

## Students

## Welfare

### Service/Companion Animals

The Watertown Unified School District recognizes that service animals may be a reasonable accommodation for assisting individuals with disabilities while at school or at school related events. It is the policy of the Watertown Unified School District that service animals assisting individuals with disabilities are generally permitted in all facilities and programs of the school district as described below. A service animal is *not* a pet present for companionship purposes. The use of service animals is legally allowed in public facilities by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### Definitions:

**Service Animal:** Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. For purposes of this definition, other species of animals, trained or untrained, are not service animals.

**Tasks:** The task(s) performed by the service dog must be directly related to the person's disability, generally to a minor job, chore, or piece of work. The task may include guiding a person who is visually impaired or blind, alerting a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure or performing other special defined tasks. The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship or crime deterrent effects of a service animal's presence do not constitute work or tasks performed for purposes of this definition.

#### Permits and Certifications:

If parent(s)/guardian(s) believe their son/daughter requires the assistance of a service animal to effectively participate in the educational programs of the District, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall provide the following:

1. If the District has no knowledge that a person has a disability and requires a service animal as an accommodation, a physician's written certification of the disability and the use of a service animal as an accommodation will be required.
2. A veterinarian's written confirmation of the animal's appropriate immunizations provided on an annual basis.

#### Owner/Keeper Responsibilities:

1. The owner/keeper is responsible for providing documentation of need for use of a service animal as an accommodation when such need is not readily apparent, that the service animal is current on all required vaccinations and proof of current liability insurance.
2. The owner/keeper is responsible to ensure all vaccinations are current. Service animals must wear a rabies vaccination tag.
3. The owner/keeper is responsible for licensing the service animal.
4. Service animals must be on a leash, harness or other tether at all times, unless impracticable or unfeasible due to the owner/keeper's disability or the use of a tether would interfere with the

service animal's safe, effective performance of works or tasks. The owner/keeper of a service animal must be in full control of the animal at all times.

5. It is recommended a special harness, collar, patch, jacket, sign that states "Service Animal", or the like be on the dog to identify the animal to be a service animal.
6. The owner/keeper is responsible for grooming the animal, ensuring the service animal is free of ticks and fleas, and is spayed or neutered.
7. The owner/keeper is responsible to insure the animal is housebroken and train the service animal to relieve itself in an appropriate area designated by the school district.
8. The owner/keeper is responsible for care of the service animal during the school day, including watering, feeding, walking, taking the dog outside to relieve itself, etc.
9. The owner/keeper of a service animal is required to clean up after the animal defecates and dispose of the animal waste in a sanitary manner approved by the school district.
10. The owner/keeper is responsible to keep the service animal from disrupting the educational environment: remains quiet, stays within 24" of handler unless needed to go further to perform task, does not block aisles, doorways, etc.
11. The owner/keeper is responsible to ensure the service animal is not aggressive towards others. The owner is liable for any harm or injury caused by the service animal to others. The owner must provide proof of current liability insurance coverage.

#### School District Responsibilities:

1. The District will permit service animals at District facilities and at District activities providing the owner/keeper complies with responsibilities outlined above.
2. The District will provide adequate notice to all parents and staff that a service animal may be allowed in school. Students with chemical sensitivity and extreme allergies might also have a covered disability under the law. When both students have a right to accommodation based on a disability, a practical solution to accommodate both students' needs is required. One disorder does not take precedence over another. The District will make accommodations for students and staff to relocate in the building or transfer to another building if the presence of a service animal results in a health concern for an individual.
3. The District will provide a location for the service animal to relieve itself. However, the owner/keeper is responsible for cleaning up if the animal defecates.
4. Provide education awareness, and training to students and staff concerning the role of service animals as well as safety of those that may be in the physical proximity of the service animal.

#### Removal of a Service Animal:

A request to remove a service animal from school may be made if any of the following circumstances occurs:

1. The animal is out of control and the owner/keeper does not take effective action to control the service animal. (It is not the District's responsibility to control a service animal.)
2. The animal is not "housebroken".
3. The animal's presence would "fundamentally alter" the nature of the program, service, or activity. Examples may include, but are not limited to, science labs, areas requiring protective clothing, technical education shops with power equipment and tools, and food preparation areas.

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