

SUBJECT: THERAPY DOGS

The Rotterdam-Mohonasen Central School District (the District) supports the use of Social Service Dogs by teachers, or other qualified school personnel, or qualified volunteers (the Owner) for the benefit of its students, subject to the conditions of this policy.

A Therapy Dog is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its owner to provide specified services and functions to District students. Therapy dogs, for the purpose of this policy, are not “service animals” as that term is used in the American with Disabilities Act or New York State law.

Therapy dogs are the personal property of the Owner and are not owned by the District.

Nothing herein shall enlarge or abridge the right of any student, employee, or visitor to be accompanied on district property by his/her own service dog, to the extent required by federal or state law.

Nothing herein shall permit a student, employee or visitor to be accompanied by his or her own comfort animal or emotional support animal for his or her own personal use of individual benefit on District property.

Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures

The following requirements must be satisfied before a Therapy Dog will be allowed in school buildings or on school grounds:

- A. *Requests:*
All individuals who wish to bring a Therapy Dog for the benefit of students to District property must submit a written application to the superintendent or his/her designee. A copy of the application is attached. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different Therapy Dog will be used.
- B. *Training and Certification:*
The Owner must submit one of the following: (1) Social Service Dog International Certification for Social Service Dogs; or (2) Therapy Dogs International Certification. The certification must remain current at all times that the Therapy Dog is present in any district school building.
- C. *Health and Vaccination:*
The Therapy Dog must be clean, well groomed, in good health, housebroken, and immunized against disease common to dogs including rabies. The Owner must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the Therapy Dog’s current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian.

D. Control:

A Therapy Dog must be under the control of the Owner through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would interfere with the Therapy Dog's safe, effective performance of its services for students such as might be the case in a closed controlled environment such as a classroom or office.

The Therapy Dog must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or engaging in any other disruptive behavior.

E. Identification:

The Therapy Dog must have appropriate identification clearly indicating that it is a Therapy Dog.

F. Health and Safety:

The Therapy Dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school.

G. Supervision and Care of Therapy Dogs:

The Owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the Therapy Dog, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a District building or on district property. The District is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a Therapy Dog.

H. Authorized Area(s):

The Owner shall only allow the Therapy Dog to be in areas in District buildings or on District property that are authorized by District administrators.

I. Exclusion or Removal from School:

A Therapy Dog can be excluded from a District building or District property if a District Administrator determines any of the following:

1. The Owner does not have control of the Therapy Dog;
2. The Therapy Dog is not housebroken
3. The Therapy Dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the District building or on district property; or
4. The Therapy Dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process.

The Owner shall be required to remove the Therapy Dog from the District building or District property immediately upon such determination.

POLICY

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Community Relations

Allergic Reactions

If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a Therapy Dog is permitted, suffers an allergic reaction to the Therapy Dog, the Owner of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by an administrator.

Damages to School Property and Injuries

The owner of the Therapy Dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to a district building or District property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the animal.

Adopted: 6/3/19