



THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**2 BLACKBURN DRIVE
GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01930**

**TEL: 978-281-9800
FAX: 978-281-9899
WWW.GLOUCESTERSCHOOLS.COM**

PROGRAM SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, December 7, 2017
5:00 pm
District Office Conference Room
2 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

A G E N D A

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REPORTS/DELIBERATIONS/DISCUSSION

- *A. **Therapy Pet in School Policy — Matt Fusco, Veterans' Memorial School Principal**
- B. **Referral from School Committee Member regarding Consolidation of O'Maley Innovation Middle School and Gloucester High School**
- C. **Discussion items that were not reasonably anticipated by the Chairperson, in accordance with M.G.L., Chapter 30A, Section 18-25**

III. ACTION

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

**Attachments*

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The Gloucester School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations the following animals are prohibited from schools within the Gloucester School District.

Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals - Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in school buildings under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Fur-Bearing Animals (pet dogs,* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

Bats - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

Poisonous Animals - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

***Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs** - These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

The Gloucester School Committee 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 and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes 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.” The regulations further state that “a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.”

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

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

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 parents/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 understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student’s use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35

SOURCE: MASC February 2011

From MASC

File: IMG

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- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- assist individuals with mobility impairments with balance.

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 dog 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 dog will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which an 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 assignment. 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/guardian of the students.

When a student will be accompanied by an 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 understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her 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.

SOURCE: MASC February 2011

Therapy Animals

The school district supports the use of therapy animals by school personnel or volunteers (“Owner”) that have been certified with a pet therapy organization for the benefit of its students subject to the conditions of this policy.

A “therapy animal” is an animal that has been individually trained and certified to work with its Owner to provide emotional support, wellbeing, comfort, or companionship to school district students. Therapy animals are not “service animals” as that term is used in the American with Disabilities Act. The animals must be well behaved and have a temperament that is suitable for interaction with students and others in a public school. Therapy animals are personal property of the school employee or volunteer and are not owned by the school district.

Therapy Animal Standards and Procedures

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

Request

An Owner who wants to bring a therapy animal to school must submit a written request to the building principal. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different therapy animal will be used.

Certification

The Owner must submit proof of membership/certification with a recognized animal therapy organization, like Pet Partners. The membership/certification must remain current at all times.

Health and Vaccination

The therapy animal must be clean, well groomed, in good health, house broken, and immunized. The Owner must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the therapy animal’s current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian.

Control

A therapy animal must be under the control of the school employee or volunteer through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would interfere with the therapy animal's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the therapy animal must be under the owner's control at all times.

Identification

The therapy animal must have appropriate identification identifying it as a therapy animal.

No Disruption

The therapy animal must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or any other behavior.

Health and Safety

The therapy animal must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school.

Supervision and Care of Therapy Animals

The Owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy animal, including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on school property. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a therapy animal.

Authorized Area(s)

The Owner shall only allow the therapy animal to be in areas in school buildings or on school property that are authorized by school district administrators.

Exclusion or Removal from School

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

1. A handler does not have control of the therapy animal;
2. The therapy animal is not housebroken;
3. The therapy animal presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; or
4. The animal's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process.

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

Allergic Reactions

If any student or school employee assigned to a classroom in which a therapy animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the therapy animal, the Owner of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by an administrator.

Damages to School Property and Injuries

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

Therapy Animal in Training

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

Use of Therapy Dogs in Schools

The school district supports the use of therapy dogs for the benefit of its students subject to the conditions of this policy. Benefits from working or visiting with a therapy dog include reduced stress, improved physical and emotional well being, lower blood pressure, decreased anxiety, improved self esteem and normalization of the environment, increasing the likelihood of successful academic achievement by the student. Examples of activities that students may engage in with a therapy dog include petting and/or hugging the dog, speaking to the dog, giving the dog simple commands that the dog is trained to respond to and reading to the dog.

Animal Assisted Activities and Animal Assisted Interactions are non goal-driven interactions where the specific content of the visit is spontaneous and is meant to provide motivational, educational and/or recreational activities that enhance the quality of life.

Animal Assisted Therapy is a goal-driven intervention which is directed and/or delivered by a health, human or education service professional and is meant to improve physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive functioning of an individual.

A therapy dog is a dog who has been individually trained, evaluated and registered with his/her handler to provide animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy and animal assisted interactions within a school or other facility. Therapy dogs are not "emotional support animals" or "service animals."

A handler is an individual school district staff member or volunteer who owns a therapy dog and who has been individually trained, evaluated and registered with his/her therapy dog to provide animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy and animal assisted interactions within a school or other facility.

A therapy dog is the personal property of the handler and is not the property of the school district. The handler shall assume full responsibility for the therapy dog's care, behavior and suitability for interacting with students and others in the school while the therapy dog is on school district property.

Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures

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

Request: At the request of the principal or the principal's designee, a handler who wishes to bring a therapy dog to school district property shall submit a completed written request form to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee, for approval. (The request form is attached to this policy.) The request shall be submitted for approval each school year and/or whenever the handler wishes to use a different therapy dog. Such approval may be rescinded at any time at the sole discretion of the superintendent. Once the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee approves the request, a plan for dog visits shall be developed with the Principal or the Principal's designee.

Training and Registration: The handler shall submit proof of registration as a therapy dog handler with each individual therapy dog he or she plans to bring to the school district. Such registration shall be from the Intermountain Therapy Dog, Pet Partners, Bright and Beautiful or such other therapy dog registering organization as determined by the superintendent. Such registration shall be from an organization that requires an evaluation of the therapy dog and handler prior to registration and at least every two years and shall remain current and in good standing at all times.

Health and Vaccination: The handler shall submit proof from a licensed veterinarian that the therapy dog is in good health and has been immunized against diseases common to dogs. Such vaccinations shall be kept current and up to date all times.

Licensing: The handler shall submit proof of licensure from the local dog licensing authority.

Insurance: The handler must submit a copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the work of the handler and therapy dog while the two are on school district property.

Once a handler has been approved by the superintendent to bring a therapy dog on school district property, such handler shall adhere to the rules of his/her registering organization and the following rules of the school district:

Identification: The handler and therapy dog shall wear appropriate identification issued by the registering organization identifying them as a registered handler and therapy dog. The handler shall bring only registered therapy dogs onto school district property and may bring only one such dog at a time. The handler shall not bring young children along to the school district when handling a therapy dog.

Health and Safety: The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog does not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school and that the therapy dog is brought to the school district only when properly groomed, bathed, free of illness or injury and of the temperament appropriate for working with children and others in the schools.

Control: The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog wears a collar or harness and a leash no longer than four feet and shall maintain control of the therapy dog by holding the leash at all times that the therapy dog is on school district property, including during breaks, unless holding such leash would interfere with the therapy dog's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. However, the handler shall maintain control of the therapy dog at all times and shall not tether the therapy dog to any individual or object.

Supervision and Care of Therapy Dog: The handler shall be solely responsible for the supervision and humane care of the therapy dog, including any feeding, exercising, and cleaning up after the therapy dog while the therapy dog is in a school building or on school property, shall not leave the therapy dog unsupervised or alone on school property at any time and shall limit the therapy dog's work to two consecutive hours at a time.. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision or assistance to the therapy dog.

Authorized Area(s): The handler shall ensure that the therapy dog has access to only such areas of the school buildings or properties that have been authorized by school district administrators.

Allergies and Aversions: The handler shall remove the therapy dog to a separate area as designated by the school administrator in such instances where any student or school employee who suffers dog allergies or aversions is present in an office, hallway or classroom.

Recordkeeping: Volunteer handlers shall sign themselves and their therapy dog in upon arrival at any school and shall sign both out on departure from the building. Handlers who are school district staff shall sign in their therapy dog upon arrival and sign him/her out on their departure.

Photographs: The handler shall not take any photographs of students or staff without first obtaining a photo release.

Fees and Gratuities: The handler shall not charge a fee for the work they perform with the therapy dog, shall not borrow money or personal items or receive any personal gratuity, gift or tip, such as money or jewelry from students in the district.

Multiple Therapy Dogs on Site: The handler shall confirm whether or not there will be any other therapy dog(s) on site prior to scheduling any visit with a therapy dog and shall take steps with appropriate staff to ensure that the dogs do not engage inappropriately while on school property. When multiple therapy dogs are engaged in a planned activity on school district property, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs have an opportunity to greet each other prior to entering the school building. Once inside the building, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs are each on a four-foot leash, given work space at least eight feet from each other and are given no opportunity for contact or socialization with each other while working.

Damages and Injuries: The handler shall assume full responsibility and liability for any damage to school property or injury to district staff, students or others in the school caused by the therapy dog.

Exclusion or Removal from School District Property: A therapy dog may be excluded from school district property if a school administrator determines that: (1) The handler does not have control of the therapy dog; (2) The therapy dog is not housebroken; (3) The therapy dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school; or (4) The therapy dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational program. The handler shall immediately remove his/her therapy dog from school property when instructed to do so by a school administrator.

Adopted: 5-9-16

Manchester Public Schools
Request to use Therapy Dog in School

Board of Education Policy 6213 governs the use of therapy dogs in schools. The request shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools (or Designee) for approval each school year and/or whenever the handler wishes to use a different therapy dog.

Name of Handler:

Date:

Handler Address:

Handler Phone Number:

Handler Email:

Name of Dog:

School where the Dog will be used:

Please describe, in detail, what the dog will do at the school?

Please attach the following to this form:

- Proof of registration as a therapy dog handler with the individual therapy dog to be used (*Note: Such registration shall be from an organization that requires an evaluation of the therapy dog and handler prior to registration and at least every two years*)
- Proof from a licensed veterinarian that the therapy dog is in good health and has been immunized against diseases common to dogs. Such vaccinations shall be kept current and up to date all times.
- Proof of licensure from the local dog licensing authority.
- Copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the work of the handler and therapy dog while the two are on school district property.

Handler's Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

Superintendent's (or Designee's) Signature

Date



Therapy Dogs Policy

General

The School, in recognizing the educational uses of animals in the classroom, requires that permission be obtained from the SMT before animals are brought in to the school or classrooms. It is the SMT's responsibility to ensure that there is appropriate educational purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom. Animals are not to be transported on school buses.

Any school which cares for or uses animals for study shall ensure that each animal in such school be afforded the following: Appropriate quarters; sufficient space for the normal behaviour and postural requirements of the species; proper ventilation, lighting and temperature control; adequate food and clean drinking water and quarters which shall be cleaned on a regular basis and located in an area where undue stress and disturbance are minimized.

Animals in school must be properly housed, handled, and cared for and only the teacher or those students designated by the teacher are to handle animals.

It shall be the responsibility of the SMT to develop a plan of care of those animals housed in school in the event of emergency such as fires or school evacuation.

Therapy Dogs

Cavendish School supports in the use of dogs programme for the academic, social and emotional benefit of its students.

A therapy dog is a dog trained to provide affection and comfort to students in the school. The most important characteristic of a therapy dog is its temperament. A good therapy dog must be friendly, patient, confident, at ease in all situations and gentle. Therapy dogs must enjoy human contact and be content to be petted and handled, sometimes clumsily. A therapy dog's primary job is to allow unfamiliar people to make physical contact with it and to enjoy that contact.

The following minimum standards shall be in effect for all dogs approved to serve in the school.

- A therapy dog must be clean, well-groomed, and not have an offensive odor.
- A therapy dog does not urinate or defecate in inappropriate locations.
- A therapy dog does not annoy any member of the student's body or school personnel by seeking attention.
- A therapy dog does not vocalize unnecessarily.
- A therapy dog shows no aggression towards people or other animals.
- A therapy dog does not solicit or steal food or other items from student body or school personnel.
- A therapy dog does not pose health or safety threat to any student, personnel or other persons.

Therapy dogs are independently owned by school staff and must meet standards of health as prescribed by veterinarians at owner's expense. The school district bears no financial responsibility for the care or feeding of the animal.

Prior approval, owners shall provide to the SMT:

- Proof of current inoculations
- Proof of health, such as a current health certificate from a veterinarian.
- Visible cleanliness of dog with no sign of fleas/ticks.
- A visually healthy, alert and not glossy over or under weight dog.
- Proof of physical and stool sample.
- Proof of heartworm test.
- A copy of the owner's current homeowner's insurance policy.

These same requirements must be met on an annual basis, prior to the start of any school year.

The SMT shall notify parents on an annual basis regarding the presence of therapy dogs in the school building.

Cavendish School

Sara Craggs
Head Teacher

Policy Reviewed: September 2013
Review Date: September 2014