

Appendix A



Niagara Catholic District School Board

Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting a Service Animal in the School

1. The success of the implementation of a 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. The use of a service animal is considered to be an accommodation to help your child learn and to develop the necessary skills to achieve success at school. If your child already has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), it will be reviewed at a case conference, or one will be developed in consultation with you. The Principal will invite you, your child's teacher, a representative from the training facility, the Educational Resource Teacher (ERT) in the school, and the Special Education Coordinator to the case conference to discuss your child's needs, the accommodations that are already in place for your child, as well as the additional assistance that a service animal may provide.
3. The information you provide will help the Principal to facilitate or pursue your request. The Principal will investigate as to whether any student or member of staff has severe medical or psychological reactions to animals that may prevent or restrict the involvement of the service animal at the school.
4. The well-being of the service animal is also very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed and your input is valuable. The Principal also 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 service animal will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the service animal as possible.
5. It is imperative that the service animal be ready for school. If the service animal exhibits any behaviours (i.e. growling, scratching, nipping, biting, etc.) or health issues (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea, open wounds, fleas, ticks, etc.) at school, the service animal will be removed until the plan is re-evaluated to ensure the safety of staff, students and visitors.
6. An information session will be held for the Catholic School Council and other interested Parents/Guardians. Important information shared in this way facilitates understanding and acceptance of new practices at the school. You will be invited to participate in the information session.
7. Parents'/Guardians' responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - Provide the Principal with all required documentation, reports, certificates, evaluations in a timely fashion;
 - Transport or walk the service animal to and from school or facilitate the use of Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) transportation;
 - Assume financial responsibility for the service animal's training, veterinary care, municipal license and other related costs;

- Participate in a school case conference meeting to inform the Principal of all relevant information that may affect your child, other students, staff, and/or visitors to the school;
 - Assist the Principal to communicate relevant information to the school community;
 - Work co-operatively with the school staff to make this accommodation a success;
 - Provide the required equipment and service animal care items;
 - Provide food, water and “bio-breaks” to the service animal as required;
 - Remove and dispose of service animal waste in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.
8. Once the necessary information has been discussed, the Principal will consult with the Family of Schools Superintendent and the Coordinator of Special Education prior to the admittance and implementation of the service animal into the school.
9. If the request is approved, a series of steps must take place to ensure a smooth transition for the entry of the service animal in a timely manner.
10. The right of entry of the service animal will be monitored regularly and reviewed on an annual basis by school staff.