



# Northeastern Catholic District School Board

## STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Policy Number: E-22

Authority: 20-04/22-130/25-137

### POLICY STATEMENT

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The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to the learning of all students and provides a range of differentiated placements, programs and interventions to support student success. It is the policy of the NCDSB, in accordance with its obligations pursuant to the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, to provide individualized accommodation to students with disabilities to enable them to have meaningful access to education services.

### REFERENCES

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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  
J.F. v. Waterloo Catholic District School Board, 2017 HRTO 1121 (CanLII)  
*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c.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 Program Memorandum (PPM)  
163 School Board Policies on Service Animals  
NCDSB Administrative Procedure  
APE022 Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals

### DEFINITIONS

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#### **Accredited training organization**

For the purposes of this policy, "accredited training organization" means a formal program recognized by a provincial or national authority that provides standardized training, documentation, and certification for guide dogs or service animals.

Online accreditation / self-certification will not be considered eligible under this policy.

#### **Adult student**

A student who is 18 years of age or older or 16 or 17 years of age and has removed themselves from the care and control of their custodial parent.

#### **Disability**

In accordance with Section 10 of the Ontario Human Rights Code:

Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination,

blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device, a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, a mental disorder, or an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan establish under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### **Guide Dog**

A dog trained as a guide for a person who is blind or has low-vision, having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations pursuant to the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*.

### **Handler**

Refers to the individual trained by an Accredited Training Organization who is managing the Guide Dog / Service Animal and in most cases will be the student for whom the Guide Dog / Service Animal is provided.

### **Parent**

Shall be defined to mean a custodial parent of the student or a guardian pursuant to the *Education Act*.

### **Service Animal**

An animal which has been certified after successfully completing an accredited training program to assist a person with a disability other than vision loss, including physical, neurological, or psychiatric disabilities. This may include animals such as hearing dogs and autism service dogs.

## **POLICY REGULATIONS**

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- 1.0 The NCDSB shall consider requests from parents or adult students for a guide dog or service animal to accompany a student at school or school-related events. Each request shall be reviewed individually, with attention to the student's dignity, integration, independence, and disability-related learning needs, as well as the accommodations required to ensure meaningful access to education.
- 2.0 Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school is not a public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to a student's use of a guide dog or service animal when accessing education services in school buildings.
- 3.0 The process of accommodation shall also consider the competing human rights of other students and staff; the potential impact of the Guide Dog or 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.
- 4.0 The NCDSB shall retain data regarding the requests for Guide Dogs and Service Animals for the purposes of planning, monitoring, and reporting accommodations, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

5.0 Administrative procedures and guidelines will be reviewed regularly to maintain compliance with current standards and ensure best practices in all matters relating to Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals.