

When no Service Animal Certification is Available

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

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

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

School-Level Considerations

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

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*