

Book	Policy Manual
Section	700 Property
Title	Service Animals in Schools
Code	718 - New
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Purpose

The Joint Operating Committee adopts this policy to ensure that individuals with disabilities are permitted to participate in and benefit from school programs, activities and services, and to ensure that the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

Definition

Service animal means any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.^[1]

~~Miniature horses may be utilized as service animals if:~~^[2]

- ~~1. The miniature horse is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.~~
- ~~2. The facility can accommodate the type, size and weight of the miniature horse.~~
- ~~3. The presence of the miniature horse does not compromise the safe operation of the facility.~~

The work or tasks performed by a service animal shall be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of 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, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.^[1]

The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition.^[1]

Authority

The Joint Operating Committee shall permit individuals with disabilities to use service animals in school buildings; on school property; and on vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school, in accordance with this policy and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.^{[3][4][5][6]}

Guidelines

Admission of Service Animals to Schools

A student or an employee with a disability may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational or employment purposes. A student or employee seeking to bring a service animal to school must comply with the requirements as set forth in this policy and any administrative regulations governing this issue.

Parents/Guardians of students with disabilities may submit a request to the building administrator for their student to bring a service animal to school. The building administrator shall forward the request to the appropriate Section 504 or IEP team. The team shall gather the necessary information and evaluate the request to bring a service animal to school. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities shall be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student's IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement.^{[7][8]}

Before a service animal shall be allowed in a school building, or on school property or vehicles, the school shall request the following documentation from the owner or handler of the animal:^[6]

1. **Verification of the need for a service animal.**^[2]
2. **Description of the function(s) the service animal is trained to perform in relation to the individual's disability.**^[2]
3. **Proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service animal.**^[9]

Admission of Service Animals to Public Events

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals while on school property for events that are open to the general public. This right of access does not extend to the schools generally or to other activities that are not open to the general public.^[2]

School administrators may inquire of the owner or handler of an animal whether the animal is required because of a disability and the specific tasks that the animal has been trained to perform, but shall not ask questions about an individual's disability.^{[3][2][10]}

The school shall not require an owner or handler of a service animal to pay an extra charge for the animal to attend events for which a fee is charged.^[2]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Director or designee shall develop and disseminate administrative regulations to implement Joint Operating Committee policy and accommodate individuals with disabilities requesting use of a service animal in school buildings and on school property and vehicles.

The designated administrator shall ensure that all individuals involved in a situation where a service animal will regularly accompany an individual in school buildings or on school property or vehicles are informed of the Joint Operating Committee policy and administrative regulations governing this issue. Involved individuals can include administrators, appropriate employees, student and parent/guardian.

The owner or handler of a service animal shall be solely responsible for:

1. **Supervision and care of the animal, including any feeding, exercising, clean up and stain removal.**^[2]
2. **Control of the animal at all times through the use of a harness, leash, tether or by other effective means.**
3. **Damages to school buildings, property and vehicles caused by the animal.**
4. **Injuries to students, employees, volunteers and visitors caused by the animal.**
5. **Annual submission of documentation of vaccinations and immunizations.**

The building administrator shall receive and forward to the Director or designee each completed request by an individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal. The Director or designee shall respond to the request.

School administrators may exclude a service animal from school buildings, property and vehicles under the following circumstances:

1. **Presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.**
2. **Owner or handler is unable to control the animal.**
3. **Animal is not housebroken.**
4. **Presence of the animal would require a fundamental alteration to the program.**

Any individual with a service animal who is aggrieved by a decision to exclude, limit or remove a service animal may appeal that decision in accordance with applicable Joint Operating Committee policy. The appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.^[7]^[11]^[12]

Legal

1. 28 CFR 35.104
 2. 28 CFR 35.136
 3. 43 P.S. 953
 4. 29 U.S.C. 794
 5. 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq
 6. 28 CFR 35.130
 7. Pol. 103.1
 8. Pol. 113
 9. 3 P.S. 455.1 et seq
 10. Pol. 904
 11. Pol. 104
 12. Pol. 906
- 28 CFR Part 35
29 CFR Part 1630
45 CFR Part 80 App B
Pol. 103
Pol. 707