Title: **STUDENT USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOL**

Adopted: June 2020
Reviewed: November 2021, October 2026

Authority: Ontario PPM 163: School Board Policies on Service Animals

Related: Procedure EQ #13: Service Animals

References: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the "AODA")
Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities* (2018)
Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c.H.19
Education Act, RSO 1990, c. E2, s. 170(1), s.265(1); O. Reg. 298, s.11
Blind Persons' Rights Act, RSO 1990, c. B7,
Dog Owners' Liability Act, RSO 1990, c. D16
Health Protection and Promotion Act, RSO 1990, c.H7
Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, SO 2001, c.20

POLICY

It is the policy of the Bloorview School Authority that a student, be allowed to be accompanied by a service animal in school, when doing so would be an appropriate accommodation to support the student's learning needs and would meet the Authority's duty to accommodate students with disabilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code;

BACKGROUND

1. All school boards in Ontario are required to develop, implement, and maintain a policy on student use of service animals in schools.

2. People with disabilities who use service animals to assist them with disability-related needs are protected under the criteria of "disability" in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

3. "Certified Service Animal" refers to an animal that provides support relating to a student's disability to assist that student in meaningfully accessing education. Traditionally, service animals have been dogs, and dogs remain the most common species of service animal. However, other species may also provide services to individuals with disabilities. The types of functions performed by service animals are diverse, and may or may not include sensory, medical, therapeutic, and emotional support services.

GUIDELINES

4. In circumstances where a parent or adult student requests to have the student's service animal accompany the student while attending school or a school-related event, each such request shall be reviewed individually by the Principal considering the student's dignity, integration, independence and disability-related learning needs and the accommodations available to enable meaningful access to education.

5. The process of accommodation will also consider the competing human rights of other students and of staff; the impact of the service animal on the learning environment; and the health and safety of all individuals who are or might be in the school, on school grounds or at a school-related event.

6. The Authority will retain data regarding the requests for the use of service animals in schools.

7. The Bloorview School Authority does not provide Service Animals to students.

8. The Bloorview School Authority encourages any family considering the purchase of a service animal to meet with the Principal before making a commitment.

9. The Principal, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, will make a determination, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether a service animal may accompany a student taking into account all the circumstances, including the needs of the student and the school community and the Authority's obligation to provide meaningful access to education.

10. Only Certified Service Animals will be allowed as supports for students in the Bloorview School.