

ERVING SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

The Erving School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a “service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” The regulations further state that “a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.”

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- ◆ Assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as “seeing eye dogs” or guide dogs.”
- ◆ Alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- ◆ Pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- ◆ Assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately.

In accordance with the ADA, the District may be required to provide reasonable accommodations to student(s) which may include the use of service animals.

The District recognizes that having individuals within the building or those being transported by the school who suffer from allergies are not a valid reason for denying access or refusing services to people using service animals. When individuals with allergies are in the school at the same time as a people using service animals, the District will accommodate the allergy sufferers, if possible, by separating them in different locations within the room or different rooms in the school. In the case of transportation, the District will make reasonable efforts to accommodate allergy sufferers, if possible, by separating them on the vehicle or by transporting them on a different vehicle.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance dog in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

SOURCE: MASC February 2011
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