



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP434-6

Use of Service Animals by the Public

Area: Operations
Policy Reference: Accessibility (PO434)

Approved: April 26, 2010
Revised: October 3, 2016; August 10, 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide direction in supporting members of the public who access Durham Catholic District School Board (“Board”) facilities with the assistance of a service animal. This administrative procedure contemplates only service animals used by staff and the public.

2. Definitions

Service Animal (*Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards*) – an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability, if,

- a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - i. A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.
 - ii. A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.
 - iii. A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
 - iv. A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
 - v. A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
 - vi. A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
 - vii. A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
 - viii. A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
 - ix. A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

3. Procedures

3.1 Training:

- 3.1.1 Members of senior administration, principals and departmental managers shall ensure that all staff, volunteers and others who interact with the public receive training on interacting with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, in accordance with applicable accessibility standards.

3.2 Access to Board Premises:

- 3.2.1 Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal shall be permitted access to Board premises with the service animal, in accordance with standard security procedures. Access applies only to areas of the premises that are open to the public or third parties.

3.3 Exclusion of Service Animal

- 3.3.1 A service animal may only be excluded from access to premises where required by another law. For example, under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and its regulations, animals are not permitted in areas where food is prepared, processed, or handled (e.g., kitchen of school cafeteria or culinary arts classroom). However, service animals are permitted in areas where food is served, sold, or offered to the public (e.g., school cafeteria or lunchroom).
- 3.3.2 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 the Board'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).

3.4 Alternative Measures if Service Animal Must Be Excluded:

- 3.4.1 In the rare instance where a service animal must be excluded, the Board 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 their needs (e.g., a person with a vision disability might need someone, a member of staff or volunteer, to guide them).

3.5 When it is Necessary to Confirm an Animal is a Service Animal

- 3.5.1 Where an animal is not a trained service animal and it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the school or Board staff member may ask the person using the service animal for a letter from a physician or nurse

confirming that the animal is needed because of a disability. The letter does not need to identify the disability, why the animal is needed or how it is used.

- 3.5.2 Where the person using the service animal regularly attends a school or Board facility, the principal or departmental manager (designate) may request to keep a copy of the letter on file but only as long as required by the circumstances. Alternatively, the person using the service animal may be asked to bring a letter with them on occasions when they visit the premises. The principal or departmental manager (designate) shall preserve the confidentiality of the letter and information contained in the letter, and shall not use or disclose the letter or information except as provided for in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSO 1990, cM56, or as otherwise required by law.

4. Sources

- 4.1 [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)
- 4.2 [Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)
- 4.3 [“Tips on Servicing Customers with Disabilities” – Ontario Education Services Corporation](#)

5. Appendices

Nil

6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 6.1 [Accessibility Policy \(PO434\)](#)
- 6.2 [Customer Service Accessibility Standards Administrative Procedure \(AP434-1\)](#)
- 6.3 [Notice of Disruption of Service Administrative Procedure \(AP434-2\)](#)
- 6.4 [Use of Assistive Devices by the Public Administrative Procedure \(AP434-3\)](#)
- 6.5 [Use of Support Person by the General Public Administrative Procedure \(AP434-4\)](#)
- 6.6 [Monitoring and Feedback on Accessible Customer Service Administrative Procedure \(AP434-5\)](#)
- 6.7 [Use of Service Animals by General Public Administrative Procedure \(AP434-6\)](#)
- 6.8 [Acceptable Information and Communications Administrative Procedure \(AP434-8\)](#)
- 6.9 [Accessible Employment Administrative Procedure \(AP434-9\)](#)
- 6.10 [Accessible Student Transportation Administrative Procedure \(AP434-10\)](#)