



Title: **ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS: USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

Adopted: October 6, 2009

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Related Document: Policy PCE.001 – Accessibility Standards

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process by which all members of the school and broader community will be welcomed to the Bloorview School Authority. Staff and volunteers are committed to providing services that respect the independence and dignity of people with disabilities, such service to incorporate measures that include but are not limited to the use of service animals.

## **DEFINITION**

A service animal is an animal that is being used because of a person's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who have vision loss, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety and animals used for therapy. The client service standard's provisions also apply to animals providing other services to people with disabilities.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Training**

1. The Principal will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

### **Access to Authority Premises**

2. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be welcomed at the school with his or her service animal and will be accompanied by the service animal while on the premises. Access will be in accordance with normal

security procedures.

3. This requirement applies only to those areas of the premises where the public or third parties customarily have access and does not include places or areas of the school where the public does not have access.
4. This procedure deals solely with the individual's right to be accompanied by a service animal.

### **Exclusion of Service Animal**

5. A service animal can only be excluded from access to the premises where this is required by another law. Examples include the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the *Food Safety and Quality Act*. The former Act prohibits service animals in places where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g., school kitchen) although service dogs are permitted where food is served and sold.
6. Where there is a risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of a service animal, consideration must be given to options available prior to exclusion of a service animal. An example would be a situation where an individual has a severe allergy to the service animal. It is Bloorview School Authority's expectation that the situation be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk be considered, e.g. creating distance between the two individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc
7. A service animal can be excluded if it is of a breed that is prohibited by law. An example would be the Ontario *Dog Owners' Liability Act* which places restrictions on pit bull terriers

### **Alternative Measures if Service Animal Must be Excluded**

In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Authority must make every effort to put alternative arrangements in place to provide the services required by the person with a disability. This could involve leaving the animal in a secure area where it is permitted by law and discussing with the person how best to serve them, e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone (a member of staff or volunteer) to guide them.

### **When it is Necessary to confirm an animal is a Service Animal**

8. Where an animal is not a trained guide dog and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a document from a regulated health professional confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The document does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.
9. Where the person using the service animal regularly attends the school, the Principal may request to keep a copy of the document on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a document with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The Principal

shall preserve the confidentiality of the document and information contained in the document, and shall not use or disclose the document or information except as provided for in the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.