



## AP 309 –SERVICE DOGS IN SCHOOLS

### BACKGROUND

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Saskatoon Public Schools is committed to the delivery of high quality education programs, supports and services that allow students with diverse needs to maximize their learning and achievement. The division recognizes the needs of some students may require unique accommodation(s). These accommodations may include the use of a Service Dog where necessitated by the student's learning profile and/or by medical restriction(s) such as blindness or low vision, deafness or hearing impairments as well as seizure disorder or autism.

Saskatoon Public Schools is also committed to ensuring it operates within the legal mandate of all legislation in meeting the needs of its students. This includes the Education Act, 1995, and the Policy on Service Animals within the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

**Note:** This Administrative Procedure does not pertain to the introduction of Therapy Dogs in schools. Therapy Dogs are specifically trained for Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) and under the control of a specially trained animal handler at all times. Therapy Dogs are deployed as part of a trained AAT Intervention team directed by a health services professional with specialized AAT expertise. The provision of AAT is a specialized health service that is beyond the scope of the school division.

### DEFINITIONS

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**Service Dog** - a dog that has received specialized training and therefore is accredited to assist a person with a recognized disability or medical restriction.

**Note:** Assistance Dogs International is the recognized and approved entity for training of Service Dogs

### PROCEDURES

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1. Determine Appropriateness of Service Dog Accommodation
  - a. Prior to applying to have a Service Dog as an accommodation at school, the parents/legal guardians must meet with the school principal to discuss the following:
    - i. the student's needs, medical restriction, and/or learning profile;
    - ii. how existing accommodations or supports could address the student's needs during school hours; and
    - iii. whether the Service Dog would address the student's needs more effectively than other available accommodations.
  - b. The Principal will ensure that the use of a Service Dog is consistent with the needs or recommendations of the IIP process;



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2. Application Process
  - a. Where it is determined that available accommodations are not effective, parents may apply to have a Service Dog accompany a student at school. To apply, parents submit the following to the principal:
    - i. *SPS Application for a Service Dog* (Appendix B)
    - ii. *Saskatoon Public Schools' Medical* indicating the restrictions for the student (Appendix C).
      - 1) Parents will receive a letter requesting the medical information attached to the Medical Certificate. The letter will be issued by the school's Superintendent and/or the Superintendent of Student Services.
      - 2) Parents must deliver the letter of request and Medical Certificate for completion by their medical doctor.
    - iii. Proof of the Service Dog's accreditation from *Assistance Dogs International*.
  - b. After receiving from the parents the completed application for, the Medical Certificate completed by the physician, and the proof of the Service Dog's accreditation, the principal shall, with the support of the school's Superintendent and/or the Superintendent of Student Services:
    - i. Adjudicate the application and supporting medical documentation;
    - ii. Determine whether the specific medical restriction is best addressed by the introduction of the specific dog as an accommodation at the school;
    - iii. Communicate the results of the application to the parents;
      - 1) Where any of the above criteria are found deficient, communication will be made to the parents that the application does not meet the criteria for approval of the Service Dog.
      - 2) Where the above are found to meet criteria, communication will be made to the parents regarding next steps towards implementation of the Service Dog.
  - c. Where it is determined that the Service Dog is the appropriate accommodation for the student's medical restriction, the principal shall, with the support of the school's Superintendent and/or the Superintendent of Student Services:
    - i. Determine whether or not the introduction of a Service Dog into the school will represent an undue hardship (as per Human Rights Commission Policy) and/or affect the medical restrictions of other students in the school;
    - ii. Provide opportunity for staff and families at the school to express concerns about the introduction of a service dog to the school;
    - iii. Where concerns exist, determine whether complementary accommodations can be made that support both parties;
    - iv. Identify handlers who will fulfil the obligations of that role in accordance with the [Human Rights Commission Policy on Service Animals](#);
3. Preparation for Implementation of Approved Service Dog  
Prior to the introduction of the Service Dog at the school the following must be in place:
  - a. The parent/legal guardian must:



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- i. Accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behavior of the Service Dog while present at school and indemnify the school division in writing;
  - ii. Provide proof of appropriate insurance coverage (third party liability of not less than \$2,000,000) naming the Division as an additional insured arising out of the named insured (for any damages caused by the Service Dog) and provide proof of such coverage annually;
  - iii. Participate in meetings to ensure that the bonding and training are progressing suitably well for the training to agency to recommend the Service Dog's readiness to be at school;
  - iv. Provide information in writing from the organization that trained the Service Dog indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the Service Dog, including:
    - 1) safest and most environmentally sound place for the dog to relieve itself;
    - 2) safe removal and disposal of dog waste;
    - 3) considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather
  - v. Provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations and licensing of the Service Dog annually.
  - vi. Cooperate with the school administrators to make arrangements for how and when initial and ongoing training will be provided for staff;
  - vii. Arrange with the training agency for training of school personnel in the use and care of the Service Dog while at school; and assume all costs for the training;
  - viii. Arrange for the Service Dog to visit the school to familiarize it with the school site;
  - ix. Give permission to school division staff and volunteers acting as handlers to touch, feed or deal with the Service Dog in any way that may be required to ensure appropriate care of the Service Dog and the safety of students and staff
- b. The school Principal shall:
- i. Consult with the appropriate Superintendent prior to discussing the implementation of a Service Dog at school;
  - ii. Confirm who will be the designated handler(s) for the service dog and ensure training is provided;
  - iii. Ensure the personal care and physical needs of the service dog are met, such as per 3. (a) (iv) above;
  - iv. Consider logistical arrangements in classes and hallways;
  - v. Implement complementary accommodations for staff or other students as needed (e.g. where allergies, phobias etc. exist);
  - vi. Inform all staff, parents and the SCC regarding the introduction of a Service Dog;
  - vii. Arrange for information sessions describing Service Dog procedures for the student body, staff and or the community as deemed necessary to provide education and awareness;
  - viii. Ensure that the Manager of Transportation is contacted regarding any transportation requirements, where applicable;
  - ix. Revise emergency procedures as required to include the service dog (i.e.: notification to the Fire Department regarding the existence of the Service Dog);
  - x. Post signs on each entry door of the school and throughout the school to advise staff, visitors and community of the presence of a working Service Dog and the procedures and rules pertaining to the Service Dog;
  - xi. Retain the application, insurance and related documentation in the student's cumulative folder;
  - xii. Ensure that the Service Dog accommodation is described in detail in the student's Inclusion and Intervention Plan, including a measurement plan with clear indicators of the effectiveness of the accommodation.



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### 4. Considerations and Limitations

Considerations and limitations include:

- a. The school division may impose reasonable conditions or restrictions relating to:
  - i. Transportation of the Service Dog to and from school;
  - ii. Restricting the presence of the Service Dog to specific areas in the school;
  - iii. Exclusion from access to specific areas where required by other laws (i.e.: food preparation areas).
- b. The right to be accompanied by a Service Dog does not apply if the individual is not in control of the behavior of the Service Dog and no other appropriate and trained handler is available.
- c. The agreement to accommodate a Service Dog is reviewed annually and may be modified as required following the same process as set out in this administrative procedure.
- d. If the student moves to a different school, the request for a Service Dog must be resubmitted and initiated in advance, at the new site, with the principal.
- e. The approval of the Service Dog as an accommodation may be terminated by the division if the dog does not have up to date documentation or licensing, or vaccinations.

### 5. Communication

- a. Letters will be distributed (samples attached) as follows to inform:
  - i. The school community of the arrival of the service dog, its purpose and rules regarding conduct around the service dog;
  - ii. The families of the Service Dog to elicit information concerning allergies, phobias or religious considerations from the students' families;
  - iii. The families of any students who will be sharing transportation where the Service Dog will be present, where applicable.

### Appendices

Appendix A: **Service Dog Information Letter**

Appendix B: **Service Dog Application Form**

Appendix C: **Medical Certificate**

Reference: Policy on Service Animals, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

Date Last Revised: June 1, 2017



## APPENDIX A:

### Parent Information Letter

(Date)

Dear Ms,

You have requested that your child be allowed to have a service animal attend at the school during classes. In order for us to appropriately address this request we will require you to submit the following documents to the school principal:

- A. The **Service Dog Application Form (Appendix B)** – completed and signed by parents/guardians.
- B. The official SPS **Medical Certificate (Appendix C)** - completed and signed by a physician.
- C. **Proof of the Service Dog’s Accreditation** - Certification documents to indicate that you have been provided with a Service Dog that has received specialized training and therefore is accredited to assist your child with his/her recognized disability or medical restriction.

#### **Detailed Information about the Required Documents**

##### **A. Service Dog Application Form**

This form provides the school principal with your formal signed intent to pursue the introduction of a Service Dog as a support at school for your child. The form outlines the application process and requires parents/guardians to agree to that process. The application form is attached to this letter.

##### **B. Medical Certificate**

In order to process the application for permission to have a Service Dog at school, we need a detailed description from your doctor of any medical restrictions your child currently faces. We have prepared the attached letter and medical certificate to assist you and your doctor in providing the information we require. The certificate does require detailed information about the medical restrictions and the reason for requesting to have a Service Dog at school. This helps us to determine whether the service dog and/or other accommodations will be the most effective ways to support your child.

Please note that the medical certificate must be completed by a doctor who is a licenced member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

##### **C. Proof of the Service Dog’s Accreditation**

In Saskatoon Public Schools a Service Dog is a dog that has received specialized training from *Assistance Dogs International*, the recognized and approved entity for training of Service Dogs. We also require confirmation that the dog is accredited to assist the child named in the application with his/her specific recognized disability or medical restriction. The agency would also provide a detailed description of the specific ways the Service Dog interacts with the child to provide the assistance.



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### Application Process

Once the school principal has received your official application and accompanying medical certificate and proof of your Service Dog's accreditation, you will be contacted to discuss the status of your application.

- a. If any additional information is required you will have an opportunity to provide it.
- b. If the application and additional documents are complete, the principal will inform you whether:
  - i. the application has been approved and we will proceed with the steps outlined on the application form, or
  - ii. if other accommodations are recommended instead of the Service Dog.

The school principal is your contact person and you will be informed of the status of your application throughout the process.

We look forward to receiving the requested information in the near future.

Yours truly,

Superintendent of Education

Saskatoon Public Schools

Saskatoon, SK

306-683-8422



## APPENDIX B:

### Service Dog Application Form

Submit the following to the school principal when applying to have a Service Dog accompany a child to school on a regular basis as a support.

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In order to assist \_\_\_\_\_ (students' name) to be successful at school we are requesting that he/she be accompanied at school by a Service Dog.

Terms and Conditions:

#### Preliminary Meeting

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will speak with the school principal about the possibility of using a Service Dog to support their child at school.
  - a. They will discuss with the school principal existing and additional interventions that can be used to effectively support the student at school without a Service Dog.
  - b. Discuss the responsibilities for parent(s)/guardian(s) related to the introduction of a Service Dog at school.

#### Formal Application

2. To officially apply for the use of a Service Dog at school the parent/guardian will submit three completed documents to the school principal:
  - A. The **Service Dog Application Form** – completed and signed by parents/guardians.
  - B. The official **SPS Medical Certificate** - completed and signed by a physician.
  - C. **Proof of the Service Dog's Accreditation** - Certification documents to indicate that you have been provided with a service dog that has received specialized training and therefore is accredited to assist your child with his/her recognized disability or medical restriction.
3. Once submitted, the application, medical certificate, and proof of Service Dog accreditation are reviewed by the school principal and Superintendent(s). If the information provided is insufficient, the principal will speak with the parents about what additional information is required to proceed with the application. Accommodations other than the service dog may be implemented or the service dog may be approved in principle.
4. If the introduction of the service dog is approved in principle, the principal and superintendents will:
  - a. Inform all staff and families at the school of the possibility of a Service Dog coming to the school on a regular basis.
    - i. Anyone for whom the presence of a dog will constitute an undue hardship will be provided with an opportunity to submit medical documentation to support that claim.
    - ii. Where the Service Dog constitutes an undue hardship, accommodations will be planned for those individuals to ensure they are able to be at the school at the same time as the Service Dog. Those accommodations will be in place before proceeding in the approval process.



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- b. Determine whether possible handlers are available who may fulfil the obligations of that role in accordance with the Human Rights Commission Policy on Service Animals. Handlers will be in place before proceeding in the approval process.
5. If the introduction of the Service Dog is approved in principle, the parent/legal guardian requesting the presence of a Service Dog must:
- i. Accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behavior of the Service Dog while present at school and indemnify the school division in writing;
  - ii. Provide proof of appropriate insurance coverage (third party liability of not less than \$2,000,000) naming the Division as an additional insured arising out of the named insured (for any damages caused by the Service Dog) and provide proof of such coverage annually;
  - iii. Participate in meetings to ensure that the bonding and training are progressing suitably well for the training agency to recommend the Service Dog’s readiness to be at school;
  - iv. Provide information in writing from the organization that trained the Service Dog indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the Service Dog, including:
    - 1. Safest and most environmentally sound place for the dog to relieve itself;
    - 2. Safe removal and disposal of dog waste;
    - 3. Considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather.
  - v. Provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations and licensing of the Service Dog annually.
  - vi. Cooperate with the school administrators to make arrangements for how and when initial and ongoing training will be provided for staff;
  - vii. Arrange with the training agency for training of school personnel in the use and care of the Service Dog while at school;
  - viii. Arrange for the Service Dog to visit the school to familiarize it with the school site;
  - ix. Give permission to school division staff and volunteers acting as handlers to touch, feed or deal with the Service Dog in any way that may be required to ensure appropriate care of the Service Dog and the safety of students and staff.
  - x. Participate in an annual review of the effectiveness of the Service Dog accommodation at the school;

As parent(s)/guardian(s) we submit this application for \_\_\_\_\_ (students’ name) to be accompanied at school by a service dog and agree to the Terms and Conditions as set out above.

Parent Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX C:**  
**Medical Certificate**

(Date)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Re: \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name)

(Name) is a student in our school division. We understand that you have attended to (Name) with regard to his/her medical condition. We understand that (Name) has medical restrictions that may require accommodation. A request has been made for a service dog to attend during class time to support (Name).

The Board of Education is committed to working with our students to accommodate disabilities which might affect their access to education and would appreciate any help you can provide in this regard. To assist you to provide the medical information that we require, we have prepared the attached medical certificate.

We ask that you complete the attached form and return it to our office as soon as possible. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included for your convenience.

We thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Education



## APPENDIX C

### Medical Certificate – Service Dog Application

1. Parent Authorization

<p><b>Student Name:</b></p> <p><b>PARENT AUTHORIZATION</b></p> <p>I consent to the release of the following information to Saskatoon Public Schools. The following information is required to assist Saskatoon Public Schools with a decision regarding the request for a service dog to support _____ during the school day.</p> <p>Parent Signature _____ Date: _____</p>
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2. Date on which you first examined \_\_\_\_\_ (enter students' name)
- i. Date of first visit \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Date of most recent visit: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please describe in detail the student's medical restriction(s) and specifically how a service dog will address the medical restriction and support the student at school.

Description of Medical Restriction(s)	How the service dog will address the medical restriction(s)
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.
d.	d.

4. Explain why the service dog is the preferred intervention. For example, explain how the service dog can address the medical restriction(s) more effectively than a school staff member.

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5. Please identify any specific procedures that the student may require at school:

Procedure	Frequency Required	Time(s)	Details	Can a non-medical



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				professional be trained to do the procedure?
				Yes__ No__

6. Is the student taking any medication which must be administered during the school day (between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 pm)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

If yes:

Name of Medication	Dosage	Time(s)

7. Please provide any additional information that you feel would be pertinent and beneficial to support Saskatoon Public Schools with a decision regarding the request for a service dog to support this student during the school day.

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Name of Physician (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_