

SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS

The Livingston Parish School System acknowledges its responsibilities to permit students and/or other individual with disabilities to participate in and benefit from School Board services, programs and activities, and to promote the nondiscrimination of individuals on the basis of disability. Therefore the School Board shall permit the use of service animals by students and other individuals under appropriate circumstances.

A service animal is any 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. The School Board shall permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the miniature horse has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, shall not be considered service animals.

A written request detailing the need for the use of a service animal and the services it performs shall be submitted to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The work or task performed by a service animal shall be directly related to the handler's disability. Whenever possible, the request must be made no less than ten (10) days prior to the proposed use of the service animal prior to the proposed use of the service animal or prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school event. Additional documentation may be requested relating to the need for and appropriate use of a service animal. Determination of whether a service animal may be used at school depends on multiple factors and should be done on a case-by case basis after consultation with the Board's legal counsel.

Individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a service animal in all areas of the Board's buildings and facilities where the public participates in services, programs or activities, or where invitees are permitted to go.

If any service animal is excluded by the School Board, the Board shall give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

REGULATIONS

1. Special Provisions/Miniature Horses: Requests to permit a miniature horse to accompany a student or adult with a disability in school buildings, in classrooms, or at school functions, shall be handled on a case-by-case basis.
2. Removal of a Service Animal: A school administrator may ask an individual with a disability or his/her parents to remove a service animal from a school building, a classroom, or from a school function, if *any* one of the following circumstances

occurs:

- a. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it.
 - b. The animal is not housebroken.
 - c. The animal's presence would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the service, program, or activity.
3. A service animal shall be required to have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work, or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control.
 4. Students with service animals shall be expected to care and supervise their animal. The School Board shall not be responsible for the care or supervision of any service animal. In the case of a young child or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or supervise his/her service animal, the parent shall be responsible for providing care and supervision of the animal. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis in the discretion of the building administrator.
 5. Owners of service animals shall be solely responsible for any harm, damage, or injury caused by the service animal to students, staff, visitors, and/or property. A signed agreement shall be required indemnifying the School Board and school district against injury to any person or property damage caused by the animal.

Other regulations and/or procedures shall be maintained by the Superintendent and staff.

New policy: May, 2014

Ref: 42 USC 1201 et seq. (*Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*); 28 CFR, Part 35 (*Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services*).