

THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

January 7, 2020, 12:15 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

London Room

Note: For those meetings starting at 12:15 p.m., lunch is provided in advance; please arrive early.

Meetings are scent free

Pages

1. Call to Order
2. Confirmation of Agenda
3. Conflicts of Interest
4. Report of the Previous Meeting 1
The report of the 2019 December 16 meeting is provided for information.
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Exclusion of a Student - Discussion - A. Canham
7. System Updates - A. Canham/R. Ferrara
 - a. Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals - Review of Draft Policy and Procedure 6
 - b. Ministry of Education PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals 27
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9. Students on Modified Day (Standing Item)
10. Special Education Plan (Standing Item)
11. Correspondence (Standing Item)
12. Other Business
13. Forum: Association Updates (Round Table)

14. 2019-2020 Meeting Dates

Tuesday, February 4, 2020 12:15 p.m.

Monday, March 9, 2020 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 7, 2020 12:15 p.m.

Monday, May 4, 2020 6:30 p.m.

Monday, May 25, 2020 6:30 p.m.

Monday, June 8, 2020 6:30 p.m.

15. Adjournment

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 16, 2019
6:34 p.m. - 8:33 p.m.

MEMBERS

C. Thammavongsa, Association for Bright Children
A. Morse, Easter Seals Ontario
B. Harvey, Epilepsy Support Centre
P. Cook, Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
L. Turner-Otte, Ontario Parents Advocating for Children with Cancer
S. Grabstas, Vanier Children's Services
M. Barbeau, Voice for Hearing Impaired Children
M. Cvetkovich, Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex
J. Wright, Community Services Coordination Network (CSCN)
J. Gritzan, Thames Valley Children's Centre
S. Thomson, Thames Valley Council Home and School
Associations
D. Shore-Reid, Learning Disabilities Association London
J. Bennett, Trustee
L. Pizzolato, Trustee
B. Yeoman, Trustee

Regrets: S. Lawrence Farrants, B. Furac, T. Grant, S. Young

ADMINISTRATION AND OTHERS

A. Canham, Superintendent of Special Education
A. Leatham, Learning Supervisor
R. Ferrara, Learning Supervisor
J. Bruce, Elementary Principal
T. Birtch, Secondary Principal
M. Chevalier, Elementary Principal
M. Phillips, Secondary Principal
S. Smith, Corporate Services

1. Call to Order

A. Canham called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the London Room at the Education Centre.

2. Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda was approved on motion.

3. Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

4. Election of Chair

A. Canham presided over the election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2020. This year the Chair of SEAC will be an agency representative and the Vice-Chair will be a Trustee.

P. Cook was elected to the position of Chair of the Special Education Advisory Committee for the term ending 2020 November 30. Trustee Pizzolato was elected to the position of Vice-Chair.

All ballots were destroyed.

5. Welcome

P. Cook extended his appreciation to the Committee for their engagement and efforts during the last year, noting his excitement for the year ahead.

6. Report of the Previous Meeting

The report of the 2019 November 11 Special Education Advisory Committee meeting was provided for information.

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

8. System Updates - A. Canham

a. Exclusion of a Student Policy and Procedure

A. Canham advised an Exclusion of a Student Policy and Procedure will be drafted to support Section 265(1)(m) of the *Education Act*.

It was noted exclusion is intended to be used as a short term measure and the decision cannot be disciplinary in nature and cannot be used in lieu of a consequence such as suspension or expulsion.

The tentative SEAC consultation date to review the policy and procedure is 2020 February 4.

Questions of clarification regarding using the policy/procedure to exclude additional persons (non students) were addressed.

b. Special Education Year- End Financials

A. Canham advised the Special Education 2018-2019 Year End Statement will be provided at the 2020 February 4 SEAC meeting.

c. Assistive Technology Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs)

R. Ferrara provided a system update on Assistive Technology Teachers on Special Assignment. She reported the focus is to train, coach, and model assistive technology for staff and students, noting that over 300 students have been trained to date.

Questions of clarification regarding TOSA teams, access to assistive technology, student profiles, types of programs used in training and wait times were answered by Administration.

Administrators advised on the progress of the capacity building TOSAs have provided in their schools, noting the positive feedback from staff and students.

d. After School Skills Development Program (ASSDP)

A. Leatham provided an update on the After School Skills Development Program (ASSDP) grant. The program will be held at Algonquin P.S. and River Heights P.S. There will be an application process.

In response to a question, Administration reported the program anticipates room for six to ten students at each location.

A. Leatham reported the program will run one day a week for ten weeks. There is no cost to families to participate in the program. The program will be staffed by TVDSB staff (Educational Assistants, Speech and Language Pathologists, and Board Certified Behavioural Analysts).

In response to a question, it was noted the staff at every site running the program will receive Peer Mediated Social Skills (TRACKS) training.

A recap of the program will be provided to SEAC at the 2020 April 7 meeting.

e. Special Incident Portion (SIP) Claims

a. 2018-2019

A. Canham provided a recap of the Special Incident Portions (SIP) for 2018-2019.

b. 2019-2020

It was noted TVDSB is on track to exceed the number of submissions this school year.

The committee requested additional data from Administration

9. Operational Plan Update - A. Canham

a. Literacy

A. Canham reviewed the Literacy Operational Plan. Targeted outcomes and goals were outlined.

a. Phonological Awareness

A. Canham provided an update on the Literacy Operational Plan specifically phonological awareness.

A. Canham reported that teachers attended a phonological awareness training session where they received training on: understanding phonological awareness and the impact on literacy, phonemic awareness phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Data from the phonological awareness testing will be used to help Administrators identify how to help students.

Questions of clarification regarding parent involvement, sharing results of the phonological awareness testing and providing interpreters to assist in phonological awareness conversations with parents/guardians were addressed.

In response to a question, Administration noted that phonological awareness information is sent home with students including recommended activities to reinforce practicing phonological awareness skills at home.

10. IEP Audit Committee - R. Ferrara

a. Call for Membership 2020

R. Ferrara advised the IEP Audit Committee is looking for two SEAC members to sit on the committee. Timelines, guidelines, and expectations were detailed.

Volunteers were captured by Chair Cook.

Communication will be sent to the interested parties in 2020 January.

11. SEAC/Department Priorities (Standing Item)

None.

12. Students on Modified Day (Standing Item)

A. Canham reported on the number of Elementary students currently on a modified day program.

Additional information was requested on the average period for being on a modified day.

Discussion occurred regarding tracking modified days in Secondary school.

In response to a question, it was noted three courses is considered full time at the Secondary level. Alternative Education classes are offered to at risk students to keep them enrolled in four courses.

13. Special Education Plan (Standing Item)

A. Canham reported discussion will begin on 2020 January 7.

14. Correspondence (Standing Item)

None.

15. Other Business

None.

16. Forum: Association Updates (Round Table)

Round table updates were completed. Committee members highlighted some of the events and activities planned by their various organizations in the coming weeks. As a follow up to the meeting, event flyers will be emailed out to the committee members as they are received by Corporate Services.

17. 2019-2020 Meeting Dates

The 2019-2020 meeting dates were provided in the agenda package. The next meeting is scheduled for 2020 January 7, 12:15 p.m.

18. Future Agenda Items

Recommended items may be emailed to Administration.

In response to a question, the process for communicating EQAO data was outlined.

19. Adjournment

A. Canham thanked Trustee Bennett for her dedication and contributions as the outgoing SEAC Chair.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m. by motion.



PROCEDURE

Title: **STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS
AND SERVICE ANIMALS**

Procedure No.: **5012f**
Effective Date:

Department:

- Reference(s):
- Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19
 - Education Act, RSO 1990, c.E2, s. 170(1), s.265(1); O. Reg. 298, s.11
 - PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals
 - J.F. v. Waterloo Catholic District School Board, 2017 HRTO 1121 (CanLII)
 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c.11
 - Blind Persons' Rights Act, RSO 1990, c.B7,
 - Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c.D16
 - Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990, c.H7

Statement

The use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals is one strategy used to accommodate the special needs of individuals with disabilities. This procedure provides direction to principals/supervisors regarding the admittance and implementation of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals for students in the school environment.

The success of the implementation of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals depends on clear communication, a well-informed school/work community and careful planning. The information provided will assist the principal/supervisor to make the best possible arrangements for the students with disabilities as well as other students, staff, volunteers and visitors in the school.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Thames Valley District School Board is committed to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs and interventions to support student success.
- 1.2 It is the policy of the Thames Valley District School Board, in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services.
- 1.3 In circumstances where a parent or adult student requests to have the student's Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal accompany the student while attending school or a school-related event, each such request shall be reviewed individually

Administered By:

Amendment Date (s):

- by the Thames Valley District School Board considering the student's dignity, integration, independence and disability-related learning needs and the accommodations available to enable meaningful access to education.
- 1.4 Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted.
 - 1.5 The process of accommodation shall also consider the competing human rights of other students and of staff; the impact of the Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal on the learning environment; and the health and safety of all individuals who are or might be in the school, on school grounds or at a school-related event.
 - 1.6 A copy of this procedure shall be available in accessible formats on the Thames Valley District School Board's website and may be requested by a parent or adult student in a different language through the school attended by the student.
 - 1.7 The Board shall retain data regarding the requests for Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals as outlined in its Administrative Procedure.

Administrative Procedure

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 It is the policy of the Thames Valley District School Board in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and facilitates the development of independence.
 - (a) The school board utilizes a variety of placements, differentiated programming, and evidence-based interventions and strategies to provide meaningful access to education for students who have disability-related needs that impact their learning.
 - (b) The school board does not provide Guide Dogs, Service Dogs or Service Animals to students.
 - (c) The school board encourages any family considering the purchase of a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal to meet with the school principal or superintendent before making a commitment.
- 1.2 This Administrative Procedure identifies the individualized process to be followed when a parent or adult student applies to the school board to have a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal accompany the student while the student is attending school or a school-related event.
- 1.3 Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and

Ontario Regulation 474/00 *Access to School Premises*, the Thames Valley District School Board requires each school to have a process for visitors.

- 1.4 Any determination of whether a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal is an appropriate accommodation for a student while receiving education services is a decision of the school board. A regulated health professional cannot unilaterally prescribe that a Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal be a specific accommodation while the student is receiving education services at school.
- 1.5 When an adult student or parent seeks to have their child attend school or school related events with a Guide Dog / Service Dog, both the Guide Dog / Service Dog **and** the Student Handler must be certified as having been successfully trained to a standard consistent with an accredited training facility.
 - (a) Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the school board consider an application for a student who will not be acting as the primary trained Handler of the Guide Dog / Service Dog.
- 1.6 Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Human Rights Code*, will the school board consider Service Animals, other than dogs, as an accommodation for a student and only if other reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Service animals have traditionally been highly trained dogs that assist individuals with various tasks of daily living (Guide Dog, Hearing and Signal Dogs, Mobility Assistance Dogs, Seizure Response Dogs).
- 2.2 In most circumstances, a Guide Dog will be a highly trained dog provided to support the orientation and mobility needs of a student Handler who has a diagnosis of blindness/low vision, and the Guide Dog will provide the student Handler with greater independence, dignity and opportunity for integration.
- 2.3 The term Service Animal is used in the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), to describe an animal that assists an individual with a disability to be able to access goods and services available to the public. **A school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to a student's use of a Service Dog / Service Animal when accessing education services in school buildings.**
 - (a) Pursuant to the *Code* it is possible that a Service Animal might include different species that provide a therapeutic function, emotional support, sensory function, companionship and/or comfort.

- (b) The determination of whether the animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate a demonstrated disability-related learning need is a decision of the school board.
 - (i) Such a decision will consider that animals, other than dogs, are not trained by an Accredited Training Organization and may pose a risk to the safety of students and staff and/or may be disruptive to the learning environment and/or may act as a distraction in the learning environment.
- 2.4 Due to risks to safety, and risks of disruption and distraction in the learning environment, the school board does **not** permit training of potential guide dogs and service dogs in the school setting or during school activities.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this Procedure the following definitions apply:

Accredited training organization is a guide dog or service dog trainer that is accredited by:

- International Guide Dog Federation (“IGDF”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide Dogs for the blind/low vision are trained by its member organizations; or
- Assistance Dogs International (“ADI”): which develops and ensures compliance with the standards by which Guide, Hearing and Service Dogs are trained by its member organizations; or
- A Guide Dog or Service Dog trainer that attests to compliance with the Meghan Search and Rescue Standard in Support of Accessibility: Persons with a Disability Teamed with Service Dogs standard for training (MSAR).

Adult student shall be defined to mean a student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent.

Disability means,

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997](#);

Guide Dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*;

Handler refers to the individual trained by an Accredited Training Organization who is managing the Guide Dog / Service Dog who will be the student for whom the Guide Dog / Service Dog is provided;

Parent shall be defined to mean a custodial parent of the student or a guardian pursuant to the *Education Act*;

Service Dog means a dog which has been certified after successfully completing a training program provided by an Accredited Training Organization.

Service Animal have training to perform specific tasks for people with disabilities. Service animals are trained to perform a wide variety of tasks, which may include but are not limited to, deep pressure therapy, anchoring, stimulous distraction, and alerting handler to a change in medical status.

Emotional support animals provide comfort and security. However, they do not have training for specific tasks. Therefore, emotional support animals do not qualify as service animals under the AODA.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Principals

- 4.1 School principals are responsible for the management of the school premises, the staff providing educational programs and the safety of all students.
 - (a) A school principal has authority to exclude any animal, including Guide Dogs / Service Dogs and Service Animals, from entry onto school premises and school building(s), as an accommodation for a student, provided that the student is offered appropriate alternative accommodation to meet the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs.
 - (b) School principals, before admitting a Guide Dog / Service Dog into the school or on school related activities with the student handler, shall require a parents/guardians/adult student to submit a completed application, included in **Appendix A** of the Procedure.

- 4.2 On receipt of an application for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal, the school principal shall review the application for completeness and may request any additional information or clarification necessary to assess the request for accommodation.
- 4.3 The school principal shall be responsible for communication with the parents/guardians/adult student with respect to the accommodation process, and where approved the implementation and management of the accommodation.

Parents / Guardians / Adult Students

- 4.5 Parents/guardians or adult students are required to provide all necessary documentation and engage in the consultation process for the purpose of considering and implementing, if appropriate, the request that a Guide Dog / Service Dog accompany the student at school and/or on school-related activities. The parents/guardians or adult student shall be responsible for:
 - (a) submission of **Appendix A**;
 - (b) all costs related to the dog, food, grooming, harness, crate and/or mat and veterinary care;
 - (c) obtaining training and maintaining the Guide Dog / Service Dog training to provide the accommodation in a safe manner that does not disrupt student learning;
 - (d) providing confirmation of municipal license for the dog (to be updated annually),
 - (e) providing confirmation of certificates of training not older than 6 months from an Accredited Training Organization attesting that the dog and student handler have successfully completed training and may safely engage in a public setting without creating a risk of safety or a risk of disruption within a school setting;
 - (f) diagnosis from a registered family physician, nurse practitioner, pediatrician, psychologist, psychiatrist, audiologist or optometrist with a recommendation for the use of a Guide Dog / Service Dog;
 - (g) a description of the services provided by the Guide Dog / Service Dog to the student, and how those services will accommodate the student's disability-related needs and assist the student in achieving their learning goals and/or goals of daily living while at school;
 - (h) a certificate not greater than three (3) months old from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario attesting that, the dog is an adult; identifying the age and breed; does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans; has received all required vaccinations; and is in good health to assist the student (to be updated

annually);

- (i) general liability insurance providing coverage in an amount of 1 million dollars as specified by the Board in the event of an injury or death as a result of the Guide Dog / Service Dog's attendance on school property or on a school-related activity.

Students

4.6 Students will be expected to act as the Guide Dog / Service Dog's primary handler. The student handler must:

- (a) demonstrate the ability to control the Guide Dog / Service Dog in accordance with the training received;
- (b) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Dog is always wearing a vest and leash or harness when the dog is working.
- (c) ensure the Guide Dog / Service Dog does not disrupt the learning of others with unnecessary movement, vocalization or other behaviour, including aggressive or threatening behaviour;
- (d) ensure that the Guide Dog / Service Dog's biological needs are addressed; (See Appendix C)
- (e) transition and maintain at all times the Guide Dog/Service Dog on a leash, harness, mat and/or crate;
- (f) comply with an accommodation plan that addresses the competing rights of others;

Guide Dog / Service Dog

4.7 The Guide Dog / Service Dog:

- (a) shall be a highly trained and certified to the standard of an accredited training organization;
 - (i) will have evidence of training or re-certification confirming compliance with training requirements within the last 6 months, or as requested by the principal, be required;
- (b) must be groomed and clean;
- (c) must at all times while on school property be responsive to commands and demonstrate that it can perform the necessary tasks or accommodation;
- (d) must **not** engage in behaviour that puts at risk the safety of others, including other animals, or that creates disruption or distraction in the learning

environment;

- (i) such behaviour includes, but is not limited to, growling, nipping, barking, attention seeking, eating;
 - (ii) any such behaviour is grounds to prohibit the Guide Dog / Service Dog's attendance on school property and in the school building,
- (e) must have control of its biological functions so as not to soil the inside of buildings, or require feeding during the school day;
- (f) must demonstrate continuous appropriate behaviour with its handler and others in the school environment to remain eligible for entry in school buildings or school-related events.

5.0 Assessment of the Accommodation Request

- 5.1 Once the application and all necessary documentation is received by the school principal, a review will take place by the Board team supporting the student and a meeting shall be scheduled to review the accommodation request. Every effort will be made to review the documentation and schedule a meeting in a reasonable time frame.
- 5.2 A meeting with the Board team supporting the student, the parents/guardians/adult student and student (as appropriate), the health practitioner recommending the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal for the student, the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog and of the handler, and any other individuals who may contribute to the accommodation process may be scheduled to review the request for accommodation.
- 5.3 Each request for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be addressed on an individual basis giving consideration to:
 - (a) the individual learning strengths and needs of the student, the student's IEP goals, Management of Aggressive Behaviour Safety Plan, behaviour plan and/or student's medical plan of care (if any);
 - (i) supporting documents such as psychological assessments, occupational or physical therapy assessments, functional behaviour assessments etc.
 - (b) evidence of how the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal's attendance at school might provide accommodation for a demonstrated disability-related learning need and/or act of daily living necessary while at school;
 - (c) assessment information provided by a regulated health professional with expertise regarding the student's disability-related needs supporting the request for a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal;
 - (d) the training and certification of the Guide Dog / Service Dog and student as

handler;

- (e) the impact of the accommodation on the student's dignity, integration and independence;
 - (f) whether one or more alternative accommodations can meet the needs of the student;
 - (g) whether the student's attendance with a Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal might require an increase in the level of staff support provided to the student;
 - (h) whether training will be required for staff and/or the student;
 - (i) the impact of the accommodation on the learning environment for the student, other students, including, health, safety, disruption and distraction;
 - (j) any competing human rights of students, staff, and community members using the school pursuant to a permit;
 - (i) recommendations for accommodation plans to reconcile competing rights.
- 5.4 The process of accommodation, including inquiries regarding competing rights and notice to the school community, shall respect the student's right to privacy regarding their disability and specific learning needs and/or needs of daily living.
- 5.5 Service Animals shall only be considered when reasonable methods of accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student. Parents/guardians/adult student must complete an application for a Service Animal included in **Appendix A** of the Procedure.
- (a) The accommodation process following a request by a parent/guardian/adult student for a Service Animal shall be consistent with the process noted above, but shall also include any special considerations that may arise if an animal is a species other than a dog, including the ability to be trained, necessary biological functions, the capacity for the animal to respond to commands, whether the animal may be kept on a leash/harness/crate/mat and how such restrictions might impact accommodation.
- 5.6 The determination with respect to the application for a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal shall be communicated to the parents/guardians/adult student in writing in accordance with **Appendix D(1) or D(2)**.

6.0 Implementing the Accommodation

- 6.1 Where approval is granted, the school principal in consultation with the student's educational team, will do the following:

STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

- (a) make changes to the student's Individual Education Plan and/or student's medical plan of care;
 - (i) may provide for the accommodation on an interim trial basis, in which case the indicators of success or lack of success for this form of accommodation will be identified before the trial period begins.
- (b) organize an orientation session for school staff, students and the student Handler;
- (c) develop a timetable identifying a bio-break, water break, location/process to be followed during instructional and non-instructional times;
 - (i) access may be limited to certain activities, areas of the school, or certain times of the day, including but not limited to, where exclusion is required pursuant to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* or the *Food Safety and Quality Act 2001*, which prohibit Service Animals from being in places where food is prepared, processed or handled.
 - (ii) assessment may be required by the School Board's health and safety officer health and safety issues applicable to different areas/activities in the school;
- (d) develop emergency procedures, to include a fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan;
- (e) notice to the community via a letter to parents; posting on the school's website / social media; presentation by the trainer of the Guide Dog / Service Dog during a school council meeting or association supporting the use of the Service Animal; signage on the school's front door, gymnasium and library doors; communication to potential occasional staff accepting a position where the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal may be providing service to the student;
- (f) student assembly for introduction and orientation regarding the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal;
- (g) arrangements for transportation of the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal to and from school, if necessary;
 - (i) If the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be accompanying the student on a school vehicle, inquiries must be made regarding competing rights, the transportation plan must specify where the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal and student will be located; the vehicle shall have a sticker / sign identifying the presence of a Guide Dog/Service Dog or Service Animal is on board;
 - (ii) Documentation about the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal will be included with the route information so that new or substitute

bus drivers are aware of the Guide Dog / Service Dog's or Service Animal's presence.

- (iii) Specialized transportation shall **not** be provided solely for the purpose enabling the Guide Dog / Service Dog or Service Animal to travel to and from school with the student;

7.0 Continuous Assessment

- 7.1 A review of the effectiveness of the Guide Dog, Service Dog or Service Animal in supporting the student's learning goals shall be undertaken as part of each review of the student's Individual Education Plan, in the event of a Violent Incident Report, and as otherwise deemed necessary by the Principal.
- 7.2 Approval may be revoked at any time by the principal if:
 - (a) there are any concerns for the health and safety of students, staff or the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal;
 - (b) there is behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping. In the event that this behaviour occurs, the handler will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the classroom immediately and the student's parent/guardian will be called to pick up the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal from the school. Alternative options for accommodation will be discussed.
 - (c) there has been a change to the student's circumstances or disability-related needs, which had supported the original approval or a change to the needs of students/staff such that there is a new competing right;
 - (d) the Board in its discretion determines that the accommodation is not effective for the student's demonstrated disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living.

8.0 Records

- 8.1 A copy of the application and confirmation of approval, as well as any other relevant documents supporting the accommodation shall be retained in the student's Ontario Student Record.
- 8.2 The School Board shall be required to collect, use and disclose the personal information of the student in order to fulfill the accommodation process. Notice of the collection, use and disclosure must be provided to the parent/adult student. Efforts should be made to limit the personal information to only that which is necessary.
- 8.2 The Board is required pursuant to PPM 163 School Board Policies on Service

Animals to collect information regarding the implementation of the policy and procedure regarding Guide Dogs and Service Animals, including.

- (a) Total number of requests for students to be accompanied by Guide Dog / Service Dogs / Service Animals;
 - (i) Whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students;
 - (ii) The student's grade;
 - (iii) Student as the handler;
- (b) The number of requests approved and denied;
 - (i) If denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and/or services provided to the student to support their access to the Ontario Curriculum;
 - (ii) Species of Service Animals requested and approved; and
 - (iii) Types of needs being supported: emotional, social, psychological, physical.

9.0 Food Areas

Regulation 493/17, of Ontario's *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, allows Guide Dogs and Service Animals in areas where food is served, sold, and offered for sale. Steps should be taken to ensure that Guide Dogs and Service Animals in school cafeterias, or areas where students are consuming food, are not disruptive and do not eat student food.

No animals are allowed in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled such as the kitchen of the school cafeteria or the hospitality classroom.



Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Appendix A Application for Guide Dog and Service Animals

This Form is to be submitted to the School Principal

School _____

Grade _____

Student Name _____

Address _____

Home / Cell Telephone Number _____

Disability-Related Needs to be Accommodated by Guide Dog / Service Animal

- Please attach a copy of the assessment report from a registered family physician, pediatrician, nurse practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist, optometrist or audiologist containing the student's diagnosis and describing in detail the disability-related learning needs or acts of daily living to be accommodated and how the Guide Dog / Service Animal will provide accommodation in a school setting.

Municipal License

- Please attach a copy of the municipal license, not more than 12 months old; confirmation to be updated annually.

Veterinary Certificate

- Please attach a certificate from a veterinarian qualified to practice veterinary medicine in the Province of Ontario (confirmation to be updated annually) attesting to:
 - the breed of dog, age of dog and that the dog is an adult;
 - the dog does not have a disease or illness that might pose a risk to humans;
 - the dog has received all required vaccinations;
 - the dog is in good health to assist the student

Certificate of Training

- Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the Guide Dog / Service Animal's training by a training organization accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR standard for training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animal's Procedure 5012f.
- A letter confirming that the trainer will attend a School Council Meeting to provide a presentation and respond to questions from the school community.

- Please attach a copy of the certificate, not more than 6 months old, confirming the student handler's training by an accredited training organization by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International or an attestation of compliance with the MSAR standard for training, as defined in the Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animal's Procedure 5012f.

Information regarding Animal

- Describe in detail the tasks or services performed by the animal _____

- Identify the oral commands or visual signs to which the animal responds _____

- Attestation will be required confirming that the animal does not make vocal noises, does not engage in distracting behaviour, does not exhibit aggression _____

- Identify whether the animal will be on a leash/harness or in a crate _____

- Describe the biological needs of the animal _____

Student

- Can the student independently manage the animal? _____

- Describe in detail where, when and how the student currently utilizes the animal's services in public spaces for accommodation purposes. _____

- Please describe below what, if any, responsibilities the student is capable of performing independently.

- Please describe below the responsibilities you wish to have assumed by a school staff member.

Insurance

Pursuant to Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c.D16, the owner of a dog is responsible for any injury or death caused by the dog. Please attach a certificate of home or contents insurance. Where the dog is owned by a registered charity, please provide a letter from the registered charity confirming their ownership of the dog.

Personal information of the student and parent/guardian is being collected by the Thames Valley District School Board in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to be used to provide education services pursuant to the *Education Act s.170(1)7* and PPM 163 and the *Human Rights Code*, s.1.



Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Appendix B

Principal's Checklist for Guide Dog / Service Dog

School _____

Grade _____

Student Name _____

Application Requirements for Guide Dog / Service Dog

- ☐ Assessment report with diagnosis and accommodation to be provided
- ☐ Supporting documents (IEP, psychological, occupational therapy, physical therapy, functional behaviour, and/or orientation and mobility assessments)
- ☐ Copy of municipal license [within 12 months]
- ☐ Veterinary certificate [within 3 months]
- ☐ Certificate of training or attestation for Guide Dog / Service Dog [within 6 months]
- ☐ Certificate of training or attestation for student Handler [within 6 months]
- ☐ Letter of confirmation that the trainer will present to School Council
- ☐ Certificate of insurance [within 3 months] or Letter from the registered charity which owns the dog
- ☐ Letter of inquiry with school staff and community using the school pursuant to permit regarding allergies, phobia/fear or cultural sensitivity
- ☐ Assessment by health and safety officer

Implementation Requirements

- ☐ Accommodation plan where there are competing rights (may include restriction of access to areas of school, change in classroom etc.)
- ☐ Management Plan for the care of Service Dogs
- ☐ Timetable identifying bio breaks, when accompanying student, when in crate
- ☐ Emergency procedures (fire exit plan, lockdown plan, evacuation plan)
- ☐ Letter to parents that Guide Dog/Service Dog will be accompanying student
- ☐ Information session during to school council meeting
- ☐ Posting on school website or Facebook that Guide Dog/Service Dog will be accompanying student
- ☐ Signage for front door, gymnasium door and library door advising of Guide Dog / Service Dog
- ☐ Transportation plan (if required)
- ☐ Orientation for school staff and students
- ☐ Training for staff member acting as Handler (if required)
- ☐ Identification of benchmarks for assessment of effectiveness (to be reviewed with IEP)



Appendix C Management Plan for the Care of the Service Dog

Name of Student/Staff _____

Date _____

Name of dog _____

School/Site _____

Name(s) of Individual(s) responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan for the Care of the Service Dog:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NOTE: Responsibility for care of the dog rests 100% with the individual(s) listed above, not Thames Valley District School Board staff.

Water needs: (e.g. provision of water bowl, procedures for use, cleaning, etc.) _____

Dietary Needs Procedure: _____

Bladder/Bowel needs of Dog: (e.g. frequency, location, disposal, etc.) _____

Other considerations

1. Rest periods from "work" _____

2. Hot weather _____

3. Winter weather _____

4. Additional Considerations _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Staff: _____ Date: _____

Signature/Name of Individual(s) responsible for care of the dog:

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Principal/Supervisor: _____ Date: _____



Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Appendix D

Sample Letter to the School Community

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians

This letter is to advise that a Guide Dog / Service Dog will be attending [school] with a student in order to accommodate the student's needs pursuant to the *Human Right Code*.

The Guide Dog / Service Dog is trained to provide service in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment for others and is identifiable by its vest or harness.

An information session has been scheduled to take place following the school council meeting on [insert date]. A trainer from [insert] will be present to answer any questions that you might have about the training of Guide Dogs / Service Dog.

An orientation session will be provided for all students, to explain the role of Guide Dog / Service Dog as working animals, not pets, and to identify how the Guide Dog / Service Dog will be integrated into our school community.

We respect the needs of all students in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. Please let us know if you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of a Guide Dog / Service Dog in our school.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Sincerely,

Principal



Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Appendix D (1)

Sample Letter Decision Letter Approving Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians/Adult Student

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Dog to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs / acts of daily living.

I wish to confirm approval of your request.

As we have discussed, your child's ability to perform the responsibilities of a Handler, and assessment of benchmarks established for evaluating the effectiveness of the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal in meeting your child's accommodation needs will take place on a regular basis.

You will be responsible for ensuring that the Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal is groomed, has a vest or harness and crate [if necessary], as well as a water bowl. All costs associated will be your responsibility.

If concerns arise regarding the integration of the Guide Dog / Service Dog into the school community and your child's class(es), a meeting will be scheduled to review how the issues might be resolved.

In the event that the Guide Dog / Service Dog engages in behaviour that is distracting, disruptive or aggressive, including making noise, failing to follow commands, growling or nipping, you will be required to remove the Guide Dog / Service Dog from the classroom immediately and you will be required to arrange for the Guide Dog / Service Dog to be removed from the school. In such a case, alternative options for accommodation will be reviewed.

Sincerely,

Principal



Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

Appendix D (2)

Sample Letter Decision Letter Declining Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians/Adult Student

I am writing to communicate the decision regarding your request that your child attend school with a Guide Dog / Service Dog / Service Animal to provide accommodation for disability-related learning needs / acts of daily living.

I wish to communicate that your request is being denied.

As we have discussed, your child is not able to perform the responsibilities of a Handler [and/or the Service Animal is not trained and may be disruptive or a distraction in the school environment], and reasonable alternative accommodations that respect your child's dignity, encourage independence and facilitate integration are available to support your child's learning needs and access to meaningful educational services.

This decision is not subject to appeal; however, if you wish to discuss the alternative accommodation measures available to support your child while at school, please contact me to arrange for a meeting.

Sincerely,

Principal

Date of Issue: September 9, 2019

Effective: Until revoked or modified

Subject: **School Board Policies on Service Animals**

Application: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Executive Director, Provincial and Demonstration Schools
Principals of Elementary Schools
Principals of Secondary Schools

Purpose

All school boards¹ in Ontario are required to develop, implement, and maintain a policy on student use of service animals in schools.² The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards on the development and implementation of their policy. The ministry's expectations regarding the components of a board's policy are identified in this memorandum as well as the implementation and reporting requirements.

School boards are expected to:

- allow a student to be accompanied by a service animal in school when doing so would be an appropriate accommodation to support the student's learning needs and would meet the school board's duty to accommodate students with disabilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- make determinations on whether to approve requests for a service animal on a case-by-case basis, based on the individual needs of each student;
- put in place consistent and transparent processes that allow for meaningful consideration of requests for service animals to accompany students in school.

1. In this memorandum, *school board(s)* and *board(s)* refer to district school boards and school authorities. This memorandum also applies to Provincial and Demonstration Schools.

2. This policy is established under the authority of paragraph 29.5 of subsection 8(1) of the Education Act and school boards are required to develop their policies on service animals in schools in accordance with this policy.

This memorandum applies to all publicly funded elementary and secondary schools, including extended-day programs operated by school boards. However, this memorandum does not apply to licensed child-care providers, including those operating on the premises of publicly funded schools.

Context

The Ministry of Education is committed to supporting school boards in providing appropriate accommodations to all students with demonstrable learning needs, including special education programs and services in Ontario's schools.

The term "service animal" refers to any animal that provides support to a person with a disability. Traditionally, service animals have been dogs, and dogs remain the most common species of service animal; however, other species may also provide services to individuals with disabilities. The types of functions performed by service animals are diverse, and may or may not include sensory, medical, therapeutic, and emotional support services.

In Ontario, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the "AODA") sets out a framework related to the use of service animals by individuals with a disability. The Blind Persons' Rights Act sets out a framework specifically for the use of guide dogs for individuals who are blind.

People with disabilities who use service animals to assist them with disability-related needs are protected under the ground of "disability" in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Under the Human Rights Code, school boards have a duty to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities up to the point of undue hardship. The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities* (2018) states that: "Depending on a student's individual needs and the nature of the education service being provided, accommodations may include . . . modifying 'no pets' policies to allow guide dogs and other service animals."³

Nothing in this memorandum detracts from other legal obligations of school boards under applicable law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code.

3. *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities* (Ontario: Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018), pp. 59–60.

Definition of “Service Animal”

In the context of this memorandum, “service animal” means an animal that provides support relating to a student’s disability to assist that student in meaningfully accessing education. Due consideration should be given to any documentation on how the service animal assists with the student’s learning needs, and disability-related needs (e.g., documentation from the student’s medical professionals).

School boards must make a determination, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether a service animal may accompany a student taking into account all the circumstances, including the needs of the student and the school community and a school board’s obligation to provide meaningful access to education.

School boards may also consider including service animals in training in their service animal policies.

Components of School Board Policies on Service Animals

When developing their policy on student use of service animals, school boards must respect their obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the AODA, the Blind Persons’ Rights Act, and collective agreements as well as other applicable laws and government policies. When developing their policies on student use of service animals, school boards are encouraged to consult with local partners, as appropriate.

Each school board policy on student use of service animals must contain, at a minimum, the following components:

Communication Plan. The school board policy should say how the school board will inform the school community about the process by which parents⁴ can apply to have their child’s service animal in the school. It should also say how it will inform the school community of the presence of any service animals at the school.

Process. The school board policy should lay out how requests for students to be accompanied by service animals in schools can be made and the steps in the school board decision-making process. School board processes must be timely, equitable, and readily available, and decisions must be based on a student’s individual strengths and needs.

4. In this memorandum, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s).

Policies should include the following:

- a clearly articulated process for a parent to follow when making a request for a student to be accompanied by a service animal in school, including:
 - a primary point of contact;
 - supporting materials for initiating requests (e.g., templates);
- information around the process through which a determination is made about whether or not a service animal is an appropriate accommodation. This could include:
 - a meeting or meetings for all appropriate parties (e.g., parents, school staff) to discuss the request for a service animal;
 - a list of documentation that a parent must provide;
 - a list identifying who must be consulted in making the determination;
- information about the factors the board will consider when making a case-by-case determination, including:
 - any documentation on how the service animal supports the student's learning needs and/or disability-related needs, including documentation from the student's medical professionals;
 - the disability-related needs and learning needs of the student;
 - other accommodations available;
 - the rights of other students and the needs of the school community;
 - any training or certification of the service animal;
 - any special considerations that may arise if the animal is a species other than a dog;
- consideration of privacy rights of the student seeking to bring a service animal to school;
- information about how the school board will document its decision regarding a request. For example, if a school board approves a request, that information could be recorded in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), if one exists;
- *if the school board approves a request for a service animal*: a process for developing a plan that addresses:
 - the ongoing documentation required for the animal (e.g., annual vaccination records);
 - the type of support the service animal will provide to the student;
 - who will be the handler of the service animal while at the school;

- a plan for how the care of the animal will be provided (including supporting the safety and biological needs of the animal);
- how the animal will be readily identifiable;
- transportation of the animal to and from school;
- timeline for implementation;
- *if the school board approves a request for a service animal:* strategies for sharing information with members of the broader school community who may be impacted by the decision (e.g., other students, parents, educators, school staff, volunteers, Special Education Advisory Committees) and organizations that use the school facilities (e.g., licensed child-care providers operating in schools of the board), while identifying how the student's privacy will be considered;
- *if the school board denies a request for a service animal:* a statement that the school board will provide a written response to the family that made the request in a timely manner.

Health, Safety, and Other Concerns. The school board policy should include a protocol for the board to hear and address concerns from other students and staff who may come in contact with a service animal, and from parents of other students, including health and safety concerns such as allergies and fear or anxiety associated with the animal. Wherever possible, school boards should take steps to minimize conflict through cooperative problem-solving, and/or other supports which may include training for staff and students.

Roles and Responsibilities. The school board policy should clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, and school staff regarding service animals at school, taking into account local circumstances.

Training. The school board policy should consider strategies for providing training related to service animals, as appropriate, for school staff who have direct contact with service animals in schools.

Review of School Board Service Animal Policies and Data Collection. The school board policy should be reviewed by the board on a regular basis.

School boards are expected to develop a process for data collection and to collect data regularly, including, but not limited to:

- total number of requests for students to be accompanied by service animals;
- whether requests are for elementary or secondary school students;
- the number of requests approved and denied;

- if denied, the rationale for the decision, including a description of other supports and/or services provided to the student to support their access to education;
- species of service animals requested and approved;
- types of needs being supported (e.g., medical, physical, emotional).

School boards should use this data to inform their cyclical policy reviews.

Implementation

School boards must implement and make publicly available on their websites their newly developed or updated policies and procedures on student use of service animals by January 1, 2020.

School Board Reporting

School boards are required to report to the Ministry of Education, upon request, regarding their activities to achieve the expectations outlined in this memorandum. This could include specific data collected.

SEAC Committee and Departmental Priorities*

- Identified students at transition times (high school or post high school) assessments require updating; who is responsible for updating?
- Supports for students transitioning; transition planning; consistency between schools particularly from secondary school to post-secondary options
 - what steps need to be taken
 - what do the teachers need to ensure a smooth transition
 - assessments completed on time
 - family need to know process and next steps
 - identify skills needed to graduate and skills students will need in the future
 - resources to know what to do; a document
- Early identification, early understanding of needs, early plan development, reflection on plan = better services and support for students and families
- Potentially look at transition plans and how they are developed on the IEP; look for best/most effective practices teachers/school staff still need to better understand the special education population = build capacity; particularly as it applies to complex needs
- Consistency between schools - school level to teacher level; experts to share their knowledge on what to look for; training; professional development
- Organizations on SEAC to be asked, what are the most important issues for your group and the needs of our students? eg transitions, transitions for un-diagnosed
- Measuring specific outcomes
- Awareness of elementary to secondary SLIPS (beyond IEP transition planning) and other supports that are being put into place by the system to ensure consistency
- Look at service delivery model of SLPs
- More emphasis on in class instruction
- Children with externalizing behaviours — adaptive and executive function - day treatment program - intensive program w access to many different professionals. need a separate environment to learn
- IEP process streamlined and made easier for parents - streamlined example from Sick Kids - put online
- Asset tagging for SEA equipment - tracking and coding - bar codes that can be scanned and reallocated.
- Town halls and additional opportunities for parental input

From September 2019's SEAC Meeting