

# Toronto District School Board

Policy P096

Title: **STUDENT USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS**

Adopted: October 30, 2019

Effectuated: October 30, 2019

Revised: N/A

Reviewed: N/A

Authorization: Board of Trustees

## 1. RATIONALE

The Student Use of Service Animals Policy (the “Policy”) affirms the Toronto District School Board’s commitment to creating school learning environments which promote and support human rights and accessibility for persons with disabilities.

This Policy supports the implementation of the Board’s obligations under the *Education Act*, paragraph 29.5 of subsection 8(1), the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the direction of the Ministry of Education stated in Policy/Program Memoranda (PPM) 163 – School Board Policies on Service Animals.

The Policy is aligned with Board’s Accessibility Policy (P069), Human Rights Policy (P031), Ontario Human Rights Commission’s Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, and applicable legislation, including but not limited to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, *Blind Person’s Rights Act*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and collective agreements.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

To provide direction regarding the administration and support of service animals in the school environment.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

*Board* refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “TDSB”.

*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 paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other service 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*.

*Service Animal* refers to an animal that provides support relating to a student's disability. Traditionally, service animals have been dogs, and dogs remain the most common species of service animal; however, other species may also provide services to individuals with disabilities. The types of functions performed by service animals are diverse, and may or may not include sensory, medical, therapeutic, and emotional support services.

*TDSB* refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the "Board".

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Director of Education holds primary responsibility for this Policy.

Within the Director's Office, the executive oversight and responsibility for the implementation, coordination and day-to-day management of the Policy is assigned to the Executive Superintendent, Human Rights and Indigenous Education.

#### **5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all employees of the Board.

The Policy covers students with disabilities using service animals, and their parents and guardians.

#### **6. POLICY**

- 6.1. The Board is committed to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs and interventions to support student success.
  - 6.2. The Board, in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, will provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services.
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- 6.3. In circumstances where a parent or adult student requests to have the student's service animal accompany the student while attending school or a school-related event, each such request shall be reviewed individually by the Board considering the student's dignity, integration, independence and disability-related learning needs and the accommodations available to enable meaningful access to education.
- 6.4. The process of accommodation will also consider the competing human rights of other students and of staff; the impact of the service animal on the learning environment; and the health and safety of all individuals who are or might be in the school, on school grounds or at a school-related event.
- 6.5. A copy of this Policy shall be available in accessible formats at the schools' administrative offices, including on the Boards website and may be requested by a parent or adult student in a different language through the school attended by the student.
- 6.6. The Board will retain data regarding the requests for the use of service animals in schools.

## **7. EVALUATION**

This Policy will initially be reviewed within the first year after the effective date, and subsequently, at a minimum every four (4) years.

## **8. APPENDICES**

Not applicable

## **9. SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

The Director of Education has authority to issue operational procedures to implement this Policy.

## **10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### Policies:

- Accessibility Policy (P069)
- Student Health Support Policy (P092)
- Equity Policy (P037)

### Procedures:

- Use of Service Animals by the General Public (PR604)

### Legislative Acts and Regulations:

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- *Blind Person's Rights Act*
- *Education Act*

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*

Other Documents:

- Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018)*
- PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals