

Instruction

Live Animals in the Classroom

Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)

The Newtown Board of Education (the “Board”) complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of a disability, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law. Accordingly, the Board shall make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices and procedures to permit an individual with a disability to use a service animal on school property and/or at school-sponsored programs or activities in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), applicable state laws and this policy.

A. Definitions

1. “**Service animal**” means any dog regardless of breed or size (“service dog”) or miniature horse (“service horse”) that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including but not limited to a physical; sensory; psychiatric; intellectual; or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. In other words, the animal must be required for the individual with a disability, and must be individually trained to do work or a task for the individual with a disability. For purposes of this policy, 1) a service animal includes a *guide dog* or *assistance dog* for a blind, deaf or mobility impaired person as outlined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-44; 2) service animal is **not** a pet; 3) a service animal in-training is **not** a service animal except for a dog being trained to assist a blind, deaf or mobility impaired individual; 4) companionship, comfort, therapy or emotional support animals do **not** qualify as service animals and 5) other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained are **not** service animals.
2. “**Work or tasks**” include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks; alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds; alerting individuals to the onset of medical conditions; alerting individuals to the presence of allergens; assisting individuals with limited use of their limbs with tasks such as carrying items, opening doors, turning on lights, retrieving items and/or pulling a wheelchair; assisting individuals with intellectual or cognitive disabilities locate places or misplaced items; providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities; and/or performing tasks for individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities such as preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors or reminding an individual to take prescribed medication. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do **not** constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this policy.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

A. Definitions (continued)

3. “**Handler**” is an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal, or a third party who accompanies an individual with a disability to assist with his or her service animal. For purposes of this policy, a handler may, in limited circumstances, include a person training a *guide* or *assistance dog* for a blind, deaf or mobility impaired person provided the trainer is employed by and authorized to engage in designated training activities by a guide or assistance dog organization that complies with the criteria for membership in a professional association of guide dog or assistance dog schools and carries photographic identification indicating such employment and authorization, or a person who volunteers for a guide or assistance dog organization that authorizes such volunteers to raise dogs to become guide dogs or assistance dogs and causes the identification of such dog with (a) identification tags, (b) ear tattoos, (c) identifying bandanas on puppies, (d) identifying coats on adult dogs, or (e) leashes and collars, as outlined in Conn. Gen. Stat. §46a-44.

B. Access to Board Property, Programs and/or Activities

Generally, a service animal shall be permitted to accompany a handler in all areas of Board property to the same extent that the handler has the right 1) to be present on school property or facilities; 2) to attend and/or participate in a Board-sponsored program or activity, including but not limited to, attending sporting events and student theatrical productions open to the general public; or 3) to be transported in a vehicle operated by or on behalf of the Board. Under no circumstances shall a handler be permitted to access a place where s/he would not otherwise be allowed access without the service animal.

The Board prohibits inquiries of a handler (or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child) about the nature of his/her disability. Additionally, Board personnel may not ask a handler (or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child) to pay an additional fee to comply with any condition not outlined in this policy and/or request documentation such as proof of licensure, certification or any other proof of the service animal’s training, including, but not limited to, demanding the animal perform a particular task. In instances where it is not readily apparent whether an animal qualifies as a *service animal*, Board personnel may **only** make the following **two** inquiries of a handler (or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child):

- *Is the dog (or miniature horse) a service animal required because of a disability?*
- *What work or task(s) has the dog (or miniature horse) been trained to perform?*

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C. Management of Service Animals; Responsibilities of Handlers and Liability

1. Service animals are working animals, **not** pets. Accordingly, service animals should not be petted, provoked or otherwise distracted, including, but not limited: talking to or saying the animal's name.
2. A service animal must harnessed, leashed, or tethered while on school property or at a school-sponsored program or activity unless such devices interfere with the service animal's work or the handler's disability prevents use of such devices. In that case, the handler must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.
3. A service animal must be housebroken.
4. A service animal must be under the control of its handler at all times while on Board property or at a Board-sponsored program or activity. Where a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, Board personnel may request that the animal be removed from the property or a Board-sponsored program or activity. In the event that the handler is unable or unwilling to remove a properly excluded animal, Board personnel are authorized to take appropriate action necessary to remove the animal and ensure the health and/or safety of individuals attending and/or participating in a Board-sponsored program or activity. In certain limited instances (e.g., younger children), the Board may provide reasonable accommodations to enable a handler to control his/her service animal. In such instances, the reasonable accommodations shall be determined on case-by-case basis at a meeting with school officials, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the handler, where appropriate.
5. Service animals are generally the sole responsibility of their handlers, who must take appropriate precautions to prevent damage or injury to persons or property from the actions of their service animals. The Board shall not be responsible for the care or supervision of service animals, including but not limited to the cost of veterinary care, supplies or equipment; provision of food and/or water; walking the service animal; responding to the service animal's toileting needs, including accidents; and/or grooming the service animal. Accordingly, handlers (or if a minor, their parent(s)/guardian(s)) are liable for any harm, damage, or injury caused by the service animal to students, staff, visitors, and/or property to the same extent other individuals who cause harm, damage or injury to persons or property are responsible for such harm, damage or injuries.
6. Handlers shall ensure that service animals comply with all generally applicable state and local animal control and public health requirements, including, but not limited vaccinations registration and/or licensure requirements.
7. All service animals should be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander, where possible. All service animals should be treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

D. Students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) and/or Section 504 Plans

An inquiry by a planning and placement team (“PPT”) and/or Section 504 team concerning whether a service animal is necessary for a student with a disability to receive a free and appropriate public education (“FAPE”) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is separate from the analysis and inquiry related to service animals under the ADA and applicable state laws. Any decisions with respect to whether a service animal is necessary in order to provide a student FAPE will be made by the student’s PPT or Section 504 team, as applicable. Where a service animal is not required for a student with a disability to receive a FAPE, the Board shall permit the use of a service animal in the Board’s programs or activities in accordance with the law and this policy.

E. Exclusion and/or Removal of a Service Animal

The Board shall not exclude a service animal based on assumptions or stereotypes or general fears about how a service animal or particular breed of dog might behave. However, a school official may ask a handler to remove a service animal from Board property, or a Board-sponsored program or activity in the event of one of the following:

1. The service animal is out of control and the service animal’s handler does not take effective action to control it;
2. The service animal is not housebroken;
3. The service animal’s presence would “fundamentally alter” the nature of the service, program, or activity; and/or
4. The service animal’s actual behavior poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications to policies, practices or procedures; or has a history of such behavior.

Where a service animal is properly excluded, the Board shall permit the handler to remain on Board property and/or participate in the Board-sponsored program or activity without the service animal unless such handler otherwise violated a Board policy or state or federal law which warrants the removal of the individual. In the event that the handler is unable or unwilling to remove a properly excluded animal, Board personnel are authorized to take appropriate action necessary to remove the animal and ensure the health and/or safety of individuals attending and/or participating in a Board-sponsored program or activity.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

F. Special Provisions Applicable to Service Horses

The Board shall modify its policies, practices or procedures to permit a handler to use miniature horses, where reasonable. In determining whether reasonable modifications can be made to allow a service horse into a specific facility, the Board shall consider:

1. Whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight;
2. Whether the handler has control of the miniature horse;
3. Whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and
4. Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.

The Board shall promptly notify a handler (or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s)) in writing whether reasonable modifications may be made to permit a service horse into a specific facility.

G. Conflicting Disabilities

In instances where an individual has an allergy significant to qualify as a disability, or have another disability that conflicts with the disability requiring the use of a service animal, the individual shall immediately notify a building administrator or the school official in charge of Board-sponsored program or activity. The Board, through its administration, shall consider the needs of each individual and balance the rights of the individuals involved. The Board shall work to resolve the conflict as efficiently and expeditiously as possible in order to meet its obligations to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities.

H. Grievances

Any person who believes s/he has been discriminated against because of his/her disability by a Board personnel or student, or has been aggrieved by a decision concerning a service animal may file a complaint or appeal to:

Ms. Deborah Mailloux-Petersen
Director of Pupil Personnel
Newtown Public Schools
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470
E-mail: petersend@newtown.k12.ct.us

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

Grievances (continued)

You may also file a complaint with the following agencies, via mail, telephone, fax and/or online:

US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section – 1425 NYAV
Washington, D.C. 20530
Fax: (202) 307-1197
<https://www.ada.gov/complaint/>

Boston Office
Office for Civil Rights
US Department of Education
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109-3921
Telephone: (617) 289-0111
Fax: (617) 289-0150
TDD: (800) 877-8339
email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov
<https://ocrcas.ed.gov/>

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
Telephone: (800) 669-4000
Fax: (617) 565-3196
TTY: (800) 669-6820
ASL Video Phone: (844) 234-5122
<https://publicportal.eeoc.gov/portal/>

Legal References:	State Law:	Conn. Gen. Stat. §22-339b Conn. Gen. Stat. §46a-44 Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-64
	Federal law:	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended 28 C.F.R. § 35.104 28 C.F.R. § 35.136 28 C.F.R. § 36.302(c)

Policy adopted: June 20, 2018

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Newtown, Connecticut

Instruction**Live Animals in the Classroom****Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)****What are Assistance Dogs?**

Therapy Dogs	Comfort Dogs	Emotional Support Animals	Service Dogs
Handler encourages the dog to visit others.	Are deployed during natural disasters or community tragedies.	Are personal pets that help to comfort or offer emotional support to their owners.	Dog needs to ignore others and concentrate on their handler's disability.
Loves to comfort people in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, etc	Handler encourages the dog to visit others and bring comfort after trauma.	They are not required to have any obedience or specialized training.	Has at least one trained task that mitigates their handler's disability.
Is not protected by the ADA.	Is not protected by the ADA.	Is not protected by the ADA.	Is protected by the ADA.
Does not have public access rights unless they are invited in for therapy visits or the establishments are open to all pets.	Does not have public access rights and must be invited into all non pet friendly establishments. Usually Red Cross, evacuation centers, or designated safe zones.	Does not have any public access rights and are not protected under the ADA. They do have housing rights under the Fair Housing Act and are able to fly in accordance with the Federal Aviation Administration.	Has the right to accompany their handler anywhere the general public is allowed including restaurants, government buildings, hospitals, planes, hotels, etc.
Should be insured by their certifying agency.	Should be insured by their certifying agency.	Are not required to carry additional insurance.	May not be asked to carry insurance.

Instruction

Live Animals in the Classroom

Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)

Background

Service animals are animals trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of normal living. The Board of Education, in compliance with state and federal laws allows service animals to accompany persons with disabilities to be on the District campus. This regulation differentiates “service animals” from “pets”, describes types of service dogs, denotes campus locations that are off-limits to service animals, and sets behavioral guidelines for service animals.

Definitions

Partner/Handler: A person with a service animal. A person with a disability is called a partner; a person without a disability is called a handler.

Pet: A domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. Pets are not permitted in District facilities. Permission may be granted by an administrator for a pet to be in a District facility for a specific reason at a specific time (e.g., a pet dog is used for a demonstration tool in a class).

Service Animal: Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. Service animals are usually dogs. Federal regulations also include miniature horses as service animals. A service animal is sometimes called an assistance animal.

A “service animal” per 28 C.F.R. 35.104, is any dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability or necessary to mitigate a disability. Service animals do not include any other species of animal, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, except that a miniature horse will be permitted for use as a service animal if reasonable modifications can be made after assessing the specific factors listed in 28 C.F.R. 35.136(i). Animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, companionship, or therapeutic benefits, or to act as a crime deterrent, are not service animals for the purpose of this policy and regulation.

Team: A person with a disability, or a handler, and his or her service animal. The twosome works as a cohesive team in accomplishing the tasks of everyday living.

Trainee: An animal undergoing training to become a service animal. A trainee will be housebroken and fully socialized. To be fully socialized means the animal will not, except under rare occasions, bark, yip, growl or make disruptive noises; will have a good temperament and disposition; will not show fear; will not be upset or agitated when it sees another animal; and will not be aggressive. A trainee will be under the control of the handler, who may or may not have a disability. If the trainee begins to show improper behavior, the handler will act immediately to correct the animal or will remove the animal from the premises.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

Types of Service Dogs

A **Guide Dog or Seeing Eye Dog** is a carefully trained dog that serves as a travel tool to persons with severe visual impairment or who are blind.

A **Hearing or Signal Dog** is a dog who has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound, e.g., knock on the door, occurs.

A **Psychiatric Service Dog** is a dog that has been trained to perform tasks that assist individuals with disabilities to detect the onset of psychiatric episodes and lessen their effects. Tasks performed by psychiatric service animals may include reminding the handler to take medicine; providing safety checks or room searches, or turning on lights for persons with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; interrupting self-mutilation by persons with dissociative identity disorders; and keeping disoriented individuals from danger.

A **Service Dog** is a dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties the dog may perform include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons, steadying a person while walking, helping a person up after a fall, etc. Service dogs are sometimes called assistance dogs.

A **Ssig Dog (sensory signal dogs or social signal dog)** is a dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the partner to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement (e.g., hand flapping). A person with autism may have problems with sensory input and need the same support services from a dog that a dog might give to a person who is blind or deaf.

A **Seizure Response Dog** is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder; how the dog serves depends on the person's needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during a seizure, or the dog may go for help. A few dogs have somehow learned to predict a seizure and warn the person in advance to sit down or to move to a safe place.

Under the Title II and III of the ADA, service animals are limited to dogs. However, the district must also make reasonable modifications to allow individuals with disabilities to use miniature horses if they have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for individuals with disabilities.

Emotional Support Animals or Comfort Animals

While emotional support animals or comfort animals are often used as part of a medical treatment plan as therapy animals, they are not considered service animals under the ADA. These support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

Requirements for Faculty, Staff, and Students

Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on campus except, where service animals are specifically prohibited.

Do not pet a service animal; petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from the task at hand.

Do not feed a service animal. The service animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food or food at an unexpected time may cause the animal to become ill.

Do not deliberately startle a service animal.

Do not separate or attempt to separate a partner/handler from his or her service animal.

Requirements of Service Animals and Their Partners/Handlers

Vaccination: The animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have had the general maintenance vaccine series, which includes vaccinations against rabies, distemper, and parvovirus. All vaccinations must be current.

Licensing: Dogs are to wear an owner identification tag at all times. The dog must also wear a current rabies tag and dog license tag. Connecticut law requires dogs to wear a harness or an orange-colored leash and collar which makes it readily identifiable as a licensed guide dog.

Health: The animal must be in good health.

Under Control of Partner/Handler: The partner/handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its partner/handler. A service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of such devices would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. In such cases the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control using voice control, signals or other effective means.

When a Service Animal Can Be Asked to Leave

Disruption: The partner of an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g., barking, running around, bringing attention to itself) may be asked to remove the animal from District facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the partner may be told not to bring the animal into any District facility until the partner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation can include muzzling a barking animal or refresher training for both the animal and the partner.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs)

When a Service Animal Can Be Asked to Leave (continued)

Disruption (continued) If the animal materially disrupts or interferes with the instructional program, school activities or student learning, or the animal's presence would result in a fundamental alteration of any school program, it may be excluded from school or school property. However, annoyance on the part of others is not considered an unreasonable risk to property or others to justify the removal of a service animal.

Health: Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. A partner with an ill animal may be asked to leave District facilities. A service animal that poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of any person may also be excluded from school or school property. A service animal that is not housebroken shall not be permitted on school premises.

Service Animals at District-Sponsored Events

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals to events or activities open to the public that are held in schools or on District property.

A building or District administrator may revoke or exclude such a service animal for the reasons set forth above.

Areas Off Limits to Service Animals

- A. **Mechanical Rooms/Custodial Closets:** Mechanical rooms, such as boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electric closets, elevator control rooms and custodial closets, are off-limits to service animals. The machinery and/or chemicals in these rooms may be harmful to animals.
- B. **Areas where protective clothing is necessary:** Any room where protective clothing is worn is off-limits to service animals. Examples impacting students include chemical laboratories, wood shops, metal/machine shops and photography dark rooms.
- C. **Areas where there is danger to the service animal:** Any room, including a classroom, where there are sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from a surface; where there are hot materials on the floor; where there is a high level of dust; or where there is moving machinery is off-limits to service animals.

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Service Animals (including Guide or Assistance Dogs) (continued)

In the event of an emergency, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) should be trained to recognize service animals and to be aware that the animal may be trying to communicate the need for help. The animal may become disoriented from the smell of smoke from a fire or laboratory emergency, from sirens or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The partner and/or animal may be confused by the stressful situation. The ERT should be aware that the animal is trying to be protective and, in its confusion, is not to be considered harmful. The ERT should make every effort to keep the animal with its partner. However, the ERT's first effort should be toward the partner; this may necessitate leaving an animal behind in certain emergency evacuation situations.

Emergency Situations

To help ensure appropriate ERT response, this policy and administrative regulation shall be disseminated to local law enforcement and fire departments.

Protocols

"The presence of dogs in our schools may be necessary at various times to provide emotional support and service for students and/or staff members. While this is permitted under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, it is important that protocols are clear and appropriately communicated to parents and staff.

As administrators and supervisors, the following will be included as part of the procedures for service animals:

1. Once a student or staff member has requested the need for a service dog (either for training or support), a *Request for a Service Animal* form must be completed, which includes the name of the student or staff who is requesting a dog, address and contact information, as well as information about the dog (e.g., current vaccination tag).
2. Forms must be signed either by a student's parent/guardian or the animal's owner.
3. Signed forms will be returned to the Principal or his/her designee for review and approval.
4. District letters will be sent to parents and staff outlining the presence of dogs in schools (either for training or service) and related information pertaining to the law supporting such dogs in schools.
5. District letters will be styled to include appropriate contact information for staff members who may be contacted for further information or questions.
6. All protocols (forms and letters) should be reviewed regularly with school administrators and secretarial support staff in all schools so that proper procedures are followed consistently.

[District Letterhead]
MEMORANDUM

To: [Relevant staff]

From: Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent of Schools

Date: [Insert date]

Re: Presence of Dogs in Schools

As you know, the Newtown Public Schools have participated in therapy dog programs in our schools, and some of our schools continue to host therapy dogs at various times throughout the school year. Students who choose to participate in these opportunities are able to interact with trained therapy dogs, under the supervision of the dog's handler and school staff, and many students find such interaction both comforting and fun.

For various reasons, there may be circumstances where other dogs are permitted on school property. Both the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in the public schools and those laws protect students, members of the public, and employees from such discrimination. Connecticut law similarly prohibits such discrimination. Specifically with respect to dogs, the ADA requires entities such as school districts to permit service dogs on school property if they are required because of an individual's disability and the dog is trained to perform work or a task for the individual, or if such a service animal is a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability. The Newtown Public Schools is committed to permitting service dogs in accordance with the law. Please also understand that the law limits the type of inquiries that one may make to an individual who is requesting, or already accompanied by, a service dog. Therefore, staff should direct questions about service dogs to the building administration, and the building administration should contact central office administration as needed.

Importantly, in contrast to therapy dogs, who - under the control of their handler - interact with others to provide comfort, the purpose of service dogs is to perform work or tasks for their handler. Therefore, employees, students, and visitors should not play with, pet, or otherwise interact with service dogs so that those dogs can perform work or tasks for their individual handler. Service dogs may not be identified in any particular manner, and the status of an individual as having a disability is private information. Therefore, unless you are specifically informed that a dog is a therapy dog available for petting and interaction, you should assume that any dog in the school is working or otherwise not available for such interaction. Employees working with children should also model and teach students these expectations related to appropriate interaction with dogs in the schools.

Employees who have any health concerns related to the presence of dogs in the schools, of which you would like us to be aware, should contact _____.

I am also sending the attached letter to parents/guardians, which contains similar information about the presence of dogs in schools. Thank you for your cooperation with, and attention to, these matters. Please contact _____ if you have any questions. Thank you.

Attachment

[District Letterhead]

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may know, the Newtown Public Schools have participated in therapy dog programs in our schools, and some of our schools continue to host therapy dogs at various times throughout the school year. Students who choose to participate in these opportunities are able to interact with trained therapy dogs, under the supervision of the dog's handler and school staff, and many students find such interaction both comforting and fun.

There may also be times where dogs are present in schools for other purposes. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, service dogs may be permitted in schools if they are required because of an individual's disability and the dog is trained to perform work or a task for the individual, or if such a service animal is a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability. The Newtown Public Schools is committed to permitting service dogs in accordance with the law.

Importantly, in contrast to therapy dogs, who - under the control of their handler - interact with others to provide comfort, the purpose of service dogs is to perform work or tasks for their handler. Therefore, students, parents/guardians, and other members of the community should not play with, pet, or otherwise interact with service dogs so that those dogs can do their important jobs. Service dogs may not be identified in any particular manner, and the status of an individual as having a disability is private information. Therefore, unless members of the school community are specifically informed that a dog is therapy dog available for petting and interaction, members of the school community should assume that any dog in the school is working or otherwise not available for such interaction.

As needed, our teachers and school staff will teach and remind students of the expectations as they relate to any dogs permitted in our schools, and we appreciate your cooperation as we teach our students how to respect the different roles of dogs in the schools. If your child has any health concerns related to the presence of dogs in the schools, of which you would like us to be aware, please contact _____. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Request for a Service Animal to Accompany a Student in School Facilities

This form identifies criteria to help the District minimize risks that a service animal poses to students, staff, and the educational environment. It is not based on speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about students with disabilities. Each criterion includes guidelines and explanations with resources. A service animal that meets the criteria may accompany a student to all school functions in or outside the classroom.

Parent/guardian *Complete this form and return it to the Building Principal. It will be used during the PPT/Individual Education Plan or Section 504 plan meeting.*

Student name (please print)	Date of birth
School attending	Grade
Parent/Guardian name (please print)	Contact number
Animal owner's name (if other than parent/guardian; please print)	Contact number
Animal handler's name (f other than owner's name; please print)	Contact number

Please initial before each of the following statements if the statement is true.

_____ **The animal has completed a professional service animal training program.**
(Initials)

Guidelines	Explanation
<p>Trained service animals generally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing dog • Guide dog • Assistance dogs • Seizure alert dog • Mobility dog • Psychiatric service dog • Autism service dog (could be same as therapy dog) • Miniature horse 	<p>To minimize risks, a service animal should be professionally trained. This training is different from and in addition to the individualized training to perform tasks for the benefit of the student.</p> <p>Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI) is a coalition of not-for-profit organizations. Its purpose is to improve the areas of training, placement, and utilization of service dogs. See its website for service animal training programs at: www.assistedogsinternational.org/Standards?serviceDogStandards.php</p>

Guidelines	Explanation
<p>Trained service animals generally do not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled Companion Animal • Social Dog • Facility Dog • Trained Agility Dog • Police Dog • Search and Rescue Dog • Helping Dog 	<p>To minimize risks, a service animal should be professionally trained. This training is different from and in addition to the individualized training to perform tasks for the benefit of the student.</p> <p>Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI) is a coalition of not-for-profit organizations. Its purpose is to improve the areas of training, placement, and utilization of service dogs. See its website for service animal training programs at: www.assistancedogsinternational.org/Standards?serviceDogStandards.php</p>

_____ **The animal meets minimum standards for a service animal in public**
(Initials)

Guidelines	Explanation
<p>Public appropriateness standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, well-groomed with no offensive odor. • Does not urinate or defecate in inappropriate locations. <p>Behavior standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not disrupt the normal course of school business; solicit attention, visit or annoy, solicit or steal food or other items from any member of the staff or student population; or vocalize unnecessarily, i.e., barking, growling or whining, etc. • Shows no aggression towards people or other animals, i.e., showing teeth, barking, growling, jumping on individuals, etc. 	<p>Requiring “minimum standards for a service animal in public” ensures that the school provides reasonable accommodations without fundamentally altering the nature of the school environment. No State laws or agency rules address specific minimum standards for a service animal. This list follows the ADI’s “minimum standards for a service animal in public,” available at: www.assistancedogsinternational.org/Standards/ServiceDogStandards.php</p> <p>Additional standards may be appropriate to meet a school building’s and its students’ needs. The ADI’s sample public access test ensures that an animal has appropriate behavior for a public setting. Available at: www.assistancedogsinternational.org/publicaccesstest.php</p>

Guidelines	Explanation
General training standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works calmly and quietly on harness, leash, or other tether. • Performs tasks in the school setting and lies quietly beside the student or adult handler without blocking aisles, doorways, etc. • Trained to urinate and defecate on command. • Stays within 24 inches of the student or adult handler at all times unless the nature of a trained task requires it to be working at a greater distance. 	<p>Requiring “minimum standards for a service animal in public” ensures that the school provides reasonable accommodations without fundamentally altering the nature of the school environment. No State laws or agency rules address specific minimum standards for a service animal. This list follows the ADI’s “minimum standards for a service animal in public,” available at: www.assistancedogsinternational.org/Standards/ServiceDogStandards.php</p> <p>Additional standards may be appropriate to meet a school building’s and its students’ needs. The ADI’s sample public access test ensures that an animal has appropriate behavior for a public setting. Available at: www.assistancedogsinternational.org/publicaccesstest.php.com</p>

_____ **The animal is individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of a student**
(Initials) **with a disability.**

Guidelines	Explanation
<p>A service animal must perform individualized tasks to mitigate aspects of the student’s disability.</p> <p>Identify individualized tasks:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p>This verification of training helps the school identify necessary IEP related services or 504 plan reasonable accommodations.</p> <p>Tasks may include, but are not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. (28 C.F.R. §36.104)</p>

_____ **The animal has a current vaccination tag.**
(Initials)

Guidelines	Explanation
<p>A service animal’s vaccinations must be current and filed in the student’s temporary record.</p>	<p>The animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have had the general maintenance vaccine series, which includes vaccinations against rabies, distemper, and parvovirus. All vaccinations must be current.</p>

Acknowledgement

- I. I understand that the presence of a service animal may present competing educational rights between my student and other students at school. These issues may present at any time, and I understand that the Building Principal must manage them immediately. I will:
- a. Participate in any meetings requested of me by the Building Principal;
 - b. Participate in drafting a joint communication to notify other students and their parents/guardians about the placement of the service animal; and
 - c. Authorize the school to disclose information as necessary to balance competing educational interests and integrate the animal into the classroom and the school environment.
- II. I understand that for the safety and protection of students and staff, which is necessary for the safe operation of the school, the school may revoke access because:
- a. One of the criteria above is not present.
 - b. The service animal displays aggression or appears to be an imminent threat to the safety or health of any person in the school. If this occurs, the Building Principal will immediately contact me to remove the animal from school property and summon Animal Control.
 - c. The adult handler fails to follow the Building Principal's instructions.
- III. I understand that a service animal's owner is solely liable for any damage to persons, premises, or facilities that were caused by the service animal. I will hold the District, its employee, agents, and assigns harmless for any injury to, including death of, the service animal. I understand that staff members are protected from liability arising from actions consistent with Board policies and administrative procedures.

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Animal owner's signature

Date

The Building Principal and, if applicable, the PPT/IEP or 504 team, based this decision on the information provided in this request. *(Note to Building Principal: return a copy of this form to the individual(s) making the request, file the original in the student's temporary record, and send a copy to the District's main office.)*

☐ Approved☐ Denied

Building Principal or designee

Date