
Medical/Health Supports Policy

Date Approved: December 2010

Review Date: December 2013

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- demonstrate the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's commitment to ensuring the provision of plans, programs, and/or services that will enable students with health/medical needs to attend and participate in school;
- share the responsibility for providing such plans, programs, and/or services with families and community agencies/partners; and
- ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environment.

Guiding Principles:

1. All health support services must be administered in a manner that respects, to the degree possible in the circumstances, the student's right to privacy, dignity, and cultural sensitivity.
2. All procedures related to medical/health supports for individual students will include consultation processes with families and, where required, appropriate service providers.
3. Students with special medical/health needs will be maintained in the school in which they are registered whenever possible; however, when this is not possible, students will be supported in appropriate facilities within the system to address their individual needs.
4. Procedures related to medical/health needs of individual students will address physician or health professional prescribed plans of care and relevant legislation and policies.
5. Medical/health services may be requested in accordance with the Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 81: Provision of Health Support Services in School Settings.
6. The designation of roles and responsibilities for medical/health support services in school settings does not preclude, in emergency situations, the provision of assistance by school board personnel.
7. Staff who provide health supports to students shall have full coverage under the Board's liability policies.
8. Services and supports as described in the directives contained within this policy shall be rendered by authorized personnel only (i.e., Board staff who have received pertinent information and training). Students and volunteers are not considered authorized personnel.

Intended Outcome:

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, in conjunction with the appropriate health care provider, will share the responsibility for providing school health support services to ensure that all school-aged children can attend and participate in school regardless of their special health support needs.

Responsibility: Superintendent with responsibility for Special Education

Definitions/Acronyms:

CCAC	: Community Care Access Centre
IEP	: Individual Education Plan
OT	: Occupational Therapist
PT	: Physiotherapist
PPM	: Ministry of Education’s Policy/Program Memorandum
EA	: Educational Assistant

Action Required:

- Ensure that a set of directives in the following areas, that outline specific medical/health procedures to be followed, are developed and regularly reviewed and updated:
 - Administration of Oral Prescription Medication;
 - Diabetes Management and Education;
 - Blood Borne Pathogens;
 - Anaphylaxis;
 - Pediculosis;
 - Use of Service Dogs in Schools;
 - Catheterization and Suctioning, Lifting, Positioning, and Physical Management;
 - Use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).
- Ensure that additional directives as may be required to address other specific medical/health conditions are developed, and then regularly reviewed and updated.

Progress Indicator:

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will work with Community Care Access Centre and other authorized service providers to facilitate supports such that students with medical/health needs are able to attend and participate in school.

References:

Legislation: Education Act
Ontario Human Rights Code
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Freedom of Information Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Policy/Program Memorandum 81: Provision of Health Support Services in a School Setting
Memorandum dated August 14, 1989, Catheterization and Suctioning
Sabrina’s Law

Pillar Policies: Diversity and Equity
Safe Schools

Policy: Transportation
Occupational Health and Safety
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (and related Policy Directives)

Plan: HWDSB Accessibility Plan



Medical / Health Support Policy

Policy Directive: Use of Service Dogs in Schools for Students with Special Needs

Date Approved:

Review Date:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicable Reference from the Policy

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to ensuring the provision of plans, programs, and/or services that will enable students with health or medical needs to attend and participate in school.

All health support services must be administered in a manner that respects, to the degree possible in the circumstances, the student's right to privacy, dignity, and cultural sensitivity.

Definition

A service dog is a dog that is being used because of a student's disability and this is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a physician or nurse. They are trained to assist students with their daily living activities. The use of service dogs is an intervention strategy that is recognized as an aid to students with special needs.

Examples of service dogs include dogs used by people who have vision loss, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety.

It is "readily apparent" that a dog is a service dog when it is obvious by its appearance or by what it is doing. For example, it may be readily apparent that a dog is a service dog if it is wearing a harness, saddle bags, a sign that identifies it as a service dog or has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario. It may also be readily apparent if the student is using the animal to assist him or her in doing things, such as opening doors or retrieving items.

Service dogs must be registered in Canada. They will generally have a black leather Special Skills Dog (SSD) harness and leash, and/or saddlebag or vest. They are given to individuals with the following disabilities: Physical, Blind or Low Vision, Deaf/Hearing Impaired, Autism Spectrum Disorder or a seizure disorder.

1.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 1.1 Principals will ensure that all staff, students and others are properly trained in how to interact with the student who is accompanied by a service dog.

2.0 PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Once the school has been notified, the procedure that follows will be put into place prior to the admittance of a service dog to the school.

3.0 PARENTAL PROCEDURES

- 3.1 Provide a letter to the school requesting permission for a service dog and outlining the benefits of having a service dog attend school with their child.
- 3.2 Provide a letter from a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, or from a member of the College of Psychologists confirming the diagnosis of a recognized special need, including a recommendation for the use of a service dog.
- 3.3 Provide a Certificate of Training for the service dog from the National Service Dogs Training Centre, or from another certified training centre.
- 3.4 Pay for any financial implications regarding the use and care of the service dog.
- 3.5 Annually, provide the school with proof of up-to-date vaccinations, a municipal service dog licence, and confirmation that the service dog is in good health.
- 3.6 Arrange for the personal care and physical needs of the service dog, including a once a day bio-break procedure.

4.0 PRINCIPAL PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Ensure that the use of a service dog is consistent with the needs or recommendations of the IPRC and/or IEP process.
- 4.2 Consult with the appropriate Superintendent of Education and the Superintendent of Special Education / Student Services prior to setting a meeting to discuss use of a service dog.
- 4.3 Arrange a meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s), classroom teacher(s), Special Education consultant, a representative of the service dog provider, the student (where appropriate), and other staff determined necessary, to discuss and develop a plan to determine:
 - 4.3.1 the purpose and function of the service dog;
 - 4.3.2 who will accompany and handle the service dog outside;
 - 4.3.3 personal care and physical needs of the service dog, such as:
 - 4.3.3.1 the safest and most environmentally sound place for the service dog to relieve itself;
 - 4.3.3.2 removal and disposal of animal waste;
 - 4.3.3.3 provision of a suitable container for waste that the dog handler can access, and
 - 4.3.3.4 considerations for seasonal changes, and inclement weather.
 - 4.3.4 classroom considerations such as seating arrangements;
 - 4.3.5 any necessary changes in routine and procedures, and program changes;

- 4.3.6 arrangements for the service dog to visit the school without students present in order to familiarize it with the school site;
- 4.3.7 a transition plan for the service dog and the student;
- 4.3.8 a timetable for the introduction of the service dog to the school and class;
- 4.3.9 a timetable for the training of the student's school team (i.e., principal; teacher(s); educational assistant(s); etc.)
- 4.3.10 rules of conduct around the service dog for students, staff, and the public; and
- 4.3.11 methods for disseminating and regulating such rules.
- 4.4 Inform all staff and the school council regarding the presence of the service dog.
- 4.5 Liaise with the appropriate Superintendent of Education and/or Special Education consultant to resolve any specific concerns or issues raised regarding the presence of a service dog.
- 4.6 Arrange for demonstrations by the service dog provider for the student body, staff, and/or the community as deemed necessary to provide education and awareness of the service dog in the school.
- 4.7 If applicable, ensure that the Manager: Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services is contacted regarding any transportation requirements.
- 4.8 Revise emergency procedures as required to include the service dog (ex., notification to the Fire Department regarding the existence of the service dog).
- 4.9 Post signs on each entry door of the school to advise visitors of the presence of a working service dog.
- 4.10 Inform the school's Superintendent and the Superintendent responsible for Special Education Services that a Service Dog is in place at the school, and, when/if the Service Dog is no longer going to be at the school.

5.0 COMMUNICATION

- 5.1 Letters will be distributed (samples attached) as follows to inform:
 - 5.1.1 the school community of the arrival of the service dog, its purpose, and rules regarding conduct around the service dog;
 - 5.1.2 the families of the students in any of the classes where the service dog will be present to elicit information concerning allergies, phobias, or religious considerations from the students' families;
 - 5.1.3 the families of any students who will be sharing transportation where the service dog will be present, where applicable.
- 5.2 All information regarding the service dog will be retained in the student's OSR.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
(SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

Date:

Dear Parent / Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a service dog in our school assisting one of our students.

This service dog is a highly trained companion for our student and is able to assist in many of the routine activities which may pose some challenges for this student. The child's right to have a service dog is protected under Human Rights legislation.

There will be information sessions at the school to integrate the service dog into our daily routines and all our students will be instructed as to the proper procedure regarding the service dog. They will be informed that the service dog is a working service dog and not a pet while at school.

Already, the service dog has been a benefit to the student, and we look forward to a lot of growth and learning together.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Sincerely,

Principal

Cc: Superintendent of Education; OSR

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN IN THE CLASS(ES)
(SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

Date:

Dear Parent / Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a service dog in our school assisting one of our students, and this student and the service dog will be a part of your child's class.

This service dog is a highly trained companion for our student and is able to assist in many of the routine activities which may pose some challenges for this student. The child's right to have a service dog is protected under Human Rights legislation.

There will be information sessions at the school to integrate the service dog into our daily routines and all our students will be instructed as to the proper procedure regarding the service dog. They will be informed that the service dog is a working service dog and not a pet while at school.

If you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of the service dog in your child's class, please contact me at the school.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Sincerely,

Principal

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THOSE SHARING TRANSPORTATION
(SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)**

Date:

Dear Parent / Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that there will be a service dog in our school assisting one of our students, and this student and that the service dog will be sharing transportation with your child daily to and from school.

This service dog is a highly trained companion for our student and is able to assist in many of the routine activities which may pose some challenges for this student. The child's right to have a service dog is protected under Human Rights legislation.

There will be information sessions at the school to integrate the service dog into our daily routines and all our students will be instructed as to the proper procedure regarding the service dog. They will be informed that the service dog is a working service dog and not a pet while at school.

If you have any specific concerns regarding the presence of the service dog on your child's mode of transportation, please contact me at the school.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Sincerely,

Principal

Cc: Superintendent of Education; OSR