

## 385 USE OF SERVICE DOGS

### Background

The Division supports the use of Service Dogs as an intervention strategy recognized as an aid to students with special needs.

The *Alberta Service Dogs Act* defines a Service Dog as an animal that has been trained by an Assistance Dogs International accredited school and that carries a Government of Alberta Identification Card as proof of qualification. Service Dogs are working animals that are allowed full public access in Alberta and are trained to meet specific needs of students whom they have been partnered. Service Dogs may provide services to students diagnosed with disabilities as defined by the *Alberta Human Rights Act- Section 10 (1)* such as physical disabilities, blind or low vision, deaf/hearing impaired, autism spectrum disorder, or a seizure disorder. The Service Dog Act website (through Alberta Human Services - [Service Alberta](#)) outlines the specific required information. All accredited schools are listed on the [ADI website](#).

### Procedures

#### 1. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

The parent/guardian(s) shall:

- a. provide a letter outlining the benefits of having the Service Dog attend with their child, description of the Service Dog's intended activities, and the duration of the support.
- b. complete the *Request for a Certified Service Dog* form and attach it to the aforementioned letter.
- c. provide a letter from a physician confirming that the student's need for the use of a Service Dog in school is essential and directly related to the learning needs of the student.
- d. ensure that the Service Dog meets the qualification requirements under the *Alberta Service Dogs Qualifications Regulations* which reads as follows:
  - i. *A dog that has qualifications resulting from the successful completion of a training program delivered by a school or institution approved by Assistance Dogs International, Inc.,*

*or*

*has passed a challenge test established or approved by the Minister,*

- ii. *Has the qualifications of a Service Dog for the purpose of the Act.*
- e. provide a copy of the Service Dog Team Identification Card issued by the Government of Alberta. All financial costs to obtain this card are the sole responsibility of the family.
- f. provide up-to-date proof of vaccinations, licensing, insurance and ensure the dog is in good health. This must be done annually if the dog is accepted into the school to ensure continued eligibility. Parents are required to provide proof that their Home Insurance Policy states that coverage is extended to include the actions of the dog, and must be a minimum of two million dollars general liability coverage.
- g. complete the attached Management Plan for the Care of the Service Dog form, that provides for the personal care and physical needs of the Service Dog. This includes the need for “bio-breaks”, disposal of waste, provision of food, water, and a kennel.
- h. work with the school principal to schedule training for the student’s school team by the Service Dog organization in order to educate the student body in the school about the role of the Service Dog and the rules of conduct concerning the dog. This process will be ongoing as staff changes, grade changes, and other circumstances warrant additional training.
- i. provide the school with signage (generally provided by the Service Dog organization) alerting visitors and emergency service providers to the Service Dog’s presence.
- j. pay for any financial implications regarding the training, use and care of the Service Dog.
- k. parents or guardians of students eligible for transportation services must contact the transportation coordinator to ensure all bus policies are followed when transporting the student and dog to and from school on the school bus.

## **2. Principal’s Responsibilities**

The principal shall:

- a. provide a copy of the Canadian Rockies Service Dog Administrative Procedure 385 to the parent/guardian of the school
- b. inform the Superintendent that a written request has been made for Service Dog admittance to a school.
- c. ensure that the use of a Service Dog is consistent with the needs or

recommendations of the student's Student Learning Plan and physician.

- d. consult with the Superintendent and school staff prior to meeting with the family.
- e. conduct a case conference involving parents, teacher(s), Special Education personnel, education assistants, a representative of the Service Dog organization, and appropriate Student Services personnel to discuss the following:
  - i. review the purpose and function of the Service Dog in relation to successful learning and/or safety for the student.
  - ii. clarify all responsibilities of the family, school, and district.
  - iii. transportation of the student and Service Dog.
  - iv. who will accompany and handle the Service Dog both inside and outside the school, and what arrangements have been made with regard to alternate handlers when necessary.
  - v. other concerns including, but not limited to: interference with delivery of an educational program, possible changes to in-class routines and procedures, increased demands on staff, other children who are allergic to dogs, recognition of children with fear of dogs, cultural sensitivities to groups that will not share space with an animal.
  - vi. development of a comprehensive transition plan for the introduction of the dog which may involve the use of social stories, visits by the dog to the school and classroom, etc.
- f. inform school staff, school council representatives and parents of the potential arrival of a Service Dog to the school.
- g. send a specific letter home to the parents of students who will be in any of the classes or classrooms where the working Service Dog will possibly be present in case of allergies, anxieties or other concerns.
- h. send a letter to the school community in general that a working Service Dog will be entering the school setting. This communication will be sent early in the process to determine alternative arrangements that may be necessary to reasonably accommodate students or staff members.
- i. work with appropriate personnel to revise emergency and safety procedures, as required, to include the Service Dog.
- j. ensure that the working Service Dog is incorporated into the SLP of the student as appropriate.

### 3. Procedures

- a. The principal, parent/guardian(s), teacher(s) and other staff will work collaboratively to create a transition plan to assist in a successful integration of a working Service Dog into the school environment. This transition plan will:
  - i. provide for the working Service Dog to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site.
  - ii. establish who will accompany and handle the working Service Dog with the student
  - iii. establish considerations and protocols for seasonal changes and inclement weather
  - iv. establish the safest and most environmentally sound place for the working Service Dog to relieve itself and who will be responsible for removal and disposal of animal waste
  - v. establish how parents/guardians will supply suitable containers for animal waste.
  - vi. arrange for the training to instruct the support staff and teacher on the proper procedure regarding the working Service Dog (example: specific commands, skills, etc.).
  - vii. establish any necessary changes to routines, procedures, or programming needs to be made prior to the working Service Dog's entry.
  - viii. establish rules of conduct around the working Service Dog for the students, staff and the public.
  - ix. this plan will be put into writing, signed by all parties and placed in the Student Record. A copy will be supplied to the parents.
- b. At the end of each year, the student's learning team will review the student's program needs related to the Service Dog. This includes the school's input with regard to monitoring the Service Dog's capacity to provide the target service. Decisions regarding the appropriate use of the Service Dog, program planning, and training will be considered. If the Service Dog is deemed essential, comprehensive transition planning for future teachers, staff, students, transportation providers and the wider community will occur.
- c. On occasion, circumstances of possible conflicting rights may occur. Employees, students or parents/guardians of students with medical issues that are impacted by animals (such as respiratory diseases) should contact the school principal if they have a concern about exposure to a Service Dog. That individual will be asked to provide medical documentation that identifies the disability and the need for an accommodation. The school principal will facilitate a process to

resolve the conflict that considers the conflicting needs/accommodation of all persons involved.

- d. Any student or parent/guardian of a student with a Service Dog who is aggrieved by the school principal's decision to remove, limit or exclude a Service Dog may appeal that decision to the Superintendent of the District. The appeal must be in writing and must provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal.
- e. A copy of all Service Dog request documentation will be placed in the Student Record of the student requiring the Service Dog.

## Forms

(Appendix A) Parent / Guardian Request for a Service Dog  
(Appendix B) Management Plan for the Care of the Service Dog  
(Appendix C) Sample Letter to School Community  
(Appendix D) Sample Letter to Families in Specific Classrooms

## References

Section 11,53,197

Legal references:

Human Rights Act: [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/570.cfm?frm\\_isbn=9780779752904&search\\_by=link](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/570.cfm?frm_isbn=9780779752904&search_by=link)

Alberta Service Dogs Act: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/service-dogs.html>

## History

Developed: January 2017  
Amended: February 2020

## APPENDIX A PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUEST FOR A SERVICE DOG

Student Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Given Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (year/mo/day): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (choose) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Co: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: \_\_\_\_\_

As parent/guardian of the above named student, I / we request that the student be allowed to use a Service Dog at school and at school-related activities.

### REASON FOR REQUESTING A CERTIFIED SERVICE DOG

The Service Dog will provide the student with the following assistance: (attach documentation as necessary)

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Length of time the student and Service Dog have worked together.

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Duration of the requested support?

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Additional information that will assist the principal (e.g. safety, behaviour, or temperament of the dog).

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**Documentation submitted with this request:**

<input type="checkbox"/> A letter outlining the benefits of having the Service Dog attend with their child, descriptions of the services dog's intended activities and the duration of the support.
<input type="checkbox"/> A letter from a physician confirming that the student's need for the use of a Service Dog in school is essential and directly related to the learning needs of the student.
<input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the Service Dog Team Identification Card issued by the Government of Alberta.
<input type="checkbox"/> Up-to-date proof of vaccinations, licensing and insurance. This must be done annually if the dog is accepted in the school to ensure continued eligibility.
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of training certification of individual responsible for the dog and trainer's certification.

**Request Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Principal*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Superintendent*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Request Not Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Principal*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Superintendent*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I / We acknowledge and understand that it is our responsibility to:**

- a) provide the principal with all required documentation, reports, certificates including:
  - i. Physician letter confirming need for a Service Dog
  - ii. Copy of the Service Dog Team Identification Card.
  - iii. Up-to-date proof of vaccinations, licensing, insurance.
- b) assume financial responsibility for the Service Dog training, vet care, licensing, etc.
- c) participate in a school case conference meeting to inform the principal of all relevant information that may affect our child, other students, staff and/or visitors to the school.
- d) assist the principal to communicate relevant information to the school community.
- e) work cooperatively with school staff to make this accommodation a success.
- f) organize or cooperate with the District to arrange appropriate transportation.
- g) provide the required equipment and dog care items.
- h) provide food, water, kennel and "bio-breaks" to the Service Dog as required and remove and dispose of animal waste.
- i) remove the dog immediately from the school, should the Service Dog exhibit any unprovoked behaviours (biting, nipping, etc.) until the plan is re-evaluated.

**I / We have read the above information and agree with the above conditions. Further, I / we give**

**permission for information concerning the Service Dog to be shared with the school community.**

Signature of Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FOIP: This personal information is collected under Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used for such purposes.



## APPENDIX B

### Administrative Procedure 385

#### SAMPLE LETTER TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

*Date*

Dear Parent / Guardian:

I am writing to advise that there will be a Service Dog arriving in our school to assist one of our students.

This Service Dog is a highly trained companion and is able to assist in many of the daily school routines and activities which may pose challenges for this student. Service Dogs are comparable to Guide Service Dogs and are included in aspects of the student's life at home and at school. The child's right to have a Service Dog is protected under Alberta Human Rights legislation and the *Service Dogs Act*, and implementation is defined by Canadian Rockies Public Schools policy.

There will be information sessions for all school staff and students to ensure a smooth integration of the Service Dog into our daily routines. All of our students and staff will be instructed as to the proper procedure regarding interactions with this dog as it is a working Service Dog and not a pet while at school. The provision of a Service Dog will be a significant benefit to the student, and we look forward to a lot of growth and learning together.

Thank you for your understanding, support, and interest. Should you have any questions please review the Canadian Rockies Public Schools Administrative Procedure 385 online at [www.crps.ca](http://www.crps.ca) or contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Principal

cc: Superintendent, Classroom Teacher, Learning Support Teacher

## APPENDIX C

### Administrative Procedure 385

#### SAMPLE LETTER TO THE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN IN THE CLASS(ES) (SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

*Date*

Dear Parent / Guardian:

I am writing to advise that there will be a Service Dog coming into our school to assist one of our students, and that this student and the Service Dog will be a part of your child's class. This Service Dog is a highly trained companion and is able to assist in many of the routine activities which may pose some challenges for this student. Service Dogs are comparable to a Guide Service Dog and are included in every aspect of the student's life. The child's right to have a Service Dog is protected under Alberta Human Rights legislation and the *Service Dogs Act*. Implementation is defined by Canadian Rockies Public Schools policy.

There will be information sessions to integrate the Service Dog into the classroom and school routines, and all of our students will be instructed as to the proper procedure around the Service Dog. They will be informed that the Service Dog is a working Service Dog and not a pet while at school.

If you have any questions or specific concerns regarding the presence of the Service Dog in your child's class, please review the Canadian Rockies Public Schools Administrative Procedure 385 online at [www.crps.ca](http://www.crps.ca) or contact me directly.

Thank you for your understanding, support, and interest.

Sincerely,

Principal

cc: Superintendent, Classroom Teacher, Learning Support Teacher

## APPENDIX D

### MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CARE OF THE SERVICE DOG

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Dog: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of individual(s) responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan for the care of the Service Dog:
1)
2)
3)

*Note: Responsibility for care of the dog rests with the individual(s) listed above, **not** Canadian Rockies Public School Staff.*

**WATER NEEDS / DIETARY NEEDS:** (e.g. provision of food or water bowl, procedures for use, cleaning, etc.)

**BLADDER/BOWEL NEEDS OF DOG** (e.g. frequency, location, disposal, etc.)

Other Considerations	Response
1. Rest periods away from “work”:	
2. Hot Weather:	
3. Winter Weather:	
4. Additional Considerations:	

**Parent/Guardian or Staff:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Person(s) responsible for the care of dog:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal / Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_