SCHOOL DISTRICT #49 (CENTRAL COAST)

Procedure

Administrative Procedures**: S-15 Animals in Schools and District Facilities**

Nov. 2, 2022

# Background

School District No. 49 (the "District") recognizes that animals may be in schools or other District buildings in certain circumstances and that animals can both complement the educational program and support the well-being of students and staff. A commonsense approach must be used when admitting animals to the school district buildings for any length of time.

# General

* 1. Approval must be granted by site administrator for all animals visiting School District buildings.
  2. Animals shall not be allowed to roam freely within a school or a District facility setting.
  3. Animals shall not be left in schools or other District facilities during weekends or holiday periods.
  4. Animals shall be housed in suitable sanitary self-contained enclosures appropriate to the size of the animal.
  5. Teachers or other designated staff will be responsible for ensuring that all animal enclosures are kept in acceptable sanitary conditions.
  6. All refuse or waste pertaining to classroom animals shall be removed using gloves; double plastic bagged and placed in the appropriate receptacle (NB: it must not be left in the room overnight). For larger animals, a plan must be in place to account for bio-breaks, feeding, excluded spaces, etc…
  7. Every owner of an animal, other than a special needs assistance animal, while in a public place must obey all posted signs and this administrative procedure.
  8. Failure to adhere to posted signage may result in exclusion of the animal from the building.

# Assistance Animals

* 1. The following types of Assistance Animals encompassed in this administrative procedure include:

1. Autism Support – trained as assistants for persons with autism.
2. Hearing – alert individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to specific sounds.
3. Seizure Response – trained to provide emergency response for persons with epilepsy.
4. Service Dogs – (as defined by the BC Guide Dog and Service Dog Act) are Dogs trained to assist individuals who utilize a wheelchair.
5. Guide Dogs – (as defined by the BC Guide Dog and Service Dog Act) are Dogs trained as a guide for a blind or visually impaired person.
6. Therapy – trained to decrease anxiety and provide psychological or physiological therapy to individuals.
   1. An Assistance Animal will wear a vest to ensure it is clearly identified as a support animal.

# Application for admission of an Assistance Animal to schools

Prior to admittance of an Assistant Animal to school District buildings, an individual must:

1. Provide a letter to the School District requesting Assistance Animal admittance. The letter must outline the benefits of having an Assistance Animal attend school and include their plan for the care and supervision of the Assistance Animal while at school.
2. Provide a copy of the letter of recommendation from an appropriate professional confirming the diagnosis of a recognized special need, including a recommendation for the use of an Assistance Animal.
3. Provide a Certificate of Training for the Assistance Animal and the Handler from the appropriate agency.
4. Agree to pay for any additional costs incurred by the School District and/or school related to the assistance animal (e.g., appropriate training for School District staff members, bus and/or classroom modifications).
5. Arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the Assistance Animal, including at least one bio-break procedure per day and providing appropriate bedding (e.g., bed or blanket) and water bowl.
6. Accept responsibility for the actions of the Assistance Animal by signing a School District release of liability.
7. Annually, provide the School District with proof of annual re-certification from the appropriate agency and proof of up to date vaccinations provided by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine confirming that the Assistance Animal is in good health.

# School and District Responsibilities

The school district shall not be responsible for the training, feeding, grooming or care of any Assistance Animal permitted to attend school district buildings.

The school principal will:

Ensure the following letters are provided to all students attending the school, to inform:

1. The school community of the arrival of the working Assistance Animal, its purpose, rules and regulations regarding the existence of the Assistance Animal at the school.
2. The students in any of the classes where the Assistance Animal will be present to elicit information concerning allergies, or extreme phobias from the students’ parents/guardians.
3. Inform all staff including teachers, educational assistants, custodians, support staff, volunteers, and health and safety representatives of the presence of the Assistance Animal(s).
4. Revise emergency procedures as required to include the Assistance Animal, such as evacuations, and notify the fire department regarding the existence of the Assistance Animal.
5. Post appropriate signage at the school entrance, which informs visitors of the presence of an Assistance Animal.

# Restricting or Excluding Assistance Animal

The school / school district may exclude or restrict the access of Assistance Animals to certain areas of school district buildings, or programs for safety reasons as it deems appropriate.

# Conflict Resolution

Employees or parents of students with medical issues that are impacted by animals (such as respiratory diseases) should contact the school principal if they have a concern about exposure to an Assistance Animal. The employee, student/parents of a student will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the disability and the need for an accommodation. The school principal will facilitate a process to resolve the conflict that considers the needs/accommodations of all persons involved.

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| **Assistance Animal**  **Agreement** | **Objectives:**  ▪ To ensure the safe inclusion of Assistance Animals in the school setting.  ▪ To ensure all parties involved with the presence of an Assistance Animal in schools are aware of their roles and responsibilities. |
| Assistance Animals are trained to assist children and adults with their daily living activities, and provide physical safety and emotional support. Use of an Assistance Animal by a student or staff, in school or on Central Coast School District property, may be approved when it has been determined that it helps develop independence or when the individual requires such use in order to have equitable access to the services, programs or activities offered by the school, or to fulfill the requirements of their job and when the school district’s criteria have been met. | |
| **Roles and Responsibilities:**  ▪ Parents/guardians of a child requiring an Assistance Animal, or staff members requiring an Assistance Animal are responsible for providing appropriate documentation regarding the Assistance Animal  ▪ Parents/guardians of a child requiring an Assistance Animal, or staff members requiring an Assistance Animal agree to pay for any additional costs incurred by the school district and/or school related to the Assistance Animal.  ▪ Parents/guardians of a child requiring an Assistance Animal, or staff members requiring an Assistance Animal arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the Assistance Dog, including at least one bio-break procedure per day and providing appropriate bedding (e.g. bed or blanket), and water bowl.  ▪ Parents/guardians of a child requiring an Assistance Animal, or staff members requiring an Assistance Animal accept responsibility for the actions of the Assistance Animal.  ▪ Parents/guardians of a child requiring an Assistance Animal, or staff members requiring an Assistance Animal provide proof of annual re-certification from the appropriate agency and proof of up to date vaccinations provided by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine confirming that the Assistance Animal is in good health, annually.  ▪ The Handler (when applicable) will respect the confidentiality of all information received regarding students or staff members while providing services in the school. The Handler will not share or disclose any confidential or personal information that may be directly or indirectly disclosed to them.  ▪ The Dog will always be under the direct control and supervision of the individual requiring the Assistance Dog or Handler (where applicable). The Handler will be aware of the Dog’s behaviour at all times. If any changes in behaviour occur that may affect the safety of the children, the family or Handler will immediately remove the Animal from the school and notify the Principal.  ▪ The school district may remove or exclude from school facilities or property any Assistance Animal for reasons it deems appropriate.  ▪ I am aware of the protocols regarding restrictions and conflict resolution as per Administrative Procedure XXX | |
| **I have read and agree to the above roles, responsibilities and guidelines** | |
| Student Name: | DOB: |
| Parent Name: | Signature: |
| Handler Name: (if applicable) | Signature: |
| Staff Name: | Signature: |
| School Name: | Date: |

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)**

<< Date >>

Dear Parent / Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that, effective (date), there will be an Assistance Animal in our school.

The << animal >> will be in the school (times/days). Dates and times may change as required without further notice.

Assistance Animals are interactive and trained to work for a Handler to provide service and comfort to people. The presence of an Assistance Animal can decrease anxiety and provide a level of comfort that enables individuals to work through a variety of challenging issues.

<< Name of animal >> is a highly trained and fully certified Assistance Animal, and we are thrilled to have (him/her) become a member of our school community.

If you have any questions about << name of animal >>, please feel free to contact me. There will be information sessions at the school to integrate << name of animal >> into our daily routines and all of our staff and students will be instructed as to the proper procedures regarding the Assistance Animal.

If you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of the Assistance Animal in the school, please contact me. Thank you for your understanding, support, and interest.

Sincerely,

Principal

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN IN THE CLASS(ES) (SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)**

<< Date >>

Dear Parent / Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that, effective << date >>, there will be an Assistance Animal in our school assisting our students / staff, and the Assistance Animal will be present in your child’s class.

Assistance Animals are interactive and trained to work for a Handler to provide service and comfort to people. The presence of an Assistance Animal can decrease anxiety and provide a level of comfort that enables individuals to work through a variety of challenging issues.

<< Name of animal >> is a highly trained and fully certified Assistance Animal, and we are thrilled to have (him/her) become a member of our school community.

If you have any questions about << name of animal >> please feel free to contact me. There will be information sessions at the school to integrate << name of animal >> into our daily routines and all of our staff and students will be instructed as to the proper procedures regarding the Assistance Animal.

If you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of the Assistance Animal in your child’s class, please contact me. Thank you for your understanding, support, and interest.

Sincerely,

Principal



NOTICE:

There is an ASSISTANCE ANIMAL working in this school

