Administrative Procedure 155

Use of Service Animals by General Public



The Board welcomes all members of the school and broader community to our facilities by committing our staff and volunteers to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of service animals, which include any animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a regulated health professional which confirms that the person needs the service animal for reasons related to their disability.

Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who have vision loss, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety. The customer service standard's provisions also apply to animals providing other services to people with disabilities.

It is "readily apparent" that an animal is a service animal when it is obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal if it is wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign that identifies it as a service animal or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. It may also be readily apparent if a person is using the animal to assist him or her in doing things, such as opening doors or retrieving items.

1. Responsibility

1.1. Supervisory Officers, Principals and Departmental Managers will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

2. Access to Board Premises

2.1. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed on Board and/or school premises with their service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.

Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.



- 2.2. This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school or board offices where the public does not have access.
- 2.3 This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal. Access to classrooms for service animals used by students and staff is covered under separate procedures.

3. Exclusion of Service Animal

- 3.1. A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g., kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold (e.g. school cafeteria or lunchroom).
- 3.2. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is the Board's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, e.g. creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc.
- 3.3. A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the *Ontario Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on pit bull terriers.

4. Alternative Measures to Service Animal Being Excluded

4.1. In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve them, e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff or



volunteer) to guide them.

5. Confirming Requirement for Service Animal

5.1. Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used. Regulated health professionals include audiologist, speech-language pathologist, chiropractor, nurse, occupational therapist, optometrist, physician or surgeon, physiotherapist, psychologist, or psychotherapist or mental health therapist.

Legal References

Bill 80, Ontario Service Dogs Act, 2016
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562, Section 60
Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05
Dog Owner's Liability Act
Ontario Human Rights Code