

Montessori School in Kleinburg – Service Animal Policy

Effective January 1, 2020

Background

The Montessori School in Kleinburg (MSK) is committed to providing an equitable and safe learning environment for our school community. This includes providing accommodation for students who identify as a person with a disability that require a service animal to provide support.

Traditionally, a service animal is a dog and dogs remain the most common species; however other species may also provide services to individuals with disabilities. The functions these animals provide are diverse and may include sensory, medical, therapeutic and emotional support services.

Definitions

There are two (2) recognized groups of trained service animals to accommodate the needs of individuals who identify as disabled or with special needs:

1. **Guide Dogs** – Effective July 1, 2016, [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07](#) is now part of the [Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Act](#) which refers to the definition of a guide dog.
As per these policies, a “guide dog” means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and has the qualifications prescribed by the regulations.
2. **Service Animals** – [Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Act](#) states that a service animal is one that is being used by a person for reasons relating to the person’s disability. They are visually identified by a special vest or harness. The person must be required to provide documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals where they indicate the animal is required for support. These regulated health professionals must be one of the following:
 - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech- Language Pathologists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. ([Ontario Regulation 165/16, s. 16](#))

Service Animals at MSK

The Process

- In the event a student of MSK requires a service animal to be on the school property or at school-related events (i.e. field trips or outings), parents/guardians are to contact MSK Administrators to request a meeting with the classroom teacher, Resource Department Head and Principal to determine whether the accommodation can be met. For this meeting parents/guardians must be prepared to bring documentation regarding the specific animal's duties and requested accommodations. This includes:
 - Health records of animals including date of birth (as only adult service animals are allowed on school property for safety reasons), training or certification of the service animal, medical history and vaccination records.
 - Medical documentation from one of the above mentioned regulated medical professionals on how the service animal supports the student's learning/disability needs.
 - Information on disability-related needs and learning needs of the student.
- Staff involved in the meeting and discussion of said service animal will practice the utmost discretion and respect the student's privacy.
- In the event MSK *approves* the request for a service animal, MSK reserves the right to the following information:
 - Annual records from the service animal's medical assessment along with vaccination records.
 - How the service animal will provide support to the student.
 - Who will be the handler of the service animal at school and in doing so provide care (i.e. food, drink and hygiene).
 - Training and guidelines on how staff and students should behave and address the service animal.
 - The service animal has an identifiable vest or harness when on school property or at school-related events.
 - Determine a reasonable timeline for when the service animal can begin its work on MSK grounds.
- In the event MSK *does not* approve the request for the service animal, MSK will provide a written statement that outlines why the request was denied in a reasonably timely manner.

Health and Safety

MSK will provide students, parents/guardians and staff who may be in direct contact with the service animal to hear and address their concerns such as allergies, anxiety or fear. MSK will work with those to minimize conflict through cooperative collaboration to determine how the school can support them.

Training

In the event a service animal is deemed necessary to support a student at MSK, MSK will arrange for appropriate training for any party who will be in direct contact with the animal.