

Administrative Procedure 152 – Appendix B

THERAPY DOG PLANNING CHECKLIST

The principal provides a copy of *AP 152 Therapy Dogs in Schools* and this checklist to the therapy dog handler and reviews the documents together.

The principal receives proof from the therapy dog handler of training certification, up-to-date vaccinations, dog license, and proof the dog is in good health and forwards this information to the Superintendent of Schools.

The principal shares the rationale for the inclusion of a therapy dog with staff, invites staff input around planning considerations based on students in classes where the therapy dog may be present, and gathers information regarding allergies, phobias, or other concerns. A therapy dog may be excluded from the school or parts of the school when there is a risk to the health or physical and/or mental well-being of students or staff

The principal sets up a team meeting to discuss concerns or questions brought forward by the staff. Target classrooms and students should also be discussed.

A planning meeting with the therapy dog handler should be arranged with the following discussed:

- The purpose and function of the therapy dog and the support it will provide students in areas such as the following: anxiety, self-regulation, trauma, social skills, compassion and empathy, self-esteem, memory, problem solving, and/or motivation to move.
- Clarification that the handler is solely responsible for the overall care and any costs associated with the therapy dog.
- Plan for personal care of the therapy dog during the school day including bio breaks and disposal of waste.
- Plan for educating the school staff on the role of the therapy dog and the rules of conduct concerning interactions with the dog. Include plans for classroom and other areas of school such as hallway and recess if applicable. Consider routines that need to be established and expectations/rules of conduct for students and staff around the therapy dog.
- Discuss which areas of the school the therapy dog will have access to and what entrance will be used.
- Discuss dates/plan for integration of the therapy dog to the school and/or classes.

The principal will ask the therapy dog handler to complete the Agreement for Therapy Dog Service and will forward a copy to the Superintendent of Schools.

Once the plan to integrate a therapy dog has been established, the principal will send a letter home to parents/guardians of students in the school to inform them, and offer to answer questions or address any concerns. The principal will also inform the School Community Council.

Arrange for the therapy dog to first visit the school when students are not present in order to familiarize the dog to the school site and facilitate planning

Collaborate with the handler to develop an appropriate emergency plan that will include a plan for evacuation, lock down, fire drills, and any other relevant procedures

Ensure signage is placed on each entry door of the school to inform visitors of the presence of a therapy dog (Please be aware a Certified Therapy Dog may be present in our school to support various student learning and well-being goals).

Monitor and review documentation annually to ensure that all certification, vaccination, licenses, and agreement is updated.

Maintain open communication with parents/guardians, staff, and School Community Council to proactively address concerns as they arise.