

## **SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOL AND AT SCHOOL EVENTS**

### **PURPOSE**

The Chariho Regional School District acknowledges its responsibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act to permit students and/or adults with disabilities to be accompanied by a “service animal” in its school buildings, in classrooms, on school transportation, and at school functions (including field trips) as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR Part 35. Service animals are not pets but are working animals that perform some of the tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves, such as guiding persons with visual impairments, alerting persons with hearing impairments, or assisting persons with mobility impairments.

As defined by the Act, service animals are individually trained to perform specific tasks and to work with individuals with disabilities. According to the ADA, disabilities can be physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. The work of the service animal must be directly related to the handler’s disability. The need for a service animal accommodation is determined at an IEP or 504 meeting.

### **GENERAL NOTATIONS**

Students and/or adults with disabilities may be accompanied by a “service animal” in school buildings, in classrooms, and at school functions as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR Part 35, subject to the following:

1. The definition of “service animal” is limited to a dog or, in certain rare circumstances, a miniature horse. Other types of animals, wild or domestic, do not qualify as “service animals”.
2. All requests for individual students or staff with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be addressed in writing to the Director of Special Education, 455A Switch Road, Wood River Junction, RI 02894, and must contain required documentation of vaccinations. This written request must be delivered at least ten (10) business days prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school function. A letter of diagnosis from the handler’s doctor or psychiatrist, to include documentation of the need for a service animal at school and/or at school events and tasks that will be performed by the service animal that cannot be performed by the individual with disabilities, must accompany the request.
3. Service dogs are allowed to accompany visitors and parents/guardians to Chariho schools, so long as all visitor procedures are followed, without the notification required in #2 and so long as the presence of the service dog does not create risk of harm or disruption.
4. Owners of a service dog must provide annual proof of the following vaccinations: DHLPPC (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza, Parvovirus, and Coronavirus), Bordetella, and Rabies. The service dog must wear an up-to-date Rabies tag on its collar.

5. Owners of a service miniature horse must provide annual proof of the following vaccinations: Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins Test), Rabies, Tetanus, Encephalomyelitis, Rhinopneumonitis, Influenza, and Strangles.
6. All service dogs must be spayed or neutered.
7. All service animals must be treated for, and kept free of, fleas and ticks.
8. All service animals must be kept clean and groomed to avoid shedding and dander.
9. Owners of service animals are liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property.
10. The animal must be “required” for the individual with a disability.
11. The animal must be “individually trained” to do work or a task for the individual with a disability.
12. Special Provisions/Miniature Horses: Requests to permit a miniature horse to accompany a student or adult with a disability in school buildings, in classrooms, or at school functions will be handled on a case-by-case basis, considering:
  - (a) The type, size, and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features.
  - (b) Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse.
  - (c) Whether the miniature horse is housebroken.
  - (d) Whether the miniature horse’s presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation.
13. Removal of a Service Animal: A school administrator may require that an individual with a disability or his/her parent(s) immediately remove a service animal from a school building, a classroom, or from a school function 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.
14. The service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler’s control.

15. The school district is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal, including walking the animal or responding to the animal's need to relieve itself.

(a) The school district is not responsible for providing a staff member to walk the service animal or to provide any other care or assistance to the animal.

(b) Students with service animals are expected to care for and supervise their animals. In the case of a young child or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or supervise his/her service animal, the parent is responsible for providing care and supervision of the animal. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the building administrator.

(c) The school district is not liable for any damage to persons, premises, property or facilities caused by the service animal including, but not limited to, clean up and stain removal.

16. If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction (or extreme and documented fear) to the animal or the student or staff member already has a plan in place that precludes the proximity of a service animal, school administration will work collaboratively to immediately alleviate the conflict in a reasonable manner. In light of the conflict, an alternative plan will be developed in collaboration with the Director of Special Education. Such plan will attempt to accommodate both individuals by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility. 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 parents/guardians of the students.

17. When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school, or in other school 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 District will provide, in cooperation with the family and student making the written request (#2), an orientation and training for students and staff likely to have contact with the service animal; the training shall include service animal etiquette.

Reference: ADA Regulations, 28 CFR part 35 (as amended, 2010)

Adopted and effective 9/24/19