

Instruction

Live Animals in School

The Board of Education (“Board”) shall comply with all laws and regulations regarding the use of service animals by individuals with disabilities, as those terms are defined by federal and state laws and regulations. The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations to address the presence and use of service animals in the Schools.

In all other circumstances, no student shall bring any live animal, whether pet or wild, to any classroom without prior consent of the teacher and the principal, in order to protect both the animal and individuals within the school community.

Teachers may bring and maintain in the school environment goldfish or tropical fish in suitable bowls or tanks, but turtles, birds, snakes, or other animals that might present a health hazard shall not be allowed without the approval of the principal, and then only for class observation and study for a limited period of time.

Science teachers may have animals in appropriate facilities in or adjacent to laboratories for the purpose of class study and experimentation, provided that appropriate state and federal guidelines and/or requirements are followed relative to health and safety of the animals and the school community, and with prior approval of the principal.

Legal References:

State Law:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22-339b

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-44

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-64

Federal law:

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et. seq.

28 C.F.R. § 35.104

28 C.F.R. § 35.136

28 C.F.R. § 36.302(c)

Adopted: March 10, 2026

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

North Canaan, Connecticut

Administrative Regulations - Live Animals in School – Service Animals

I. Introduction district

Service animals - The Board of Education (the “Board”) and Regional School District #1 (the “District”) comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of a disability, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law. Accordingly, the District shall make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices and procedures to permit an individual with a disability to use a service animal on school property and/or at school-sponsored programs or activities in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), applicable state laws and these administrative regulations and the associated policy.

II. Definitions

A. “Service animal” means any dog regardless of breed or size (“service dog”) or miniature horse (“service horse”) that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. In other words, the animal must be required for the individual with a disability and must be individually trained to do work or a task for the individual with a disability.

For purposes of this policy, 1) a service animal is not a pet; 2) companionship, comfort, therapy or emotional support animals do not qualify as service animals; and 3) other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained are not service animals. A service animal includes a service animal in training.

B. “Work or tasks” performed by a service animal include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks; alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds; alerting individuals to the onset of medical conditions; alerting individuals to the presence of allergens; assisting individuals with limited use of their limbs with tasks such as carrying items, opening doors, turning on lights, retrieving items and/or pulling a wheelchair; assisting individuals with intellectual or cognitive disabilities locate places or misplaced items; providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities; and/or performing tasks for individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities such as preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors or reminding an individual to take prescribed medication. The crime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort,

or companionship do not constitute service animal work or tasks for the purposes of this policy.

C. "Service animal handler" is an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal or a third party who accompanies an individual with a disability to assist with them or their service animal. For purposes of this policy, a handler includes a person training a service animal, provided the trainer is employed by and authorized to engage in designated training activities by an organization that trains service animals and complies with the criteria for membership in a professional association of schools that trains service animals and carries photographic identification indicating such employment and authorization, or a person who volunteers for an organization that trains service animals and authorizes such volunteers to raise animals to become service animals, as outlined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-44.

III. Service Dog Access to Board Property, Programs and/or Activities

A. Generally, a service animal shall be permitted to accompany a service animal handler in all areas of District property to the same extent that the service animal handler has the right 1) to be present on school property or facilities; 2) to attend and/or participate in a District-sponsored program or activity, including but not limited to, attending sporting events and student theatrical productions open to the general public; or 3) to be transported in a vehicle operated by or on behalf of the District. Under no circumstances shall a service animal handler be permitted to access a place where the individual would not otherwise be allowed access without the service animal.

B. The District prohibits inquiries of a service animal handler (or parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child) about the nature of the individual's disability. Additionally, District personnel may not ask a service animal handler (or parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child) to pay an additional fee to comply with any condition not outlined in this policy and/or request documentation such as proof of licensure, certification or any other proof of the service animal's training, including, but not limited to, demanding the animal perform a particular task. In instances where it is not readily apparent whether an animal qualifies as a service animal, District personnel may only make the following two inquiries of a handler (or parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child):

1. Is the dog (or miniature horse) a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task(s) has the dog (or miniature horse) been trained to perform?

IV. Management of Service Animals; Responsibilities of Handlers and Liability

A. Service animals are working animals, not pets. Accordingly, service animals should not be petted, provoked or otherwise distracted, including, but not limited to talking to or saying the service animal's name.

B. A service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while on school property or at a school-sponsored program or activity unless such devices interfere with the service animal's work or the handler's disability prevents use of such devices. In that case, the handler must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.

C. A service animal must be under the control of its handler at all times while on District property or at a District-sponsored program or activity. Where a service animal is out of control and the service animal handler does not take effective action to control it, District personnel may request that the service animal be removed from the property or a District-sponsored program or activity. In the event that the service animal handler is unable or unwilling to remove a properly excluded service animal, District personnel are authorized to take appropriate action necessary to remove the service animal and ensure the health and/or safety of individuals attending and/or participating in a District-sponsored program or activity. In certain limited instances (e.g., younger children), the District may provide reasonable accommodations to enable a service animal handler to control the service animal. In such instances, the reasonable accommodations shall be determined on a case-by-case basis at a meeting with school officials, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the service animal handler, where appropriate.

D. All service animals must be housebroken.

E. Service animals are generally the sole responsibility of their handlers, who must take appropriate precautions to prevent damage or injury to persons or property from the actions of their service animals. The District shall not be responsible for the care or supervision of service animals, including but not limited to the cost of veterinary care, supplies or equipment; provision of food and/or water; walking the service animal; responding to the service animal's toileting needs, including accidents; and/or grooming the service animal. Accordingly, handlers (or if a minor, their parent(s)/guardian(s)) are liable for any harm, damage, or injury caused by the service animal to students, staff, visitors, and/or property to the same extent other individuals who cause harm, damage or injury to persons or property are responsible for such harm, damage or injuries.

F. Handlers shall ensure that service animals comply with all generally applicable state and local animal control and public health requirements, including, but not limited to vaccinations registration and/or licensure requirements.

G. All service animals should be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander, where possible. All service animals should be treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks.

V. Students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) and/or Section 504 Plans

An inquiry by a planning and placement team (“PPT”) and/or Section 504 team concerning whether a service animal is necessary for a student with a disability to receive a free and appropriate public education (“FAPE”) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is separate from the analysis and inquiry related to service animals under the ADA and applicable state laws. Any decisions with respect to whether a service animal is necessary in order to provide a student FAPE will be made by the student’s PPT or Section 504 team, as applicable. Where a service animal is not required for a student with a disability to receive a FAPE, the District shall permit the use of a service animal in the District’s programs or activities in accordance with the law, these administrative regulations and the associated policy.

VI. Exclusion and/or Removal of a Service Animal

A. The District shall not exclude a service animal based on assumptions or stereotypes or general fears about how a service animal or particular breed of dog might behave. However, a school official may ask a service animal handler to remove a service animal from District property, or a District-sponsored program or activity in the event of one of the following:

1. The service animal is not under control and the service animal’s handler does not take effective action to control it;
2. The service animal is not housebroken;
3. The service animal’s presence would “fundamentally alter” the nature of the service, program, or activity; and/or
4. The service animal’s actual behavior poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications to policies, practices or procedures; or has a history of such behavior.

B. Where a service animal is properly excluded, the District shall permit the service animal handler to remain on District property and/or participate in the District-sponsored program or activity without the service animal unless such service animal handler otherwise violated a District policy or state or federal law which warrants the removal of the individual. In the event that the service animal handler is unable or unwilling to remove a properly excluded animal, District personnel are authorized to take appropriate action necessary to remove the service animal and ensure the health and/or safety of individuals attending and/or participating in a District-sponsored program or activity.

VII. Special Provisions Applicable to Service Horses

A. The District shall modify its policies, practices or procedures to permit a service animal handler to use miniature horses, where reasonable. In determining whether reasonable modifications can be made to allow a service horse into a specific facility, the Board shall consider:

1. Whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight;
2. Whether the service animal handler has 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.

B. The District shall promptly notify a service animal handler (or parent(s)/guardian(s) in the case of a young child) in writing whether reasonable modifications may be made to permit a service horse into a specific facility.

VIII. Conflicting Disabilities

A. In instances where an individual has an allergy significant to qualify as a disability, or has another disability that conflicts with the disability requiring the use of a service animal, the individual (or parent/guardian) shall immediately notify a building administrator or the school official in charge of District-sponsored program or activity. The District, through its administration, shall consider the needs of each individual and balance the rights of the individuals involved. The District shall work to resolve the conflict as efficiently and expeditiously as possible in order to meet its obligations to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities.

IX. Grievances

A. Any person who believes s/he has been discriminated against because of their disability by a Board personnel or student, or has been aggrieved by a decision concerning a service animal may file a complaint or appeal to:

Melony Brady-Shanley, Superintendent of Schools
246 Warren Turnpike Road Falls Village, CT 06031
mbrady-shanley@region1schools.org
860-824-0855

Legal References:

State Law:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22-339b

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-44

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46a-64

Federal law:

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et. seq.

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