

Date of Issue	November 2022
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Subject	USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC
References	<u>Policy 3115 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</u>
Contact	Business Services

1. Responsibility

- 1.1 Superintendents, 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. The training will include:
 - 1.1.1 the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards;
 - 1.1.2 the board's policies related to Customer Service Standards; and,
 - 1.2.3 how to interact with people with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal.

2. Access to Board Premises

- 2.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal, will be welcomed at any Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) facility with their service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.
- 2.2 This requirement applies only to SCDSB facility areas where the public or third parties customarily have access.
- 2.3 This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal. Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff is covered under separate procedures and is not covered by this Administrative Procedures Memorandum (APM).

3. Exclusion of Service Animal

- 3.1 A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. For example, the *Food Safety and Quality Act* prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g. kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom). However, service animals are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g. school cafeteria or lunchroom).

- 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 the 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, and making reasonable alterations to schedules).
- 3.3 A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the *Ontario Dog Owners' Liability Act*, which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.

4. Alternative Measures if Service Animal must be Excluded

- 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 them (e.g. a person with a vision disability might need someone such as a member of staff or volunteer to guide them).

5. Confirming an Animal as a Service Animal

- 5.1 Where an animal is not a trained guide dog or 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 appropriate documentation confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The documentation does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed, or how it is used.
- 5.2 Where the person using the service animal regularly attends a SCDSB facility, the principal or departmental manager may request to keep a copy of the documentation on file, for as long as the use of the service animal is required. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring the documentation with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The principal or departmental manager shall preserve the confidentiality of the documentation, and shall not use or disclose the documentation 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.

Approved

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Revised

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Issued under the authority of the Director of Education