



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Lincoln, Massachusetts

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**DRAFT**  
**SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOL (GUIDE OR ASSISTANCE DOGS)**

The Lincoln Public Schools does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs in accordance with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For the purpose of this policy, a “service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Upon approval, reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures will be considered to permit the use of other trained service animals. When considering other service animals to be approved, the Superintendent or designee will determine whether the school or facility can accommodate the animal’s, size and weight and if their presence compromises the legitimate safety requirements necessary for the safe operation of the school or facility.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a “service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices”. When this is the case, “the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or effective controls”.

Proof of current rabies vaccination will be required when dogs or other applicable service animals are allowed in school or on school grounds. In addition, animals must be clean, healthy and free of fleas, mites and ticks.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several types of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples of supports include, but are not limited to animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as “guide dogs”;
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments;
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance issues and;
- assist individuals with health disabilities to alert them to specific health issues.

The district shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the building Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parent/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understand this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance dog in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Americans with Disabilities Act (2010)

SOURCE: MASC February 2011

CROSS REF: Massachusetts Department of Health, "Animals in the Classroom: Recommendations for Schools", December 2003