

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PROFESSIONAL THERAPY DOGS

Professional School Therapy Dogs certified with their owners/handlers as Certified Assistance Dog Teams provide emotional and physical support in the educational setting. These highly trained dogs' model good behavior, tolerance and acceptance. All Certified Assistance Dog Teams in the Fairfield Community School District work to support and positively influence student achievement.

Professional Therapy Dog - Definition: Professional Therapy dogs are dogs trained and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the dog as a team. Such dogs, with their handlers, perform such functions in institutional settings, community-based group settings, or when providing services to specific persons who have disabilities.

Professional therapy dogs will be certified using Therapy Dogs International (TDI) or Public Access testing prior to being placed with a school building. This training is the responsibility of the handler. A current certificate of showing active certification should be kept in the handler's building and at the District Offices.

Professional therapy dogs are owned by the Fairfield Community School District employees who wish to use a professional therapy dog to augment building educational programs. They will abide by the Therapy Dog Handler Ethics.

Conditions of Use: Professional therapy dogs may be used in the school setting on a regular basis when the following documentation is in place:

Administrative Approval

- o The use of the animal or animals must be approved by the building administrator and the superintendent of the school district in which the professional therapy dog's handler works. A letter stating this approval should be written and kept on file in the building. A copy should be sent to the District Office.

Health Records and Hygiene/Animal Care

- o The owner/handler must provide a record of annual vaccinations received by the dog and signed by a veterinarian; these health records should be kept on file in the school building and the District Office
 - The dog will receive a Bordatella vaccination annually; rabies vaccinations and five-way wormer/distemper (DHPP) shall be updated every three years. Please note: dogs less than one year of age or receiving their rabies and parvo vaccinations for the first time shall receive a follow-up vaccine in one year, with vaccinations every three years thereafter.
 - The dog will be given an annual comprehensive wormer or fecal check for worms.
 - The dog will be checked for external parasite control.
 - All owners will give preventive parasite (fleas and ticks) control and heart worm medications year-round. Annual tests for heartworm are recommended. The dog will be groomed and bathed regularly.
 - Good judgement should be used based on the dog's hair, skin, and dander conditions.

Documentation

- o The following documents will be up to date and kept on file in the school building and the District Office.
 - A copy of the Therapy Dog International or Public Access certificate of completion.
 - See board policy 606.4A
 - The Professional Therapy Dog guidelines and procedures utilized at the school site (determined by the dog owner/handler).
 - Dates, method, and participants for sharing the guidelines and procedures with staff and students (minimum of once per year)
 - Proof of insurance

Insurance

- o A district employee using a professional therapy dog according to the above guidelines must be covered by their private insurance policy (minimum \$1 million liability coverage).

Pet Visitation Dogs – Definition: A pet visitation dog is a dog owned by a volunteer or student who is not employed by Fairfield Community School District but who has received recognition for volunteer pet visitation. These dogs are not considered to be professional therapy dogs.

For a dog to be used on a Visitation/Volunteer basis, these guidelines must be followed:

- The use of the dog must be approved by the administrator of the building.
- The dog may be used no more often than one visitation per week
- Should the dog be used more often, it must pass all requirements for professional therapy dog status through Therapy Dogs International or Public Access certification.

The following documents for Pet Visitation Dogs will be up to date and kept on file in the school building and the District Office:

- Current veterinary records of worming schedules and annual vaccinations for five-way parvo and Bordatella as well as rabies vaccinations every three years.
- Proof of Insurance
- A letter of approval from the building administrator

The privilege to bring a professional therapy dog or pet visitation dog into the school setting may be terminated should the handler or dog behave in a way deemed unprofessional or unsafe.

Service Animals

- The above guidelines pertain to professional therapy dogs and pet visitation dogs only. For staff and students requiring the assistance of a Service Animal, the District will comply with the Americans with Disabilities act and the Iowa Code Chapter 216C. Also: See Code No. 646

Legal References: Iowa Code § 279.8

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Revised: