

THERAPY DOGS IN SCHOOL STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

NEPN/NSBA Code: IMGB-R

The following requirements must be satisfied before a therapy dog will be allowed in the school building or on school property.

Request: A handler who wishes to bring a therapy dog on school property shall submit a completed written request form to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee for approval. The request shall be submitted for approval each school year. Such approval may be rescinded at any time at the sole direction of the Superintendent. Once the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee approves the request, a plan for dog visits shall be developed with the Principal or the Principal's designee.

Training and Registration: The handler shall submit proof of registration as a therapy dog handler with each individual therapy dog he/she plans to bring to the school. Such registration shall be from a therapy dog registering organization as approved by the Superintendent. The registration shall remain current and in good standing at all times.

Health and Vaccination: The handler shall submit proof from a licensed veterinarian that the therapy dog is in good health and has been immunized against diseases common to dogs. Such vaccinations shall be kept current and up-to-date at all times.

Licensing: The handler shall submit proof of licensure from their local dog licensing authority.

Insurance: The handler must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the work of the handler and therapy dog while the two are on school property. The handler will submit the Certificate of Insurance in the amount of \$1 million General Liability coverage with \$2 million aggregate and naming RSU 78 as an additional insured.

Identification: The therapy dog shall wear appropriate identification issued by the registering organization identifying them as a therapy dog.

Health and Safety: The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog does not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school and that the therapy dog is brought to the school only when properly groomed, bathed, free of illness or injury and of the temperament appropriate for working with children and others in the school. The school will alert all staff, students and families of the expected presence of the therapy dog.

Control: The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog wears a collar or harness and a leash no longer than four feet and shall maintain control of the therapy dog by holding the leash at all times that the therapy dog is on school property, including during breaks, unless holding such leash would interfere with the therapy dog's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the handler shall maintain control of the therapy dog at all times and shall not tether the therapy dog to any individual or object.

Supervision and Care of Therapy Dog: The handler shall be solely responsible for the supervision and humane care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and cleaning up after the therapy dog while the dog is on school property and shall not leave the therapy dog unsupervised or alone on school property at any time. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance to the therapy dog.

Authorized Area(s): The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog has access to only such areas of the school building or school property that have been authorized by the school administrators.

Allergies and Aversions: The handler shall remove the therapy dog to a separate area as designated by the school administrator in such instances where any student or school employee who suffers dog allergies or aversions is present in an office, hallway or classroom. The handler will meet with the Principal and School Nurse to discuss any expected allergies and steps that will be taken to limit, if necessary, a therapy dog's access to certain building areas.

Damages and Injuries: The Handler shall assume full responsibility and liability for any damage to school property or injury to staff, students, or others in the school caused by the therapy dog.

Exclusion or Removal from School Property: A therapy dog may be excluded from school property if a school administrator determines that 1) the handler does not have control of the therapy dog; 2) the therapy dog is not housebroken; 3) the therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; 4) the therapy dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational program. The handler shall immediately remove his/her therapy dog from school property when instructed to do so by a school administrator.

Legal Reference: Agriculture and Animals §3961 Reimbursement for damage done by animals.

Adopted: 3.8.2022