



PRSD supports and recognizes that the use of a certified service animal may be required.

A certified service animal means any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, specific to that disability.

No individual student's rights and needs take precedence over any other individual student's rights and needs. In providing for Appropriate Educational Programming for students who require certified service animals, other students' legal rights to an education are given equal consideration.

PRSD supports the use of a certified service animal in schools or Division facilities as long as the appropriate planning and preparation has taken place in advance of the service animal's entry to the school or Division facility.

Incorporating the use of a certified service animal in the programming for a student is outlined in the procedural protocol of this policy.

1. Procedure:

A certified service animal is a recognized working animal that has been trained to assist individuals who have a physical or developmental disability with their daily living activities. The use of Service Animals is an intervention strategy that is recognized as an aid to individuals with special needs.

Once the school principal has been notified of the anticipated integration of the animal to the school, the following protocol is to be implemented by Prairie Rose School Division prior to the admittance of a service animal to the school.

Decisions regarding the use of service animals in the school environment are made on a case-by-case basis. All circumstances of a particular request, including the individual needs of the student being assisted by the animal and the needs of the other students and staff, will be considered. The principal will investigate as to whether any student or member of staff has severe medical or psychological reactions to animals that may prevent or restrict the involvement of the service animal at the school.

Approval of the use of a certified service animal will be granted by the Superintendent or designate.

2. Protocol:

It is expected that parent/guardian will advise the Division as soon as possible that a service animal is required.

(a) Parent/Guardian Responsibility:

- i. To initiate the process of having a service animal assist in a school, speak with the principal who will provide *Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting a Service Animal in a School and Facility* and *Request for a Service Animal in School and Facility*.
- ii. Make the request in writing using *Request for a Service Animal in School and Facility*.
- iii. Provide a letter from a relevant approved health care professional i.e. physician, psychiatrist or psychologist, confirming the student's diagnosis as well as a recommendation for a service animal.
- iv. Provide a Certificate of Training for the service animal from a certified training centre.



- v. Provide the school with proof of up-to-date vaccinations, a municipal Service Animal license and confirmation the service animal is in good health.
- vi. Assume financial responsibility relating to the use and care of the service animal.
- vii. Complete *Prairie Rose School Division Service Animal Registration Agreement Form* acknowledging that the Division's policy Use of a Certified Service Animal is read and understood.
- viii. Participate in a school meeting to inform the support team of all relevant information.
- ix. If a decision to approve the request is made, assist the principal to communicate relevant information to the school community. Arrange for staff training in a timely fashion.

(b) Principal's Responsibilities:

- i. The school principal is responsible to facilitate with the parents/guardians arrangements and communication of such together with the anticipated timeline for introduction of a service animal to the school
- ii. Provide *Information for Parents/Guardians Requesting a Service Animal in a School and Facility Request for a Service Animal in School and Facility*.
- iii. Consult with the Superintendent/CEO or designate prior to planning the school entry process.
- iv. Upon receipt of *Request for a Service Animal in School and Facility*, schedule and chair a meeting with the parents, a representative from the animal training facility, the classroom teacher(s), the resource teacher, senior administrator, and the support staff who work with the student. The purpose of the meeting is to review the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) description of strengths, needs and required accommodations including the type of service the service animal will provide. The services provided by the service animal should be, or become, part of the goals of the IEP.

Discussions will include other relevant information such as:

- Health and safety considerations (including severe allergies and asthma)
 - The potential impact of the involvement of the service animal on the school community
 - Animal care requirements
 - Handling routines and responsibilities
 - Guidelines for staff and students, other student issues,
 - Transportation to and from school
 - The role of and communication with parents
 - The designation of a staff animal handler/alternate in the school
- v. Once the necessary information has been gathered, the principal will consult with the superintendent or designate.



Refer to and complete *Management Plan for the Care of a Service Animal*.

- vi. If a decision to approve the request is made, the well-being of the service animal is very important. Its care, handling and training needs will be addressed. The principal must take the following steps:
 - Develop a transition plan for the service animal and the student. Strategies for becoming familiar with the building and school grounds, introduction to assemblies/concerts, recess and informing the staff/students about interacting with the service animal will need to be included in the planning to be as consistent and fair to the service animal as possible.
 - Provide training for staff and students by the animal training facility. Training will be provided at the division's expense.
 - Arrange for demonstration from the training facility and/or parent/guardian on the rules of conduct around service animals.
 - Forward the following letters to parents of students in the school:
 - *Sample Letter to Families with Children in the Classroom/on the School Bus*
 - *Sample Letter to School Community*
 - Contact the school division Transportation Department (If applicable, Section C) regarding transportation. A personalized transportation plan should be developed.
 - All protocol/procedural and planning information is placed in the pupil file.
 - Place signs on entrance doors to inform school visitors of the presence of a service animal.
 - Review the school Emergency Response Plan. Notify the local fire department of the existence of a service animal.
 - Monitor the entry of the service animal regularly and review on an annual basis.
- vii. Superintendent/CEO or designate may inform relevant employee groups and /or Workplace Safety and Health Committee that a service animal will be in the school/facility.

(c) Transportation:

- i. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for transporting the animal to and from school, or walking with the animal unless it is determined that the division will transport the child and the certified service animal.
- ii. If the animal is going to be transported on the bus a Personal Transportation Plan must be submitted for approval by the Supervisor of Operations or designate.
- iii. A protocol is collaboratively developed and implemented with the certified animal's trainer/handler for handling the certified service animal on the bus.
- iv. The transportation supervisor shall inform the driver of the presence of a certified service animal on the bus.



- v. Appropriate training will then be provided for all staff involved in the transportation of the student and service animal, including location of the animal during transport.
- vi. The certified service animal must be under control at all times when on the bus, including entering and exiting the bus.
- vii. The other students transported in the bus shall receive training to ensure that they are informed and fully aware of the role and function of the certified service animal and the appropriate behaviour required when on the bus.
- viii. Provide riders with, *Sample Letter to Families with Children in the Classroom/on the School Bus*
- ix. An evacuation plan for the bus is developed and practiced.

(d) Exclusions

Where the use of a service animal in a school has been approved, PRSD retains discretion to exclude or remove the certified service animal from the school or school property where:

- i. Exclusion is required by a statute,
- ii. The service animal is of a breed that is prohibited by law or municipal bylaw e.g., Pit Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers,
- iii. There is risk to the health and safety of another person as a result of the presence of the service animal. The situation will be fully analyzed and all measures to eliminate the risk will be considered, e.g. creating distance between the individuals concerned, making reasonable alterations to schedules, etc., or,
- iv. There has been a material change in the circumstances that led to the original approval of the use of the animal in school.
- v. If a parent/guardian, or a student over the age of 18, wishes to appeal the decision of the Superintendent or designate, the following appeal process shall be followed:
 - All normal dispute resolution procedures or formal channels must first have been exhausted.
 - A written request outlining the specifics of the appeal must be given to the Superintendent who will then review the circumstances with the principal and will convene a meeting with all individuals pertinent to the review to determine the outcome.