



**SECTION 3000 - STUDENTS
CERTIFIED SERVICE ANIMALS**

The Lord Selkirk School Division Board of Trustees recognizes that a certified service animal, when well trained & supported, not only demonstrates its trained tasks, but can also support increased safety, independence, social bonding, and self-control for individuals with special needs.

Lord Selkirk School Division supports the use of a certified service animal in schools as long as the appropriate planning & preparation has taken place prior to the implementation of the program.

This policy has been developed and consistent with the following legislation:

- i) Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) 15(1);
- ii) The Public Schools Act 41(1)(a), 41(1.1), 58.9(1), 259(1) – MB;
- iii) Appropriate Education Regulations 72;
- iv) Appropriate Educational Programming (MR 155/2005) 2(2), 3, 5(1), 5(2), 7(2);
- v) The Human Rights Code (Manitoba) 9(2);
- vi) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- vii) The Service Animals Protection Act (Manitoba) 1(a);
- viii) The Disabilities Rights Act.

A certified service animal is a recognized working animal that has been trained to assist individuals who have special learning needs with their daily living activities. There are strict guidelines that apply to their access, handling, and interaction. The use of service animals is an intervention strategy that is used to accommodate the special learning needs of some students.

It is acknowledged that dogs remain the most common form of service animal, but other animals may be trained to be service animals.

Examples of work or tasks performed by a service animal in Manitoba include:

- guiding a person who is blind or visually impaired;
- alerting a person who is Deaf or hearing impaired;
- alerting or protecting a person who is having a seizure;
- reminding a person to take their medication; or
- calming, and keeping safe, a person with Autism.

A certified service animal is not the same as a companion animal or therapy animal.

Companion Animals are a newly emerging support to assist the learning behaviour of some individuals. These animals may be present to assist an individual in feeling comfortable or less anxious.

Therapy Animals are trained to provide affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, and schools. Therapy animals should be under the direction of an adult who is authorized to be in the setting.

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Companion and therapy animals are not service animals and a request for a companion or therapy animal can be refused, while a service animal cannot, unless the proper authorization, planning and preparation are not done in advance. The use of a companion or therapy animal is not implemented in the school without Board consultation and approval. Implementation of the use of a companion or therapy animal will be made on a case-by-case situation and not automatically implemented.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS REQUIRING A SERVICE ANIMAL

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)' Responsibilities

1. Make a formal request to the school principal or site manager outlining the needs of the individual and the benefits of using a certified service animal as part of the individual's programming requirements.
2. Provide a letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons or the College of Psychologists of Manitoba (or similar provincial organization) confirming the diagnosis of an accepted exceptionality and the recommendation for the use of a certified service animal.
3. Provide a letter from an accredited training program such as the National Association of Service Dogs, Assistance Dogs International or the International Guide Dog Federation, stating that a service animal has been placed with the individual and provide a current Certificate of Training for the animal identifying the services that it has been trained to perform.
4. Provide the school with annual proof of up-to-date vaccinations, a municipal license, if required, and confirmation the service animal is in good health.
5. Assume financial responsibility relating to the use and care of the service animal. The provision of a fully-trained animal handler to assist with initial implementation or any re-training sessions that may be required is the financial responsibility of the parent/guardian. This also includes students with a certified service animal already in place who transfers into the division.

Principal's Responsibilities

1. Consult with the Superintendent and Director of Student Services prior to planning the school entry process.
2. Ensure proper documentation has been completed and is in place prior to developing an implementation plan for integration of a certified service animal into the school.

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3. Arrange a case conference with parents/guardians, a representative from the animal training centre, Director of Student Services and the student support team to review the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) and determine if the services provided by the service animal should become part of the goals of the IEP.
4. Develop a transition plan for the service animal and the student which considers:
 - a) any necessary changes in routine and procedures
 - b) arrangements for the service animal to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site
 - c) a timetable for the introduction of the service animal to the class and for the training of the student’s school team
 - d) student and staff health and safety considerations (including severe allergies and staff or students with asthma)
 - e) handling routines and responsibilities
 - f) transportation to and from school,
 - g) communication with parents
 - h) designation of a staff member who will be the handler and an alternate in the school
 - i) training for staff and students regarding rules of conduct around the service animal
5. Forward the following letters to parent(s)/guardian(s) of students in the school to inform:
 - a) the school community of the arrival of the working service animal, its purpose, rules and regulations regarding the existence of the service animal at the school; (Appendix D)
 - b) the students in any of the classes where the service animal will be present to elicit information concerning allergies, extreme phobias, or religious considerations from the students’ parents/guardians. (Appendix E)
6. Retain all letters regarding the service animal in the student’s cumulative file for a period of one year, or until superseded.
7. Inform all staff including teachers, educational assistants, custodians, all support staff, volunteers, school council, union representatives, and health and safety representatives of the presence of service animals.
8. Liaise with the Student Services Director to resolve any specific concerns or issues raised regarding the presence of a service animal.
9. Contact the School Division Transportation Department regarding any transportation requirements.

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10. Revise emergency procedures as required to include the service animal, such as evacuations, and notification to the Fire Department regarding the existence of the service animal.
 11. Post signs on each entry door of the school to advise visitors of the presence of a working service animal.
 12. Develop an alternative animal handler for instances when the handler is absent.

Exclusions

The service animal may be excluded from access to premises only where:

- a) exclusion is required by a statute;
- b) the service animal is of a breed that is prohibited by law or municipal by-law;
- c) there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of the service animal;
- d) there has been a material change in the circumstances that led to the original approval of the use of the animal in school;
- e) the student or handler is unable to fully control the animal; and/or
- f) the parent/guardian fails to provide required documentation.

The right of entry of the service animal will be monitored regularly and reviewed on an annual basis.

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