



## Administrative Procedure

Title: <b>Use of Service Animals by General Public</b>	Procedure #: <b>AP434-6</b>
Administrative Area: Operations	
Policy Reference: Accessibility (PO434)	
Date Approved: April 26, 2010	
Dates of Amendment: October 3, 2016	

### 1.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide direction in supporting members of the public who access Board facilities with the assistance of a service animal. This procedure contemplates only service animals used by staff and the general public.

### 2.0 **Definitions**

**Service Animal** – a service animal is an animal that is being used because of a person's disability. An animal would be defined as a service animal if:

- The person provides third party certification that the service animal has been trained to provide assistance that relates to that person's disability; or
- It is readily identifiable that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his/her disability; or
- The person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his/her disability.

Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who have vision loss, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, persons with autism, mental health conditions, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety. The customer service standard's provisions also apply to animals providing other services to people with disabilities.

### 3.0 **Procedures**

#### 3.1 **Training**

- 3.1.1 Supervisory Officers, principals and departmental managers will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

### 3.0 **Procedures** (Cont'd)

#### 3.2 **Access to Board Premises**

3.2.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be permitted on Board and/or school premises with his or her service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures and applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or Board offices where the public does not have access.

#### 3.3 **Exclusion of Service Animal**

3.3.1 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).

3.3.2 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).

3.3.3 A service animal can be excluded if it is a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the Ontario Dog Owners' Liability Act which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.

#### 3.4 **Alternative Measures if Service Animal Must Be Excluded**

3.4.1 In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve his/her needs (e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone, a member of staff or volunteer, to guide them).

#### 3.5 **When it is Necessary to Confirm an Animal is a Service Animal**

3.5.1 Where an animal is not a trained service animal and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.

### 3.0 **Procedures** (Cont'd)

#### 3.5 (Cont'd)

3.5.2 Where the person using the service animal regularly attends a school or board facility, the principal or departmental manager may request to keep a copy of the letter on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a letter with him/her on occasions when he/she visit the premises. The principal or departmental manager shall preserve the confidentiality of the letter and information contained in the letter, and shall not use or disclose the letter or information except as provided for in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.

### 4.0 **Sources**

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

### 5.0 **References**

- "Tips on Serving Customers with Disabilities" – Ontario Education Services Corporation

### 6.0 **Related Policies and Administrative Procedures**

- Accessibility Policy (PO434)
- Inclusion Policy (PO804)
- Customer Service Accessibility Standards Administrative Procedure (AP434-1)
- Notice of Disruption of Services Administrative Procedure (AP434-2)
- Use of Assistive Devices by the General Public Administrative Procedure (AP434-3)
- Use of Support Person by the General Public Administrative Procedure (AP434-4)
- Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service Administrative Procedure (AP434-5)
- Use of Service Dogs by Students in Schools Administrative Procedure (AP434-7)