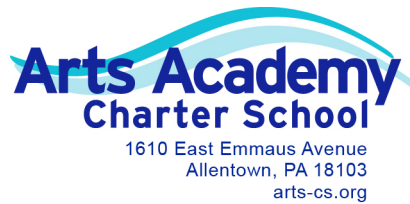


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Board Policy 4.2

Service Animals

The Board adopts this policy to ensure that individuals with disabilities have appropriate access to service dogs during school hours, during school-sponsored activities, and on school property, as required by law. The Board shall permit individuals with disabilities to use service dogs 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.

For the purposes of this Policy, service animals are limited to dogs. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. Miniature horses shall not be permitted to serve as service animals within the School, as they would fundamentally alter the nature of the school's programs, activities, and services due to their size and limited flexibility.

Definition

Direct Threat is a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services. A dog that bites an individual or that has a history of biting and/or aggressive behavior shall be considered to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

Service Animal, pursuant to this Policy, is limited to service dogs.

Service Dog is limited to a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

“Work” or “Tasks” - The work or tasks performed by a service dog must 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. *Providing emotional support, comfort, or companionship by the service dog does not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition.*

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Admission of Service Dogs to Schools

All requests for service dogs must be made to the building Principal. Before a service dog shall be allowed in a school building, or on school property, or in school vehicles, the school shall request the following documentation from the owner or handler of the dog:

1. Description of the work the service dog is trained to perform in relation to the individual's disability (if the nature of such work is not evident);
2. Current dog license and/or handler's permit or owner's permit; and
3. Proof of current vaccinations and/or immunizations of the service dog, as required by Pennsylvania law.

Admission of Service Dogs to Public Events

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service dogs 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.

Where it is not immediately evident, school officials may inquire of the owner or handler of a dog whether the dog is required because of a disability and the specific work that the dog has been trained to perform in relation to the individual's disability. School officials may also require documentation showing proof of vaccinations, as required pursuant to this Policy.

The school shall not require an owner or handler of a service dog to pay an extra charge for the dog to attend events, regardless of whether an admission fee is charged.

Service Dog Requirements

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

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

1. Supervision and care of the dog, including any feeding, exercising, clean up and stain removal.
2. Maintaining control of the dog at all times. Such control must be through the use of a harness, leash, or other tether, unless:
 - a. The handler is unable, because of a disability, to use a harness, leash, or other tether; or
 - b. The use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks.

In such cases, the handler must use voice control, signals, or other effective means to control the service animal.

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3. Damages caused by the dog to school buildings, property and vehicles.
4. Injuries to students, employees, volunteers, and/or visitors.
5. Annual submission of documentation showing that the dog is up-to-date with all vaccinations and immunizations required by Pennsylvania law.

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

1. The school has reason to believe that the presence of the dog poses a direct threat (as defined, above) to the health and safety of others.
2. Owner or handler is unable to control the dog.
3. The dog is not housebroken.
4. The facility will not accommodate the type, size and weight of the dog.
5. Presence of the dog would require or constitute a fundamental alteration to the program.

Any individual with a service dog who is aggrieved by a decision to exclude, limit or remove a service dog may appeal that decision to the Executive Director. The appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.

Use of Animals for Provision of FAPE

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit or restrict the consideration of the use of animals necessary in order to provide a student with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under Section 504 and/or the IDEA. Requests for the use of animals for the provision of FAPE shall be subject to the procedures and requirements set forth under Section 504, the IDEA and 22 Pa Code Chapters 14 and 15. Such consideration shall not be restricted to the definition of “service dog” under this Policy but is subject to a more detailed assessment of the use of an animal as an accommodation or educational tool under those laws, such as an assessment of the appropriateness of the use of the animal, evaluation of whether there is an appropriate alternative to the use of such animal, etc. Such requests should be made through the Director of Special Education, for ultimate approval by the Principal and Executive Director.