



## **Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property**

Under the proper conditions, animals can be an effective teaching aid. Additionally, there are situations when federal and state statutes allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals onto District premises.

Portland Public Schools recognizes that there are medical and physical risks associated with animals, both wild and domesticated, in the classroom and/or on school property.

The following guidelines apply to all animals in the classroom or on school property.

### **I. Definitions**

- A. “Animal(s)” means live vertebrates such as mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and amphibians. Examples: dogs, rats, red racer snakes, cats. The term “animals” includes “service animals” and “animal visitors”.
- B. “Animal visitors” means any animal that is not a service animal.
- C. “Individual with a disability” (or “student with a disability”) means a person with a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity and has the same meaning as under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
- D. “Poisonous animal” means an animal which delivers its poison through bite or scratch in amounts sufficient to cause humans sickness, extreme pain or death. Examples: rattlesnake, brown recluse spider.
- E. “Service animal” means any dog that is individually trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.
  - (1) The definition of “service animal” does not include other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained.
  - (2) The “work” or “tasks” performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to: assisting an individual who is blind or who has low vision with navigation; alerting an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds; providing non-violent protection or rescue work; pulling a wheelchair; assisting an individual during a seizure; alerting individuals to the presence of allergens; retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone; providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with



**Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property**

mobility impairments; and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The provision of emotional support does not constitute work or tasks of a service animal.

- (3) Requests for use of miniature horses will be handled in the same way as for service animals and the same requirements apply. The district may also consider: the type, size and weight of the animal and whether the school can accommodate these features; whether the handler has sufficient control of the animal; and whether the animal's presence in a specific school or school location compromises legitimate safety interests that are necessary for safe operation.

F. "Wild animal" means an animal not commonly domesticated and includes birds, reptiles and amphibians. Examples: raccoon, robin.

**II. Access for Service Animals**

A. Students: Parents may request use of a service animal by a student to a building principal. The district will respond to requests for student use of service animals at school on a case-by-case basis using the following procedures:

- (1) If a parent makes a request to a staff person for the use of a service animal by a disabled student, the staff person will notify the principal or designee. The principal or designee will forward the request to district administrator responsible for special education or Section 504 compliance, as applicable.
- (2) The district will hold a meeting with the family to consider the request in light of all relevant information. The meeting will be held within a reasonable time following the request, typically within two weeks.
  - (a) For students who are eligible under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the team will consist of the student's IEP (Individual Education Plan) team along with any other individuals with specialized knowledge regarding the student's disability and/or the training and capabilities of the service animal.
  - (b) For students who are eligible under Section 504 only, the team will consist of the student's Section 504 team along with any



## Administrative Directive 3.80.011-AD

### Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property

other individuals with specialized knowledge regarding the student's disability and/or the training and capabilities of the service animal.

- (3) The district will determine whether the animal in question meets the definition of a service animal. District staff may ask about what work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform for the individual with a disability if not readily apparent.
  - (4) If the district determines that the animal is a service animal, the meeting participants will then consider whether allowing the student's use of the service animal at school is required because:
    - (a) The use is a required or necessary accommodation under the ADA; or
    - (b) The student's use of a service animal at school is a necessary accommodation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the student under the IDEA or Section 504, as applicable.
  - (5) The district will provide parents with results of the determination under the ADA, the IDEA and Section 504, as applicable, and notice of rights as applicable.
- B. Employees: The district will consider allowing employees with disabilities to use a service animal at work as a reasonable accommodation, unless doing so would result in an undue business hardship.
- (1) The district will follow the procedures determined by the Human Resources Department to evaluate the request for accommodation. During the interactive process with the employee regarding the request to bring a service animal to work, the district may request documentation or demonstration of the need for a service animal, that the service animal is trained and that the service animal will not disrupt the workplace.
  - (2) If the accommodation request to bring a service animal to work is granted, the employee is responsible for taking care of the service animal, including making sure the animal is not disruptive, providing veterinary care and taking the animal outside when necessary to relieve itself.

### III. Rules and Responsibilities for Use of Service Animals at School, on School Grounds, and at School Functions



**Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property**

- A. PPS is not responsible for the care or supervision of the service animal.
- B. The service animal must be under the control of a handler at all times by means of a harness, leash or tether, unless either the handler is unable, because of a disability, to use a harness, leash or other tether or the use of harness, leash or tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If the latter, the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g. voice control, signals, or other effective means).
- C. The service animal may be excluded or removed if the animal is not housebroken or if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it. If a service animal is excluded, the district will give the person with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without the service animal.
- D. The district will not require a surcharge or other fee for use of a service animal. However, the district has a policy that allows charging for destruction of school property in other situations and may charge the service animal's owner for any damage or harm caused by the service animal.
- E. The district may not require documentation that the animal has been certified, trained or licensed as a service animal, as a condition for access.
- F. Handling conflicting needs:
  - (1) If the district is or becomes aware of another individual who is adversely affected by the service animal (e.g. an allergy or anxiety disorder), the district will collect necessary information from the parties and determine how best to address the needs of both individuals.
  - (2) The district will provide notice to all parties of the resolution of this situation, along with a copy of the district's ADA-504 grievance procedure and any other applicable notices.
- G. The district's complaint procedure may be used to resolve disputes arising under this AD.

**IV. Animal Visitors in the Classroom**

- A. Requests
  - (1) All requests to have animal visitors (student or staff "Show and Tell," for example) in the classroom or on school property during school hours must be submitted to the principal or designee in writing.



## Administrative Directive 3.80.011-AD

### Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property

- (2) Included in the request should be a description of the activity, type of animal, educational purpose/benefit, length of activity, and a plan for the care of the animal. Additionally, if applicable, the request should include verification that the animal is properly and currently licensed with the appropriate inoculations. The principal or designee has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of any animal visitor in the school.
- (3) Prior to approving the request, the principal or designee shall determine whether any child has a health condition (such as allergies) that could be exacerbated by exposure to animals. Parents must be notified of the plans to have an animal in the classroom so that accommodations may be made for their student.
- (4) Length of time animal visitors are allowed in classrooms
  - a) Animals will be permitted in classrooms only for a specified and appropriate educational purpose and for the time necessary to achieve the educational goal.
- (5) Teacher responsibilities for animal visitors in classrooms
  - a) Treatment of animals: Teachers must assume primary responsibility for the humane and proper treatment of any animals in the classroom. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, the teacher must make arrangements for their care and safety.
  - b) Exhibits: Each teacher is responsible for the proper supervision and control of students under his/her direction whenever there is an exhibit or activity involving animals in the school.
  - c) Food storage: All animal food will be stored in metal containers with tight-fitting lids for pest prevention.
  - d) Housekeeping: Teachers are responsible for maintaining the living space for animals. Spilled food and/or bedding materials must be cleaned up daily.
- (6) Owner responsibility for animal visitors in classrooms
  - a) Owners shall be solely responsible for the care/safety of their animals and for injuries sustained to the animal or to people due to the presence of the animals at the school.
  - b) All animals brought for exhibit must be restrained by their owner/handler.



**Guidelines for Animals in the Classroom or on School Property**

**V. Owner responsibility for animals on school grounds**

- A. Owners bringing animals on school grounds must follow city or county ordinances regarding leashing and sanitation.
- B. Refer to the Portland Parks and Recreation website for locations of dog parks and rules regarding leashed and unleashed animals.
- C. Refer to Multnomah County Animal Control Services for enforcement of city ordinances pertaining to animals in the city.
- D. Principals have the authority to exclude persons and their animals from school grounds.

**VI. Limitations**

- A. No domesticated mammals, including dogs, cats, primates, birds, or livestock shall be allowed in school buildings or grounds unless permitted by the principal and proof of appropriate and/or current rabies vaccination is provided.
- B. No wild animals including skunks, raccoons, bats, squirrels, monkeys, amphibians or birds shall be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (i.e. zookeepers, veterinarians, etc.)
- C. No poisonous animals are allowed.
- D. No animals will be allowed free range in the facility or grounds.
- E. In accordance with Board Policies 3.30.020, and 7.10.021 horseback riding, pony rides and donkey basketball on school grounds or school parking lots is prohibited.

**VII. Injuries**

- A. Staff members, students or other visitors who have been bitten or otherwise injured by an animal shall report such incident to the principal and the school nurse immediately. The principal shall notify the parents in the case of student injury. The person most knowledgeable about the incident shall complete an injury report and forward it to Risk Management.

History: Adopted 12/2004; Amended 6/2012; 5/2016