

## **Barrington Public Schools Service Animals in Schools Policy**

An individual with a disability is permitted to be accompanied by their service animal on Barrington Public Schools' (BPS) property in accordance with applicable state and federal law, subject to the conditions of this policy. This policy does not cover or allow for the use of therapy animals in schools.

### **A. General**

A "service animal" means a dog that has been trained

- a. as a guide dog;
- b. a hearing dog;
- c. or has been specially trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability other than sight or hearing.

Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition (with the exception of miniature horses in accordance with Section G below). The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

BPS will not allow service animals to remain on BPS property if they are not housebroken or if the service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it. If a service animal is lawfully excluded from BPS property, the individual with a disability served by the animal will be given the opportunity to participate in the program, service or activity without having the service animal on BPS property.

School officials may verify that an animal qualifies as a service animal by asking whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform, if it is not readily apparent. Except as otherwise specified in this policy, school officials will not inquire about the nature or extent of the individual's disability or require the individual to provide documentation that the animal is a service animal. To protect the individual and to adhere to guidelines surrounding service animals, the service animal will wear a vest, or similar article, designating service animal status.

A student with a disability will only be allowed to have an animal other than a service animal as an accommodation in accordance with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. If a student's IEP or Section 504 plan requires the use of an animal other than a service animal, the Director of Pupil Personnel will work with the student and the parents/guardians of the student to create a plan for the animal's care. The student will be primarily responsible for the care and control of any animal used as an accommodation unless otherwise provided in the IEP or Section 504 plan. Similarly, an adult with the need for a service animal will work with the Director of Finance and Administration to create a plan for the service animal. The IEP or 504 team will develop a written, individualized protocol to be provided to staff and school community for successful integration of the service animal.

### **B. Requirements Prior to Bringing a Service Animal on School Property**

1. Prior Written Request: An individual who wishes to be accompanied by their service animal into a school must make a prior written request to the building administrator or designee at least one week prior to bringing the service animal to the school. An

individual who wishes to be accompanied by their service animal to any other school location must make a prior written request to the Superintendent at least one week prior to bringing the service animal to that school location. These requests must be renewed each school year.

2. Vaccination: The service animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal.
3. Health: The service animal must be in good health. The owner or handler of the animal must submit to the building administrator or designee documentation from a licensed veterinarian a current veterinary health certificate and proof of the service animal's current vaccinations and immunizations each school year.
4. Control: All service animals must be under the control of their handlers. Service animals must have a harness, leash, or tether unless the handler is unable to use one or unless the use of a harness, leash, or tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance. Animals that are not harnessed, leashed, or tethered must be under the control of the handler through some other means, such as voice commands or hand signals.

### **C. Supervision and Care of Service Animals**

The owner or handler of a service animal is responsible for the supervision and care of the animal, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up. However, these issues may be addressed by a student's IEP team or Section 504 team where appropriate based on the individual needs of a student.

### **D. Removal of Service Animals from School Property**

A building administrator or designee can require an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from school property under the following circumstances:

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it;
2. The animal is not housebroken;
3. The presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the safety of others; or
4. The presence of an animal would require a fundamental alteration to the service, program, or activity of the school, or school-sponsored events or systems.

If the service animal is removed, the individual with a disability shall be provided with the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without the service animal.

### **E. Damages to a School Property and Injuries**

The owner or handler of a service animal is solely responsible for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the animal.

### **F. Extra Charges**

The owner or handler of a service animal will not be required to pay an extra admission fee or a charge for the service animal to attend school events for which a fee is charged.

### **G. Miniature Horses**

Requests to permit a miniature horse to accompany a student or adult with a disability in school buildings, classrooms, or at school functions, will be handled on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

1. The type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features;
2. Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;
3. Whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and
4. Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.

All additional requirements outlined in this policy applicable to service animals shall also apply to miniature horses.

#### **H. Denial of Access and Grievance**

If a school official denies a request for access to a service animal, the student with a disability or parent or guardian can file a written grievance with the BPS Director of Pupil Personnel Services. If a school official denies an adult request for access to a service animal, the individual with a disability can file a written grievance with the Superintendent.

#### References:

R.I. Gen. Laws § 40-9.1-1.1

Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR Part 35

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