

SUBJECT: USE OF THERAPY DOGS

The Wheatland-Chili Central School District supports the use of therapy dogs by employees or other qualified individuals (“Owner”) for the benefit of its students subject to the conditions of this policy.

A “therapy dog” is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Owner to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to school district students. Therapy dogs are not “service animals” as that term is used in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The therapy dog must be well-behaved and have a **patient, confident, and gentle** temperament that is suitable for interaction with students and others in a public school. Therapy dogs are personal property of the Owner and are not owned by the school district.

Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures

The following requirements must be satisfied before a therapy dog will be allowed in school buildings or on school grounds:

- Request: An Owner who wants to bring a therapy dog to school must submit a written request form to a Principal or the Superintendent. The written request must include the therapy dog’s current health/vaccination records, the therapy dog’s license, the Owner’s insurance policy covering the therapy dog’s activities within the public school setting, the therapy dog’s certification/registration to engage in therapy dog activities from a professional accrediting organization and the therapy dog’s proposed role in interacting with students. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy dog will be used. Approval may be rescinded at any time at the discretion of the Principal or Superintendent. A therapy dog may only interact with staff or students whose parents/guardians have provided informed written consent for their children to engage in such activities with the therapy dog.
- **Initial Placement: A therapy dog will be initially approved for a 90-day placement. The placement will be evaluated at the end of the 90 days for continuation.**
- Health and Vaccination: The therapy dog must be clean, well groomed, in good health, housebroken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs. The Owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the Owner’s responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. The Owner must submit proof of compliance with these ordinances, laws, and regulations upon requesting to bring a therapy dog to school.
- Control: A therapy dog must be under control of the Owner through the use of a harness, leash, or tether, at all times.

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SUBJECT: USE OF THERAPY DOGS (Cont'd.)

- No Disruption: The therapy dog must not disrupt the educational activities of the District.
- Health and Safety: The therapy dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school.
- Supervision and Care of Therapy Dogs: The Owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on school property. The Owner is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner. The Owner must always carry sufficient equipment to clean up the animal's waste. The owner is responsible for removing the animal during emergency evacuations.
- District Policies and Procedures: The Owner must abide by all equally applicable District policies such as assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the District.
- Insurance: The Owner must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the therapy dog while on school property.

Exclusion or Removal from School

A therapy dog may be excluded from school property and buildings if a school administrator determines that:

1. The Owner does not have control of the therapy dog.
2. The therapy dog is not house broken.
3. The therapy dog does not possess the required training/certification for performing therapy dog duties.
4. The therapy dog poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial damage to the property of others.
5. The therapy dog's presence interferes with the district's educational program.
6. The Owner does not comply with the Owner's responsibilities set forth in this Policy.

The Owner shall be required to remove the therapy dog from school premises immediately upon such a determination.

Allergic Reactions/Aversions

The Owner shall remove the therapy dog to a separate area as designated by a school administrator in instances where the therapy dog is in the presence of any student, school employee, or other individual on school grounds who suffer from dog allergies or aversions.

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Damages to School Property and Injuries

The Owner of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the therapy dog.

Therapy Dog in Training

This policy shall also be applicable to therapy dogs in training that are accompanied by a bona fide trainer.

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #8311 – Animals in the School (Instructional Purposes)
#3440 – Use of Service Animals
#3450 – Animals on School Grounds

Adopted: