

Policy

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

It is the policy of the Mainland Regional High School District Board of Education (“Board”) to provide equal access and reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures for individuals with disabilities to participate in any program, service, activity, or opportunity provided by the Board; and to comply with applicable state and federal law related to service dogs for persons with disabilities, including any such person who is a student at, employed at, and/or visiting the Board’s schools or its school grounds. As used in this policy, disability means a physical and/or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual.

Visitors, students, faculty, staff, or other persons with a service animal shall be provided with this policy and referred to the Child Study Team Director for more information and/or advice on using a service animal in District facilities or on school grounds.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Revised 2009), and its implementing regulation, New Jersey law and the policy of the Board, a “service animal” is defined as *any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.*

A “service animal” is not an “emotional support animal” “companion animal,” or a “therapy animal.” A “companion animal” is prescribed for some disabilities for their calming influence, affection, stability or feeling of security.

If there are any questions as to whether a dog qualifies as a service animal for purposes of this policy, such determination will be made by the Director of Child Study Team Services. The Director of Child Study Team Services shall be permitted to make this determination based on the individual’s response to the following questions:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Notification of the Board’s decision whether to permit a service animal onto school property shall be made within five (5) business days of receipt of the Board’s Service Animal Request Form. Although the Board recommends that all visitors planning a short-term visit to school property provide advance notice in accordance with the foregoing, the Board also recognizes practical limitations with regard to advance notice requirements for short-term visitors.

Accordingly, the Board shall modify this Policy for a short-term visitor (e.g., on school grounds to watch a school play or for a basketball game) to exempt him/her from the advance notice requirements of this Policy.

The Director of Child Study Team Services will develop a comprehensive implementation plan addressing service animals in the school. The plan will include training to staff on service animals, the functions that service animals typically perform, and may address any the health and safety issues that might arise when a service animal is in school property. This plan shall be developed and implemented within (3) months of the date of this policy.

Adopted: May 16, 2016, June 13, 2016

Legal References: 28 CFR:35.136
 28 CFR:36.104

Possible Cross References: 1331 Animals on School Property