



POLICY SECTION: SCHOOLS

SUB-SECTION: Special Education

POLICY NAME: Guide Dogs/Service Dogs and Service Animals for Students

POLICY NO: S.12

**Date Approved:****Date of Next  
Review: 2024****Dates of Amendments:****Cross References:**

Bill 48, 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 (AODA), 2005  
 Blind Persons' Rights Act, R.S.O. 1990  
 Dog Owners' Liability Act, R.S.O. 1990  
 Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E2, s.170(1), s.265(1); O.Reg. 298, s.11  
 Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, S.O. 2001  
 Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O.1990  
 Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990

**TCDSB Policies:**

A.35 Accessibility Standards  
 H.M. 24 Catholic Equity and Inclusion Policy  
 H.M. 40 Fair Practices in Hiring and Promotion  
 F.M. 08 Fire Emergency Procedures  
 S.P. 01 Special Education Programs and Services  
 S.T. 01 Transportation – English Language Schools

**Appendix:**

Toronto Catholic District School Board Operational Procedures - Guide  
 Dogs/Service Dogs, and Service Animals

**POLICY SECTION: SCHOOLS****SUB-SECTION: Special Education****POLICY NAME: Guide Dogs/Service Dogs and Service Animals for Students****POLICY NO: S.12****Purpose:**

Students with disabilities may use service animals to assist them with their disability-related needs. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, school boards have a duty to accommodate the needs of students up to the point of undue hardship.

This policy and the appended operational procedures on Guide Dogs/Service Dogs, and Service Animals have been developed in accordance with Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals, 2019, and the Council of Directors of Ontario (CODE) policy template provided by Miller Thompson.

**Notwithstanding any provision in the Policy and these Operational Procedures, the Board will consider each application for a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal on a case-by-case basis and will comply with its duty to accommodate under the Human Rights Code.**

**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 community partners such as licensed child-care providers operating on TCDSB premises or permit holders. The Director of Education and the Superintendent of Special Services are responsible for the oversight and implementation of this policy.

**Alignment with MYSP:**

Enhancing Public Confidence

Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being

**Policy:**

The TCDSB is committed to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, and interventions to support student success. It is the policy of the TCDSB, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, to provide individualized accommodations to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services. In some cases, this includes



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requests to have service animals attend school or school-related activities with students.

**Regulations:**

1. All accommodation requests pertaining to the student use of Guide Dogs/Service Dogs or Service Animals on TCDSB premises shall be directed to the Principal of the school where the student attends.
2. The operational procedures will outline consistent and transparent processes for the consideration of Guide Dog/Service Dog and Service Animal requests, the communication of the presence of a service animal to affected parties, the implementation of the service animal accommodation, the roles and responsibilities of the involved parties, and health and safety-related concerns.
3. In circumstances where a parent or adult student requests to have the student's Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal accompany the student while attending school or a school-related event, each such request shall be reviewed individually by the TCDSB considering the student's dignity, integration, independence and disability-related learning needs and the accommodations available to enable meaningful access to education.
4. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted.
5. The process of accommodation shall also consider the competing human rights of other students and of staff; the impact of the Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal on the learning environment; and the health and safety of individuals who are or might be in the school, on school grounds or at a school-related event.
6. A copy of this policy shall be available on the TCDSB's website and may be requested by a parent or adult student in a different language through the school attended by the student.



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7. The Board shall retain data regarding the requests for Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals as outlined in the operational procedures.

**Definitions (relating to terms outlined in the appended operational procedures):**

**1. Accredited Training Organization:**

A Guide Dog/Service Dog trainer that is accredited by:

- a) **International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF); or**
- b) **Assistance Dogs International (ADI); or**
- c) **A Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that attests to compliance with the Meghan Search and Rescue Standard in Support of Accessibility: Persons with a Disability Teamed with Service Dogs standard for training (MSAR).**

**\*Also see last paragraph in Purpose section, above.**

**2. Adult Student:**

A student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed him/her/themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent.

**3. Alternative Handler:**

A TCDSB staff member who has successfully completed training by an Accredited Training Organization and who is managing the Service Dog.

**4. Disability:**

Refers to

- (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



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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*.

**5. Guide Dog:**

A dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act, 1990*.

**6. Handler:**

The individual trained by an Accredited Training Organization who is managing the Guide Dog/Service Dog and in most cases will be the student for whom the Guide Dog/Service Dog is provided.

**7. Parent(s):**

A custodial parent of the student or a guardian pursuant to the Education Act.

**8. Service Animal:**

An animal that provides support to a person with a disability. 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 can allow individuals to achieve greater independence in daily tasks and promote safety, mental well-being, and learning.

**9. Service Dog:**

A dog that has been certified after successfully complete a training program provided by an Accredited Training Organization.



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**Evaluation and Metrics:**

1. Data will be gathered annually regarding the number of requests for students to be accompanied by ~~Guide Dogs, Service Dogs, or Service Animals~~ **Guide Dogs/Service Dogs or Service Animals for students**; as well as approvals, and denials.
2. This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis (as needed), but in any event no less than every five years.