

Board of Director's Policy Instruction 600 Series

Policy # 600.7

Animals on Campus

Summary: Animals may be brought into school buildings for educational and disability purposes provided the animal is appropriately trained and cared for.

Animals may be brought into school facilities for educational and disability purposes according to procedures developed by the Executive Director or designee assuring: (a) the animal is appropriately trained, housed, humanely cared for, and properly handled, and (b) students will not be exposed to a dangerous animal or an unhealthy environment and (c) the animal meets the criteria as outlined in the Illinois School Code, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the recommendations from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) .

Animal Experiments

Experiments on living animals are prohibited; however, behavior studies that do not impair an animal's health or safety are permissible.

Animal Dissection

The dissection of dead animals or parts of dead animals shall be allowed in the classroom only when the dissection exercise contributes to or is a part of an illustration of pertinent study materials. All dissection of animals shall be confined to the classroom and must comply with the Illinois School Code.

Parents/guardians may opt a student out of performing, participating in, or observing the dissection of animals. Any such student is excused from classroom attendance without penalty during times when such activities are taking place. No student will be penalized or disciplined for refusing to perform, participate in, or observe a dissection. The school may offer alternative activities to students excused from the dissection of animals.

The Executive Director or designee shall inform parents/guardians of: (1) their right to opt out of performing, participating in, or observing dissection, and (2) which courses contain a dissection unit and which of those courses offers an alternative project.

Use of Therapy Dogs

Each student will be afforded equitable access to social emotional interventions. Therapy dogs are one tool the school may use as part of instructional programming activities such as reading and facilitating social emotional skill building and supporting the social emotional needs of students.

Definitions

Animal assisted therapy can be a goal-driven intervention, which is directed and/or delivered by a health, human, or education service professional and is meant to improve the physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive function of an individual. Animal assisted therapy can also enhance existing academic and social emotional support programs for one or more students.

A *therapy dog* is a dog that has been individually trained, evaluated, and registered with a handler to provide animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy, and animal assisted interactions within a school or other facility. Therapy dogs are not the same as "emotional support animals" nor are they "service animals" as that term is defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The *handler* is an individual school district staff member who has been individually trained, evaluated, and registered with the therapy dog to provide animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy, and animal assisted interactions within a school or other facility. The handler shall assume full responsibility for the therapy dog's care, behavior, and suitability for

interacting with students and others in the school while the therapy dog is on school district property. A therapy dog may have a *primary handler* and a *secondary handler*.

Therapy Dog Standards

The Executive Director or designee will develop procedures and standards that address the following requirements before a therapy dog is considered for approval for use on school property:

- a) Training and Registration
- b) Health and Vaccination
- c) Identification and Control
- d) Allergies and Aversions
- e) Supervision and Care
- f) Insurance Requirements

Exclusion or Removal from School District Property:

A therapy dog may be excluded from school district property if a school administrator determines that: (1) The handler does not have control of the therapy dog; (2) The therapy dog is not housebroken; (3) The therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; or (4) The therapy dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational program. The handler shall immediately remove the therapy dog from school property when instructed to do so by a school administrator.

Student/Staff Notification

The Executive Director or designee shall establish a communications protocol with families and staff regarding the presence of therapy dogs on the school campus. Staff and Students who object to participating in, or interacting with a therapy dog will have the opportunity to opt out of direct contact with the therapy dog. No staff or students who choose to opt out will be penalized or disciplined for refusing to participate in or interact with a therapy dog.

Service Animals

Service animals will be permitted on campus only if the animal meets the requirement of a service animal under Titles II and III of the ADA. A service animal is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Title II and Title III entities must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the school community are allowed to go.

The ADA requires that service animals always be under the control of the handler. In most instances, the handler will be the individual with a disability or a third party who accompanies the individual with a disability. The school may need to provide some assistance to enable a particular student to handle a service animal. The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.

Guidelines

All animals allowed on school campus will follow the guidelines and recommendations of the applicable state and local laws, the ADA and AVMA.

LEGAL REF.:

- 105 ILCS 5/2-3.122, 5/27-14, and 112/
- ADA Requirements: Service Animals
- AVMA Service, Emotional Support, and Therapy Animals