

PARKVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT THERAPY DOG PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Parkview School District Therapy Dog Program (“Program”) is a District-wide program established for the benefit of all students in the District. The purpose of the Program is to provide students passive emotional support and comfort in the school setting in an effort to positively influence student achievement. The guidelines for the Program are set forth below.

Definition of Therapy Dog

For the purposes of the Program, a Therapy Dog is a dog owned by the District that has been trained to provide support and comfort in the school setting under the direction and control of a trained handler. No other animals shall be used in connection with the Therapy Dog Program.

Documentation for Therapy Dogs

The following documentation must be in place for a Therapy Dog prior to the Therapy Dog’s use on or in any property controlled by the District:

1. Approval by the District Administrator or his or her designee for use of the Therapy Dog.
2. Approval by the Principal of the building where the Therapy Dog will be used.
3. Proof of appropriate immunizations and local and state licensing requirements. Therapy Dogs less than one year of age or receiving their rabies and parvo vaccinations for the first time shall receive a follow-up vaccine in one year, with vaccinations thereafter according to State requirements.
4. Annual certification from a licensed veterinarian that the Therapy Dog is in good health, is clean, and is free from fleas, ticks or any external parasites.
5. Proof of training and certification as a Therapy Dog.

Maintenance of a Therapy Dog

1. Therapy Dogs will be under the supervision of a trained handler at all times in the school setting to ensure that the dog is calm and behaving appropriately. The handler will remove the Therapy Dog from the District if the dog is out of control, shows aggression toward people or other dogs, or vocalizes unnecessarily (barking, whining, etc.)
2. The handler will ensure that the Therapy Dog is clean and fed and given ample opportunity to relieve itself outside the building in an area away from District students. The handler will be responsible for properly picking up and disposing of all Therapy Dog waste.
3. The Therapy Dog handler will ensure that the dog is groomed daily and bathed regularly but no less than monthly.

Use of a Therapy Dog

1. The building principal, oversight committee, and staff members will develop a schedule for the Therapy Dog with priority, if possible, for students known to be experiencing stress, anxiety, or sadness.
2. As time permits, the Therapy Dog will be present in classrooms to support students with educational activities and during passing periods, lunch, recess, and assemblies.
3. Costs associated with the Therapy Dog will be budgeted annually in the budget of the building where the Therapy Dog is used. The Therapy Dog handler is required to comply

with all District purchasing guidelines in relation to veterinary care, food, supplies, and grooming.

4. Therapy dogs are not allowed in the food preparation areas or cafeterias.

Oversight Committee

1. An Oversight Committee will provide support and guidance to Therapy Dog handlers, address questions and concerns regarding Therapy Dogs in the school setting, educate the District community regarding the use and value of Therapy Dogs, and annually review Therapy Dog Program Guidelines.
2. The Oversight Committee will consist of the following members:
 - School Counselor
 - General Education Teacher
 - Experienced Therapy Dog Handler
 - Parent
 - District and/or Building Administrator
 - Local veterinarian
3. The Oversight Committee, in consultation with the building principal, will be responsible for approving Therapy Dog handlers and arranging and approving a location for Therapy Dogs to reside during and after school hours.
4. Questions or concerns about Therapy Dogs may be addressed to the District Administrator, who will consult with the Oversight Committee. The final decision regarding any issue related to Therapy Dogs rests with the District Administrator.

Liability Insurance

The District will maintain liability insurance at all times for the Therapy Dog Program.

Application of these Guidelines to Students with Disabilities

These Guidelines do not apply to Service Animals which are governed by Policy 835. In addition, these Guidelines do not apply to requests for emotional support animals pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Other Animals

No other animals, including domestic pets, will be allowed on District property unless otherwise approved by the District Administrator or allowed pursuant to the Service Animal policy.

Cross Ref: Policy 835 - Service Animals

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