

North Wasco County School District 21

Code: ING-AR
 Adopted: 10/22/26

Animals in District Facilities

Service Animals in Schools

1. Service Animal Defined

A “service animal” means an animal which is trained to do a task or service directly related to a disability. Service animals must be individually trained to do work or perform tasks. Service animals include service animals in training.

Service animals do not include “emotional support animals” or “professional therapy animals” which are animals that provide a sense of safety, companionship, and comfort as these animals are not trained to perform a specific task for their handlers.

2. Procedures for Service Animal Access

- a. The service animal must be under the control of a handler at all times and be harnessed, leashed or tethered, unless the devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents him or her from using these devices. Individuals who cannot use such devices must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- b. Access by the Public
 - (1) Individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all areas of district property where members of the public, students, and employees are allowed to go.
 - (2) When an individual with a disability brings a service animal onto district property, the district shall not ask about the nature or extent of a person’s disability, but may make the following two inquiries to determine whether the animal qualifies as a service animal:
 - (a) If the animal is required because of a disability;
 - (b) What work or task the animal has been trained to perform.
 - (3) The district shall not make such inquiries of an individual when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.
 - (4) An individual with a disability may not be required to provide documentation such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal.
- c. Access by Employees or Students
 - (1) An employee who may require the assistance of a service animal should contact human resources to make arrangements for such assistance.
 - (2) Students who may require the assistance of a service animal should contact their building principal to make arrangements for such assistance.

- (3) Employees and students using service animals should proactively collaborate with school staff members to make arrangements for the service animal at school. The following are examples of arrangements that may be considered, as necessary:
 - (a) A rest place and rest time for the service animal
 - (b) Appropriate areas and times of the day for the service animal to relieve itself.
 - (c) Information, as needed, for employees and students about the services animal.
 - (d) Clarification, as needed, of emergency procedures.

3. Parents or Animal Handlers

Third party service animal handlers who will be regularly present in school for the purpose of assisting a student with his/her service animal will be subjected to the same requirements and standards of conduct that apply to other school volunteers.

4. Handling Conflicting Needs

If the district is or becomes aware of another individual who is adversely affected by the service animal (e.g. an allergy or anxiety disorder), the district will collect necessary information from the parties and determine how best to address the needs of both individuals. The district will provide notice to all parties of the resolution of the situation.

5. Removal or Exclusion of a Service Animal from School or School Property

The district may ask an individual to remove a service animal from district property if any one of the following circumstances occurs:

- a. The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it.
- b. The animal is not housebroken.
- c. The animal's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.
- d. The animal is found not to be performing a task or a service directly related to a disability.

If the district excludes an animal, it will provide the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program or activity without having the service animal on the premises.

A person whose service animal has been excluded or removed may appeal the decision using the discrimination complaint process found in Board Policy AC.

6. Responsibility/Liability

Neither the district, nor its employees, are responsible for the cost, care, or supervision of the service animal. The owner/handler of the service animal is responsible for any and all damage caused by the service animal at school, on school premises or at school activities.

Professional Therapy Dogs

1. Therapy Dog Defined

“Therapy Dog” means a dog that is selected, trained and has graduated from a program that is a member of Therapy Dogs International or a similar nonprofit organization that trains the dog to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions, under the direction and control of a qualified handler.

A therapy dog performs its tasks by permission or invitation. They are not accorded the same rights as service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. An animal that does not meet the definition of therapy dog or service animal as defined in this regulation shall be subject to the conditions set for an animal visitor referenced below.

2. Therapy Dog Handler Defined

“Therapy dog handler” means an employee of the school district or volunteer who has received training and/or certification from Therapy Dogs International or a similar nonprofit organization for handling a specific therapy dog and who will be handling or overseeing care of that specific therapy dog for the entire time the dog is on district property.

3. Approval Process for the Use of a Therapy Dog on District Property

District staff who wish to have therapy dogs made available to students shall submit a plan to the building principal. The proposal shall address all of the following areas:

- a. A detailed schedule outlining the location, times, details of when and how the therapy dog will be used in the school, and expected duration of use in the school (e.g. month, school year). The schedule should include a timetable with built-in break and rest periods for the animal.
- b. The certification the proposed therapy dog has received, including the training required to receive the certification.
- c. The credentials of the certification provider.
- d. An up-to-date vaccination certificate for the dog.
- e. Proof of liability insurance for both the handler and the therapy dog.
- f. The student(s) whom the therapy dog is intended to serve.
- g. The anticipated goals for use of the therapy dog.
- h. The proposed training to be provided to students on the appropriate behavior and treatment of the therapy dog and the consequences for inappropriate treatment of the therapy dog.
- i. Detailed plan describing parent notification of therapy dog’s presence in designated classroom.
- j. Signed assurances that therapy dogs will remain in the designated assigned room and not be allowed to wander throughout the school. Also, assurances that therapy dogs will be leashed at all times while outside of the designated classroom.

The building principal shall submit any proposal meeting with their approval to the superintendent or designee for final review and approval. The superintendent or designee must approve the proposal in writing prior to the therapy dog entering district property. A letter must be sent home to the students in any classes where the therapy dog will be present, prior to the dog being allowed on site, to elicit information concerning allergies, extreme phobias, or religious considerations from the students and/or parents or guardians.

A therapy dog proposal may be rejected if:

- a. The proposal doesn't meet the requirements of this regulation.
- b. The principal, superintendent or designee does not perceive any educational benefit to be achieved based on the information contained in the proposal.
- c. The principal, superintendent or designee believes that the time required to meet the needs of the therapy dog are inconsistent with the assigned duties of the school employee(s) proposed as the therapy dog's handler(s).
- d. The proposal is otherwise inconsistent with the needs of the school or school building.
- e. A parent, student, or staff member raises legitimate concerns regarding documented allergies, extreme phobias, or religious considerations.
- f. The therapy dog is wandering the school unleashed.
- g. Conditions of therapy dog approval are not followed.

Approved therapy dogs:

- a. Must be at least one year old.
- b. Must be house-broken.
- c. Must be current on all vaccinations and immunizations.
- d. Needs to reside with the handler a minimum of six months before initiating work with the school.
- e. Zero bite policy – any therapy dog that bites, or attempts to bite, a person or an animal will not be allowed back on any district property.
- f. Must always be on a leash and/or under the control of the handler.
- g. Injured or sick animals (within the last 24 hours) will NOT be brought on district property.
- h. Must be clean and well groomed, including teeth and nails.
- i. Must have appropriate identification identifying it as a therapy dog at all times while on district property.

Any approved therapy dog may have its approval suspended or curtailed, at any time, for any reason. District employees shall not receive any additional pay, stipend, or compensation for providing the therapy dog or for being the handler and/or owner of the therapy dog. The supervision and care of the approved therapy dog is solely the responsibility of the therapy dog handler when the therapy dog is on district property. The therapy dog handler will assume full responsibility and liability for any damage to district property or injury to district staff, students, or others while the therapy dog is on district property.

This regulation is not intended to, and does not allow students, parents, or staff to bring emotional support animals onto district property. Individuals who bring an animal onto district property that does not meet the definition of a service animal or therapy dog approved pursuant to this regulation will be required to remove the animal from district property immediately. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary and/or trespass action.

4. Responsibility/Liability

Neither the district, nor its employees, are responsible for the cost, care, or supervision of the therapy dog. The owner/handler of the therapy dog is responsible for any and all damage caused by the dog at school, on school premises or at school activities.

All Other Animals on District Property

The district recognizes that under proper conditions animals can be an effective teaching aid. At the same time, the presence of animals can result in problems with allergies, indoor air quality, noise, sanitation and hygiene. Therefore, domesticated animals are not allowed on district property and will not be brought on district grounds, into schools or transported on district buses. This includes but is not limited to horses, dogs, cats, rabbits, rodents, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and other encaged, aquatic, or farm animals.

1. Requests for Animal Visitors

- a. All requests to have animal visitors (student or staff “Show and Tell,” for example) in the classroom or on school property during school hours must be submitted to the principal or designee in advance and in writing.
- b. Included in the request should be a description of the activity, type of animal, educational purpose/benefit, length of activity, and a plan for the care of the animal. Additionally, if applicable, the request should include verification that the animal is properly and currently licensed with the appropriate inoculations. The principal or designee has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of any animal visitor in the school.
- c. Prior to approving the request, the principal or designee shall determine whether any child has a health condition (such as allergies) that could be exacerbated by exposure to animals. Parents must be notified of the plans to have an animal in the classroom so that accommodations may be made for their student.
- d. Animals will be permitted in classrooms only for a specified and appropriate educational purpose and for the time necessary to achieve the educational goal. This exception is not intended to allow long-term, regular, or continuous animal visitors.

2. Teacher Responsibilities for Animal Visitors

- a. Teachers must assume primary responsibility for the proper treatment of animals in the classroom. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, the teacher must make arrangements for their care and safety.
- b. All fecal material must be cleaned from the cage of any mammal or rodent on a regular basis and an appropriate sanitizer used. Reptiles, fish, and insects must be cared for in a manner to minimize odor and maintain health.
- c. All animal food will be stored in metal containers with tight-fitting lids for pest prevention.
- d. Teachers are responsible for maintaining the living space for animals. Spilled food and/or bedding materials must be cleaned up daily. Cleaning of cages, habitats, dog beds, and disposal of animal waste will be performed by the teacher, not custodial staff.
- e. Animal waste must be disposed of in an outside dumpster.

3. Owner/Handler Responsibilities for Animal Visitors

Owners shall be solely responsible for the care/safety of their animals and for injuries sustained to the animal or to people due to the presence of the animals at the school.

4. Limitations

- a. No poisonous animals shall be brought into the school.

- b. No wild animals including skunks, raccoons, bats, squirrels, monkeys, amphibians or birds shall be allowed unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (i.e. zookeepers, veterinarians, etc.)
- c. No animals will be allowed free range in the facility or grounds.
- d. Horseback riding, pony rides and donkey basketball on school grounds or school parking lots is prohibited.
- e. Animals will remain in cages unless removed for short periods of time by individuals who have been trained to handle the animal. Students will be instructed in the care and handling of the animal.
- f. Children will not clean cages, aquariums, terrariums, or litter boxes, without parental permission and sanitation training.
- g. Dogs must be kept off all play areas, as well as student arrival and dismissal areas. All dogs must be kept on a leash with a maximum length of eight feet and must be kept under the owner's control at all times.
- h. District facilities will not be modified to accommodate an animal without Maintenance Department approval.