

The intent of this policy is to clarify the definition and the use of assistance and professional therapy dogs in USD 383. Except as provided in policy ING, the only dogs allowed in USD 383 schools are assistance dogs and professional therapy dogs.

Definitions

Assistance dog - any guide dog, hearing assistance dog or service dog.

- a. Guide dog - a dog which has been specially selected, trained and tested for the purpose of guiding a person who is legally blind.
- b. Hearing assistance dog - a dog which is specially selected, trained and tested to alert or warn individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to specific sounds.
- c. Service dog - a dog which has been specially selected, trained and tested to perform a variety of tasks for persons with disabilities. These tasks include, but are not limited to: pulling wheelchairs, lending balance support, picking up dropped objects or providing assistance in, or to avoid, a medical crisis, or to otherwise mitigate the effects of a disability.

Professional therapy dog - a dog which is selected, 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, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession. 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 dog" does not include dogs, certified or not, which are used by volunteers for pet visitation therapy.

Other dogs - dogs that are not an assistance dog or a professional therapy dog will be subject to policy ING – Animals and Plants in the School.

Bite - defined as the dog's teeth having broken the skin or caused a bruise.

Dog Handler - a person who is a certificated/licensed staff member (permanent employee) within the USD 383 school system who has been trained and tested as part of a professional therapy dog team by an organization approved by the superintendent.

Professional Therapy Dog Team - a dog handler and a professional therapy dog; both of which have been trained and tested as a professional therapy dog team by an organization approved by the superintendent.

Clarification of Rights

Kansas State Law does not provide professional therapy dogs and their handlers the same rights of access as people with disabilities who use assistance dogs.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is entitled to take an assistance dog with him or her wherever it is needed.

A professional therapy dog performs its tasks by permission or invitation. Before a professional therapy dog can begin doing its job within a USD 383 facility, the professional therapy dog team must meet all prerequisites and obtain prior permissions in accordance with *Guidelines for Professional Therapy Dogs in USD 383 Schools*.

Individuals with Dog Allergies

A person with a disability is entitled to take an assistance dog with him or her wherever it is needed and this right takes precedent over the rights of others having allergies to dogs. However, the rights of those who are allergic to dogs outweigh those of the professional therapy dog team.

Whenever assistance and professional therapy dogs are close enough to create an allergic reaction, it is the responsibility of the principal to implement an allergen precaution protocol consisting, but not limited to, one or more of the following:

- 1) Large HEPA filters are installed in relevant spaces, run continuously in the allergen mode, and are cleaned regularly with all filters replaced.
- 2) Relevant spaces are cleaned nightly, including thorough vacuuming and disinfecting.
- 3) Schedules of individuals with allergies and those with dogs will be adjusted to eliminate or reduce contact, with priority given to an individual with an assistance dog over the individual with allergies, and the individual with allergies over the professional therapy dog team.

Concerns about an allergen precaution protocol should be presented to the principal. If unresolved at the building level, an appeal can be made in writing to the superintendent. The superintendent will examine the circumstances and provide a written response to the appeal.

Assistance Dog

Assistance dogs may be permitted in the schools and on school property in accordance with board-approved guidelines and may be used by employees, patrons, and students. In order for the district to accommodate the health and safety of students and staff, while maintaining educational services, programs, and activities, employees and students are encouraged to notify their principal prior to bringing an assistance dog to school for the first time. Patrons or individuals attending functions or having short-term business on school property are not required to provide advance notice to school staff in order to be accompanied by an assistance dog on school property.

Access to school buildings will not be denied to an assistance dog as long as the animal is individually trained and required to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Such work or tasks must be directly related to the individual's disability. District staff shall not be responsible to provide care or control of an assistance dog, and any assistance dog which is out of control or is not housebroken may be excluded by district staff.

Professional Therapy Dog

Professional therapy dogs certified with their owners/handlers as professional therapy dog teams provide emotional and physical support in the educational setting.

Professional therapy dogs may be permitted in the schools and on school property in accordance with board-approved guidelines including, but not limited to, *Guidelines for Professional Therapy Dogs in USD 383 Schools*.

Approved: 7/09; Revised 6/19

Guidelines for Professional Therapy Dogs in USD 383 Schools

(Policy INH: Canine Assistance)

I. PURPOSE

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, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession.

To protect the health and safety of students and staff, access to USD 383 schools will only be granted to professional therapy dog teams that meet all prerequisites and obtain prior permission from the principal and superintendent.

II. PREREQUISITES AND PERMISSIONS

A. Completed *Professional Therapy Dog Vital Information* form, including:

1. Professional therapy dog and handler's certification date and name of certifying organization.
2. Veterinarian verification of health check.

B. Completed *Professional Therapy Dog Checklist of Information for Principal and Superintendent Files* form, including:

1. Public Access Test documentation
2. Health records
3. Administrative approval from principal and superintendent

C. Evidence must be provided that the professional therapy dog is owned and/or handled by a professional educator in USD 383 who wishes to use the professional therapy dog to augment his/her educational program.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Superintendent

1. Approve or deny, with principal, applications for professional therapy dog teams in USD 383 schools.

2. Keep on file copy of completed *Professional Therapy Dog Vital Information* and *Professional Therapy Dog Checklist of Information for Principal and Superintendent Files* forms for each professional therapy dog team.
3. Create and maintain a list of approved professional therapy dog teams.
4. Implement and enforce guidelines for professional therapy dogs in USD 383 schools.

B. Principal

1. Approve or deny, with superintendent, applications for professional therapy dog teams in his/her school.
2. Keep on file copy of completed *Professional Therapy Dog Vital Information* and *Professional Therapy Dog Checklist of Information for Principal and Superintendent Files* forms for each professional therapy dog team in his/her school.
3. Maintain a list of approved professional therapy dog teams in his/her school.
4. Implement and enforce guidelines for professional therapy dogs in his/her school.
5. If a principal intends to be a professional therapy dog handler, all district policies and guidelines will apply, and the application process will be conducted by the superintendent. Approval and other enforcement of the policy with the principal would be done by the superintendent.

C. Certified/Licensed Staff on Professional Therapy Dog Team

1. Only teachers, counselors, or certified/licensed staff of USD 383 will be allowed as part of a professional therapy dog team.
2. A dog handler should be very aware of the dog and its level of stress, the situations where inappropriate handling may occur, if the dog may not be feeling well that day, etc. and be able to remove the dog and allow it rest or a respite as needed. They are a “team,” and much responsibility is on the dog handler to anticipate problems before they arise.

3. A professional therapy dog must be accompanied by its dog handler when on site unless in its crate or a locked office for rest and respite.
4. The dog handler shall be responsible for any property damage caused by the professional therapy dog.
5. While on school property, the dog handler is the one to take the professional therapy dog outside to go to the relief area and is the one to clean up immediately afterwards.
6. The dog handler must adhere to *Professional Therapy Dog Ethics and Safety Standards for USD 383*.
7. Before bringing the professional therapy dog to work at a school for the first time, the handler must receive written approval from the principal and the superintendent.

Note: With adoption of these guidelines, there may be changes in some schools from previous years.

There is no grandfathering of dog handlers or dogs with this policy. To achieve complete uniformity and safety for students and staff, all professional therapy dog teams must go through this process to be eligible for the privilege of access to USD 383 schools.

Professional Therapy Dog VITAL INFORMATION

All documentation to be filed in the building(s) in which the Professional Therapy Dog Team works and with the Superintendent. This form will be completed yearly.

Professional Dog Owner _____

Professional Dog Handler(s) _____

Professional Therapy Dog _____

School(s) in which dog will be used _____

Dog and Handler's Certification Date _____

Name of Organization Certifying _____

Emergency Contact (Name and Phone Number) for the Owner of the Dog:

Professional Therapy Dog's Veterinarian and Phone Number:

Dog's Date of Birth _____ Date of Last Health Check _____

Annual Worm Check _____ Parvo/Distemper Date _____

Rabies Vaccination Date _____

Verification that preventive parasite control (fleas and ticks) as well as heartworm medication is given year-round.

Owner's Signature

Date

Veterinarian's Signature

Date

**Professional Therapy Dog
CHECKLIST OF INFORMATION FOR PRINCIPAL
AND SUPERINTENDENT FILES**

Professional Dog Owner _____

Professional Dog Handler(s) _____

Professional Therapy Dog _____

School(s) in which dog will be used _____

- Administrative Approval - A signed statement of approval from the principal and superintendent for use of the Professional Therapy Dog.

- Health Records - A copy of annual vaccinations and exams signed by the veterinarian.
Note: It is expected that all owners will use year-round preventative medication for heartworm and external parasites.

- Public Access Test Documentation - A certificate certifying that the handler and dog both passed the Public Access Test must be provided

- Current Certification Date: _____

Dog Owner's Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

Superintendent's Signature

Date

Professional Therapy Dog ETHICS AND SAFETY STANDARDS FOR USD 383

1. Handlers should evaluate their dog's health and attitude before each working day. If a dog is injured, it should stay home. If a dog has been sick in the last 24 hours, it should stay home.
2. Administrators and dog handlers should be aware of the following signs of stress (these are some but not all):
 - ✓ Excessive panting;
 - ✓ Dog jumps or climbs on handler for security;
 - ✓ Dog hides or cowers behind handler or furniture;
 - ✓ Shaking, tremors, or ears and tail pressed close to body;
 - ✓ Yawning and changes in facial expression; tension in body;
 - ✓ Dog looks for doorway or other escape route;
 - ✓ Snapping and growling; and
 - ✓ Noticeable change in behavior and/or decreased desire to socialize.

When these behaviors become noticeable or on going, the handler and/or administrator should call a trainer to come to the school site and observe the dog. Too much stress in the dog can lead to aggressive behavior. Being proactive can prevent a potentially dangerous situation.

3. The dog should be kept on a short leash (not retractable) when moving through the halls. It is permissible for the dog to be off the leash while in a closely supervised situation where it is working. The professional therapy dog must be accompanied by its dog handler when on site unless in its crate or locked office for rest and respite.
4. When the dog is left unattended, it should be put in a crate with the door latched. This protects the safety of the dog.
5. The dog should be clean and well-groomed. Teeth should be clean with no noticeable tartar buildup to model an image of health and well-being.
6. The dog handlers should always clean up after the dog, inside or outside the facility.

7. Give verbal commands firmly and calmly. Praise the dog for exemplary behavior.
8. Dog “kisses” are discouraged.
9. Be aware of small items dropped on the floor. Do not allow the dog to rummage through trash containers. Use the “leave it” command if this situation arises.
10. Be aware and courteous of the places your dog is welcome or allowed in each facility. Students should be taught to “smile and wave” (or other quiet greeting) at the dog in the hall or other less-structured environments to alleviate disruption of students’ attention and conduct.
11. When treats are used under the supervision of the handler, students should be taught to give the treat with a flat hand or drop the treat on the ground so that fingers will not accidentally get caught in the dog’s mouth.
12. In the event that a student and/or staff may be allergic to dogs, the site administrator will work with all parties to resolve the concern.
13. Avoid putting the dog in a questionable or threatening situation.
14. A dog bite is defined as the dog’s teeth having broken the skin or caused a bruise.
15. Bite policy - If a professional therapy dog bites a person or another animal, the dog on that team will not be allowed back to any USD 383 facility. The principal will document the incident, withdraw approval of the application, and send a letter to the dog handler. The principal will keep all dog bite documentation in the school file and will also forward a copy to the Superintendent’s Office where it will be kept on file.