

SCHOOL / COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Facility / Therapy Dogs Administrative Procedure

Facility / therapy dogs must be trained, evaluated, and certified to provide support in the educational setting. The minimum certification allowed is the AKC Good Citizen certification. These highly trained dogs model good behavior, tolerance, and acceptance. All Certified Facility / Therapy Dog Teams in the Helena School District work to support and positively influence student achievement.

Facility / Therapy dogs are trained and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the dog as a team. A facility / therapy dog has been temperament tested by an organization qualified to do temperament testing. Facility / therapy dogs are not family pets that have been certified as pet therapy animals.

Facility / therapy dogs are owned by a professional educator in the Helena School District who wishes to use a facility / therapy dog to augment his/her educational program. Any educator wishing to bring a facility / therapy dog to school must submit a written request form to the building administrator. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different facility / therapy dog will be used. Such approval may be rescinded at any time at the sole discretion of the building administrator. When the request is approved, a plan for the facility / therapy dog's visits shall be developed with the Principal or the Principal's designee.

Facility / therapy dogs may be used in the school setting on a scheduled basis when the following documentation is in place:

1. Administrative Approval

- a. The use of the animal must be approved by the building administrator in which the Facility / Therapy Dog's handler works. The administrator will consider any extenuating circumstances including but not limited to; student and staff allergies, breed / type of animal, etc. when determining whether or not to allow the use of a therapy dog in the school building.
- b. A letter stating approval including the schedule should be written and kept on file in the building. A copy should be sent to the appropriate assistant superintendent.
- c. The following must also be kept on file in the school building:
 - i. Proof of current certification as a facility / therapy dog
 - ii. Proof of up-to-date vaccinations
 - iii. General good health form provided by a certified veterinarian
 - iv. Proof of liability insurance (minimum \$1 million liability coverage)

2. Health Records and Hygiene/Animal Care

- a. The owner/handler must provide a record of annual vaccinations received by the dog and signed by a veterinarian; these health records should be kept on file in the school building.

- i. The dog should receive a bordatella vaccination annually; rabies vaccinations and five-way parvo/distemper (DHPP) shall be updated every three years. Please note: dogs less than one year of age or receiving their rabies and parvo vaccinations for the first time shall receive a follow-up vaccine in one year, with vaccinations every three years thereafter.
 - ii. The dog should be given a comprehensive wormer or fecal check for worms annually.
 - iii. The dog should be checked for external parasite control.
 - iv. All owners will give preventive parasite (fleas and ticks) control and heartworm medication year-round per the dog's veterinarian.
 - v. Annual tests for heartworm are recommended. Please note: Frontline Plus is recommended – this is due to its non-toxic nature, which is important in a school environment.
 - vi. The dog should be groomed and bathed regularly. For dogs in a working environment, monthly to bi-monthly baths are recommended as is daily brushing. (Good judgment should be used based on the dog's hair, skin, and dander concerns.) The owner/handler must also ensure proper health care through regular (several times weekly) brushing of the dog's teeth, regular nail trimming as needed, and weekly cleaning/checks of the dog's ears.
 - vii. The must be housebroken.
- 3. **Records.** Records of advanced obedience, agility, or other training may be kept updated and on file in the school building.
- 4. **Control.** A facility / therapy dog must be under the control of the educator 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 work or tasks. However, the facility / therapy dog must be under the owner's control at all times.
- 5. **Identification.** The facility / therapy dog must have appropriate identification identifying it as a facility / therapy dog. The educator shall bring only registered facility / therapy dogs onto school district property and may bring only one such dog at a time.
- 6. **No Disruption.** The facility / therapy dog must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or any other behavior.
- 7. **Supervision and Care of Facility / Therapy dogs.** The educator is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the facility / therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on school property. **All dog waste must be immediately cleaned up and not left on school property.** The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a facility / therapy dog.

- 8. Exclusion or Removal from School.** A facility / therapy dog may be excluded from school property and buildings if a school administrator determines that:
- A handler does not have control of the facility / therapy dog;
 - The facility / therapy dog is not housebroken;
 - The facility / therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; or
 - The animal's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process.

The educator shall be required to remove the facility / therapy dog from school premises immediately upon such a determination.

- 9. Damages to School Property and Injuries.** The educator who owns the facility / therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the facility / therapy dog.
- 10. Multiple Facility / Therapy Dogs on Site.** The handler shall confirm whether or not there will be any other facility / therapy dog (s) on site prior to scheduling any visit with a facility / therapy dog and shall take steps with appropriate staff to ensure that the dogs do not engage inappropriately while on school property. When multiple facility / therapy dog dogs are engaged in a planned activity on school district property, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs have an opportunity to greet each other prior to entering the school building. Once inside the building, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs are each on a four-foot leash, given work space at least eight feet from each other and are given no opportunity for contact or socialization with each other while working.
- 11. Exclusion or Removal from School District Property.** A facility / therapy dog may be excluded from school district property if a school administrator determines that: (1) The handler does not have control of the facility / therapy dog; (2) The facility / therapy dog is not housebroken; (3) The facility / therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; or (4) The facility / therapy dog/s presence otherwise interferes with the educational program. The handler shall immediately remove his/her facility / therapy dog from school property when instructed to do so by a school administrator.

Review of facility / therapy dog Administrative Procedures will be reviewed annually and are subject to revision throughout the school year.

The privilege to bring the dog into the school setting may be terminated should the handler or dog behave in a way deemed unprofessional, unhealthy or unsafe.