

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS  
SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE  
STUDENTS: NO. 322**

Effective	December 18, 2019
Last Revised	August 15, 2023

## SERVICE ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL

### PURPOSE

The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board seeks to ensure that all students are able to fully access school programs and activities in a safe, accepting, and healthy environment that supports their well-being.

The use of a guide dog or service animal is one accommodation for a student with special education needs that can assist with the safety, independence, and learning needs of the student.

This administrative procedure provides direction to school administrators regarding the admittance and implementation of guide dogs or service animals into the school environment, taking into account local circumstances.

### DEFINITIONS

**Guide Dog:** A guide dog is a dog that has successfully completed a training program to become a qualified guide for a blind person at a facility prescribed by the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*. An identification card issued by the Ontario Government may be requested should any question arise as to whether the dog is a qualified guide dog. Guide dogs are permitted to accompany a blind person in all public places, including schools and transportation.

**Service Animal:** A service animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the student for reasons relating to a disability. The service animal is identified by visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal, or the documentation provided by the student or the student's parent from a regulated health professional prescribed by Ontario Regulation 165/16 Integrated Accessibility Standards, confirming that the student requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service animals are permitted to accompany a student with a disability in all public places, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises (e.g., in places where food is prepared). In such cases, the school will work with the student to provide an alternative accommodation.

**Parent:** All references to "parent" in this document also apply to parents or a guardian or guardians.

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## PROCEDURES

### 1. Initiating the Process: Parent Responsibilities

- 1.1. The parent of the student requiring the guide dog or service animal must inform the principal of the school of the student's requirement.
- 1.2. In the case of a guide dog, the parent may be asked to provide an identification card confirming that the guide dog has been specially trained. In the case of a service animal, the parent may be asked to provide confirmation from a regulated health professional that the student requires the use of the service animal.
- 1.3. The parent must also complete FORM 322-01 Request for Guide Dog/Service Animal. The parent will receive a copy of Administrative Procedure 322 Service Animals in the School.
- 1.4. The parent may also be asked to provide proof that the service animal is vaccinated, properly licensed by the municipality, and that the service animal is in good health and temperament to be in the school environment.
- 1.5. It is the responsibility of the student's parent and student to ensure that a guide dog/service animal behaves properly at all times and does not pose a risk of danger to anyone in the school or a source of disruption due to the behavior of the animal. The student's parent remains accountable for the behavior of the animal while at school including liability for any injuries caused by the animal. The parent of a student who requires a service animal is therefore urged to ensure that the service animal has completed appropriate training and to provide the school with documentation to this effect.
- 1.6. While the student's parent is encouraged to establish a strong working relationship between the student and guide dog or service animal, the student must serve as the dog's handler. The student's parent will guide and encourage the student to be effective in managing the service animal and advocating for himself or herself.
- 1.7. Upon being notified that a student requires the use of a service animal, the principal will consult with the supervisory officer or designate and will schedule a team meeting with the parent, classroom teacher(s), educational assistant(s), and other staff as the principal deems appropriate.
- 1.8. Appendix A provides information for parents requesting a guide dog or service animal in the school.

### 2. The Team Meeting

- 2.1. At the team meeting, the following will be discussed:
  - a) the type of support that the service animal will provide;
  - b) safety considerations (e.g., severe allergies, staff or students with asthma, fear of animals, etc.);

- c) the potential impact of the involvement of the service animal on the school community;
- d) training of students and staff about how to interact with the student who is accompanied by a service dog;
- e) service animal care requirements;
- f) the ongoing documentation required for the animal (e.g., annual vaccination records);
- g) handling routines and responsibilities;
- h) guidelines for staff and students;
- i) classroom seating arrangements;
- j) other student issues;
- k) the development of a timeline for implementation;
- l) transportation to and from school;
- m) arrangements for the service dog to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize the dog with the school site;
- n) the role of and communication with the parent; and
- o) the resources available to the school.

2.2. FORM 322-02 Management Plan for Care of Guide Dog/Service Animal will be completed.

2.3. All decisions regarding the admittance of a service animal to the school will be made on a case by case basis taking into account all of the circumstances of the particular situation, including the individual needs of the student who would be assisted by the service animal, the needs of any other person at the school, including staff and students, and the terms of any applicable clause in a collective agreement.

2.4. Where necessary, the rights and needs of one person will be balanced against the rights and needs of others. Where the presence of a service animal would pose a risk to someone else in the school because of a disability, an accommodation process will be undertaken with the involvement of all stakeholders in order to find a resolution.

2.5. The principal will consult with the supervisory officer or designate prior to approval and planning the implementation process.

2.6. The principal will copy and file relevant documentation and correspondence in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). Documentation will be shared with the supervisory officer.

2.7. The principal will advise the parent that all costs related to the provision of the guide dog or service animal are the financial responsibility of the parent.

### 3. **Communication**

3.1. An information session for the School Council and other interested community members will be held to inform them, and to receive feedback or relevant information. The principal will invite the parent of the student needing the guide dog or service animal to participate in the information session. If appropriate, the student may also be invited to attend.

- 3.2. All school staff members must be informed early in the process of the request to have a guide dog or service animal in the school. Their input and information will assist the principal in the implementation process.
- 3.3. Students and parents in the school community must be informed of the request for a guide dog or service animal. The principal will determine the most appropriate format for sharing information. Formats for consideration may include a meeting at the school, a newsletter, or website notice.
- 3.4. Signs must be placed on the entrance doors of the school to inform students, staff, the school community, and visitors of the guide dog or service animal's presence.
- 3.5. An appropriate fire and emergency exit plan must be developed for the guide dog or service animal.
- 3.6. Guide dog/service animal will be placed under "Accommodation" on the Individual Education plan (IEP).

#### 4. Monitoring

- 4.1. In preparation for a new school year, the principal shall:
  - a) schedule a team meeting/case conference;
  - b) make necessary adjustments to the management plan;
  - c) review procedures with students in the classroom/school, school-based staff, and transportation staff;
  - d) share information with the School Council and parents of students in the school community;
  - e) identify and address any issues with respect to the guide dog or service animal, the student, the student's parent, or staff; and
  - f) request updated documentation relevant to the guide dog or service animal.

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**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS****Legal:**

*Education Act, Section 265 Duties of Principal: Attention to the Health of Pupils*

*Education Act, section 266 Pupil Records*

Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools, section 20 Duties of Teachers: Reasonable safety procedures

Guideline OSR—Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline, clause 3.1.5 Special Health Information

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 161 Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions (Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, and/or Epilepsy) in Schools

Policy/Program Memorandum 163 School Board Policies on Service Animals

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

Ontario Regulation 165/16 Integrated Accessibility Standards

*Blind Persons' Rights Act*

*Health Protection and Promotion Act*

*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

*Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)*

*The Good Samaritan Act. (2001). Protection of Individuals from Liability*

*Ontario Human Rights Code*

**Board:**

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission

Board Policy GOV-15 Accessibility Standards

Board Policy GOV-23 Emergency Response Plans

Administrative Procedure 141 School Fire Safety Plan

Administrative Procedure 143 Student Accidents and Illness

Administrative Procedure 144 Bomb Threat

Administrative Procedure 145 Emergency Lockdown.

Administrative Procedure 206 School Excursions

Administrative Procedure 321 Administration of Medication and Medical Procedures

FORM 322-01 Request for Guide Dog/Service Animal

FORM 322-02 Management Plan for Care of Guide Dog/Service Animal

Collective Agreements

## APPENDIX A

**Information for Parents Requesting a Guide Dog/Service Animal in the School**

1. The success of the implementation of a guide dog or service animal into a school setting depends on clear communication, a well-informed school community, and careful planning. The information you provide will assist the principal to make the best possible decisions for your child and other students as well as for the staff, volunteers, and visitors in the school. The information will be filed in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR).
2. A guide dog is a dog that has successfully completed a training program to become a qualified guide for a blind person at a facility prescribed by the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*. An identification card issued by the Ontario Government may be requested should any question arise as to whether the dog is a qualified guide dog. Guide dogs are permitted to accompany a blind person in all public places, including schools and transportation.
3. An animal is a service animal for a student with a disability if the animal can be readily identified:
  - a) as an animal that is being used by the student for reasons relating to his or her disability;
  - b) as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
  - c) because the student or the student's parent has provided documentation from a regulated health professional prescribed by Ontario Regulation 165/16 Integrated Accessibility Standards, confirming that the student requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
4. The responsibility for the care and handling routines of a guide dog or service animal remains totally with the student and the student's parent.
5. The information you provide will help the principal to consider your request. It is important that you provide information that addresses the safety of the students and staff. For example, the principal needs to know that the guide dog or service animal is properly qualified and does not exhibit aggressive or protective behaviours. The principal also needs to know if any student or member of staff has severe medical or psychological reactions to the guide dog or service animal that may prevent or restrict the involvement of the dog at the school.
6. The well-being of the guide dog or service animal is also very important. Its care, handling, and training needs will be addressed, and your input is valuable. The principal needs to know what other resources are available to facilitate the transition to school and the implementation of the plan. Strategies for becoming familiar with the building and school grounds, introduction to assemblies/concerts, recess, and informing the staff about interacting with the guide dog or service animal will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the dog as possible.
7. The school council advises the principal on matters pertaining to the school community. It is customary to provide an information session for the council and other interested parents. It is our experience that important information shared in this way

facilitates understanding and acceptance of new practices at the school. You will be asked to participate in the information session.

8. The principal will consult with the supervisory officer prior to the admittance and implementation of the guide dog or service animal in the school.
9. If your request is approved, a series of planning steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the guide dog or service animal. The goal will be to implement the plan as soon as possible.
10. Once approval and planning are in place, your responsibilities include:
  - a) transporting or walking the guide dog or service animal to and from school, or facilitating the use of transportation;
  - b) providing the required equipment and care items;
  - c) assuming financial responsibility for training, veterinary care, and other related costs;
  - d) working co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success;
  - e) assisting the principal to communicate relevant information to the school community;
  - f) informing the principal of all relevant information that may affect the students and staff; and
  - g) as applicable, providing the principal with documentation to substantiate the following in a timely fashion:
    - that the service animal has had its yearly vaccines;
    - that the service animal is properly licensed by the municipality; and
    - that the guide dog or service animal has undergone appropriate training.