

SERVICE ANIMALS (STUDENTS)

Code **JLCDD-R** Issued **9/20**

The following procedures have been established for requesting student use of a service animal on district property and for evaluating such requests on a case-by-case basis.

Requests for Use of a Service Animal

Absent exceptional circumstances, the parent/legal guardian of a student with disabilities must submit a written request for use of a service animal as outlined below before a service animal will be allowed in a district building, on district property, or in district vehicles. Requests should be made at least ten (10) business days prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school function.

Documentation from a licensed veterinarian that the service animal is currently in good health, free from parasites, and has received all recommended vaccinations to ensure that the service animal does not pose a health or safety threat to any student, staff member, or the public must be submitted with the request.

School administrators may inquire whether the animal is required because of a disability and the specific tasks that the animal has been trained to perform but will not ask for a special ID card or training documentation for the animal or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

Requests for use of a service animal must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

Students currently served by a Section 504 Plan or an individualized education program (IEP)

A student with a disability or a parent/legal guardian on behalf of the student who believes use of a service animal in the school environment is necessary to receive a free and appropriate public education will notify the building principal or the Section 504 or IEP team.

The appropriate team will then evaluate the request to use the service animal in school, gather necessary information, and determine whether the student requires the service animal during the school day or at school activities. This may include a request for parental permission to formally assess the student's education-based needs that might include alternative methods of accommodation. Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities will be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

A service animal will not be denied access solely because the accommodation is not included in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

Students not currently served by a Section 504 Plan or an IEP

A student with a disability or a parent/legal guardian on behalf of the student who is not currently served by a Section 504 Plan or IEP may request to bring a service animal to school.

The building principal will, in consultation with other school staff, as appropriate, determine whether the animal meets the criteria for a service animal. As appropriate, the student will be assessed for eligibility for special education and/or related services.

PAGE 2 - JLCDD-R - SERVICE ANIMALS (STUDENTS)

Implementation Plan

As part of the implementation plan for service animals, the district will collaborate with the student and parent/legal guardian to:

- familiarize the service animal and/or handler with the campus prior to the actual start date
- orient the service animal to school faculty and students, mainly those in the student's classroom
- establish a school wide educational program to instruct others on how to behave correctly around a service animal
- establish water or feeding breaks for the service animal
- create a place for the service animal to urinate/defecate and a location for the handler to correctly dispose of the service animal's waste
- establish a rest place for the service animal when not working (e.g. gym, lunch, and recess)
- ensure that the handler and service animal actively participate in emergency drills and evacuations

Transportation

If a student with an approved service animal uses district transportation services, the following considerations will also be made.

Prior to the first transport of the student and the service animal

The driver and any bus attendant will be introduced to the service animal's handler or owner and his/her parent/legal guardian where appropriate. The handler or owner is responsible for providing information to the driver and any bus attendant regarding critical commands needed for daily communication and emergency/evacuation. The service animal's owner or handler and his/her parent/legal guardian, where appropriate, will support the district's transportation department staff in informing other students riding the bus with the service animal about the animal's functions and how students should interact with the service animal. The service animal's owner will ensure the service animal practices the bus evacuation drills with the student.

On the bus, the handler will ensure that the service animal is positioned on the floor at the student's feet. The animal must be secured by a harness, leash, or other tether, unless such harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or task; in such a case, the service animal must otherwise be under the handler's control.

Cessation of transportation

Situations that would cause a cessation of transportation of the service animal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the service animal's behavior poses a threat to the health or safety of others as determined by the district
- the service animal urinates or defecates on the bus
- the service animal does not remain in the designated area

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Latta School District