

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
School District #33 (Chilliwack)**

**608.1
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION
Assistance Dogs in Schools**

The following procedures will be put into place prior to the admittance of an “Assistance Dog” to the school.

1. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1 Provide a letter of recommendation from an **“appropriate agency”** confirming the diagnosis of a recognized special need, including a recommendation for the use of an Assistance Dog.
- 1.2 Provide a Certificate of Training for the Assistance Dog from an organization accredited by either the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International.
- 1.3 Pay for all financial implications incurred by the School District and/or school regarding the use and care of the service (e.g., appropriate training for School District staff members).
- 1.4 Annually, provide the School District with proof of a municipal dog license and proof of up to date vaccinations provided by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine confirming that the Assistance Dog is in good health.
- 1.5 Arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the Service Dog, including at least one bio-break procedure per day and providing an appropriate kennel and water bowl.

Cross Refs: Policy 608-Assistance Dogs in Schools, Autism Support Dogs, Assistance Dogs International Inc., BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services, Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Guide Animal Act of BC

Adopted: March 8, 2016
Reviewed:
Revised: October 3, 2017

2. SCHOOL DISTRICT/SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Ensure that the use of an Assistance Dog is consistent with the needs or recommendations of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 2.2 Arrange a case conference with parents/guardians, classroom teacher (s), appropriate Student Services staff, a representative from Assistance Dogs International or other service provider, the student when appropriate, other consultants if necessary, and the District Principal of Student Services (Special Education) to discuss and develop a plan to determine.
 - a) The purpose and function of the Assistance Dog;
 - b) Who will accompany and handle the Assistance Dog outside;
 - c) The personal care and physical needs of the Assistance Dog including:
 - The safest and most environmentally sound place for the Assistance Dog to relieve itself,
 - Removal and disposal of animal waste,
 - Provision of a suitable container for waste,
 - Considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather;
 - d) Classroom considerations such as seating arrangements;
 - e) Any necessary changes in routine and procedures and program changes;
 - f) Arrangements for the Assistance Dog to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site prior to commencement of services;
 - g) A transition plan for the Assistance Dog and the student;
 - h) A timetable for the introduction of the Assistance Dog to the school and class and for the training of the student's school team (Principal, Teacher (s), Special Education Assistant (s), etc.
 - i) Rules of conduct around the Assistance Dog for students, staff and the public; and
 - j) Disseminating and regulating such rules.

- 2.3 The School District shall not be responsible for the training, feeding, grooming or care of any Assistance Dog permitted to attend school or ride on school buses under this policy. The School District must approve any person who is authorized to assist in the care and supervision of the Assistance Dog while on school property.
- 2.4 Notification Letters or Information
- 2.4.1 The following letters or information shall be forwarded home to inform:
- a) The school community of the arrival of the working Assistance Dog, its purpose, role and regulations regarding the existence of the Assistance Dog at the school;
 - b) The students in any of the classes where the Assistance Dog will be present to elicit information concerning allergies or extreme phobias from the students' parents/guardians;
 - c) The students who will be sharing transportation where the Assistance Dog will be present; and
- 2.4.2 Retain all letters regarding the Assistance Dog in the student's confidential file.
- 2.5 Inform all staff including teachers, special education assistants, custodians, all support staff, volunteers, and school planning council and health and safety representatives of the presence of an Assistance Dog (s).
- 2.6 Liaise with the District Principal of Student Services and Administration to resolve any specific concerns or issues raised regarding the presence of an Assistance Dog.
- 2.7 Arrange for demonstrations from Assistance Dogs International or another certified Assistance Dog organization for the student body, staff and the community as required to provide education and awareness of Assistance Dogs in schools.
- 2.8 Contact the School District Transportation Department regarding any transportation requirements.

- 2.9 Revise emergency procedures as required to include the Assistance Dog, such as evacuations, and notify the Fire Department regarding the existence of the Assistance Dog.

3. LIMITING, REMOVING OR EXCLUDING ASSISTANCE DOGS FROM SCHOOL

The School District may limit, remove or exclude from school facilities or property any Assistance Dog for reasons it deems appropriate. Examples of such include the following:

- 3.1 The Assistance Dog poses a direct threat to the health or safety of an employee or student or others at school, causes a significant disruption of school activities or otherwise jeopardizes the safe operation of the school or a school event. Examples of such include, but are not limited to:
- a) The Assistance Dog does not urinate or defecate in appropriate/designated locations;
 - b) The Assistance Dog solicits attention, visits or annoys any member of the student body or school personnel;
 - c) The Assistance Dog vocalizes unnecessarily, (e.g., barking, growling or whining);
 - d) The Assistance Dog shows aggression towards people or other animals;
 - e) The Assistance Dog solicits or steals food or other items from the student body or school personnel;
 - f) The Assistance Dog is unable to perform reliably the service for which it has been approved;
 - g) The Assistance Dog is not under the full control of the student with the disability or the designated employee;

- h) The Assistance Dog is a public health threat as a result of being infested with parasites or having a communicable disease of the skin, mouth or eyes;
- i) The Assistance Dog is unclean and unsanitary;
- j) The Assistance Dog's presence significantly impairs the learning of students;
- k) The Assistant Dog's presence fundamentally alters the nature of any school programs;
- l) The student or the student's parents fail to provide or maintain current documentation required by these regulations; and
- m) The student or the student's parents fail to abide by any additional conditions of the terms of an individual education plan regarding their Assistance Dog.

4. TRANSPORTATION OF THE ASSISTANCE DOG

In determining the necessity of an Assistance Dog for a student with a disability at school, the district may need to provide directions for transporting the student and the Assistance Dog.

4.1 Training

- 4.1.1 The driver and, if applicable, the bus assistant should meet with the Assistance Dog's owner. The owner is responsible for providing information to the driver and bus assistant regarding critical commands needed for daily interaction and emergency/evacuation;
- 4.1.2 The Assistance Dog's owner should provide an orientation to students riding the bus with the Assistance Dog regarding the Dog's functions and how students should interact with the Dog; and
- 4.1.3 The Assistance Dog should practice the bus evacuation drills with the student.

4.2 Loading/Unloading

The Assistance Dog should board the bus by the steps, not on a lift.

4.3 Seating Location

- a) The Assistance Dog should be positioned on the floor, at the student's feet; and
- b) A representative of the Transportation Department will meet with the Assistance Dog's owner to determine whether the Assistance Dog should be secured on the bus with a tether or harness.

5. RESTRICTIONS AND OFF-LIMITS FOR ASSISTANCE DOGS

The School District imposes some restrictions on Assistance Dogs for safety reasons. Assistance Dogs may be excluded or have limited access to certain areas of school facilities or certain programs for safety reasons. Areas or programs which may be considered off-limits for Assistance Dogs include, but are not limited to:

- 5.1 Laboratories, mechanical rooms, custodial closets, food preparation areas, areas where protective clothing is necessary, areas which have exposed sharp metal cutting or other sharp objects which may pose a threat to the Assistance Dog's safety, areas with high levels of dust and areas where there is moving machinery.
- 5.2 The determination to deny or limit the access of an Assistance Dog to specific programs or areas of that school facility will be on a case-by-case basis.

6. CONFLICTING DISABILITIES

The employees, students/parents of a student with medical issues that are impacted by dogs (such as respiratory diseases) should contact the school Principal if they have a concern about exposure to an Assistance Dog. The employee, student/parents of a student will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the disability and the need for an accommodation. The school Principal will facilitate a process to resolve the conflict that considers the conflicting needs/accommodations of all persons involved.

7. NOTICE OF APPEAL

Any student/parent of a student with an Assistance Dog who is aggrieved by the School Principal's decision to remove, limit or exclude an Assistance Dog may appeal that decision to the Board of Education. That appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.

REFERENCE:

Autism Support Dogs

<http://www.autismsupportdogs.org>

Assistance Dogs International, Inc.

<http://www.assistedogsinternational.org>

BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services

<http://www.bcguidedog.com>

Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind

<http://www.guidedog.org>

Guide Animal Act of BC

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96177_01