



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

660 West Daley Street

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Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588

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Phone: 608-588-2551

(NEW) 834.1

Therapy Animals

Certified therapy animals with their owners/handlers as Certified Therapy Animal Teams provide academic, emotional and physical support in the educational setting. These highly trained animals model good behavior, tolerance and acceptance. All Certified Therapy Animal Teams in the River Valley School District work to support and positively influence student achievement and social and emotional wellbeing.

Therapy animals are animals trained and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the animal as a team, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession.

A therapy animal has been temperament tested by a trainer affiliated with an organization recognized as qualified to do temperament testing. Such animals, with their handlers, perform such therapeutic functions in institutional settings and community-based group settings.

Professional therapy dogs have passed a Therapy Dogs International (TDI) test or District approved equivalent.

The definition of a therapy animal does not include a service animal as that term is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and Board of Education Policy 834. All requests by District employees, students, and members of the public to be accompanied by service animals on District property shall be addressed through Policy 834 and not through this policy.

Documentation for Therapy Animals

Professional Therapy Animals may be used in the school setting on a regular basis when the following documentation has been provided by the animal's handler:

- Written proof or Certificate of the above mentioned TDI or equivalent test.
- Proof of insurance (minimum \$1 million liability coverage)
- Current health records
 - A record of Annual vaccinations received by the animal and signed by the veterinarian; these health records should be kept on file in the school building and should include evidence of the following treatments/vaccination/check ups.
 - Rabies (1 or 3 years, by a veterinarian),
 - Distemper,
 - Hepatitis,
 - Paravovirus,,
 - Leptospirosis and Parainfluenza (at discretion of your veterinarian),
 - Annual check-up attested to by a veterinarian that the pet is physically and mentally healthy and free of contagious disease,
 - Fecal check, required even if the animal is on preventative medicine,
 - Heartworm check and/or listing of preventative medications,
 - Kennel cough vaccine is strongly encouraged,

- It is required that the therapy animal is on a flea/tick control program-animals should not make a visit within 24 hours of topical application.

Maintenance of a Therapy Animal

For the wellbeing of the therapy animal and safety of the students, the following requirements must be met:

- The animal should be groomed and bathed regularly. For animals in a working environment, monthly to bi-monthly baths are recommended, as is daily brushing (good judgment should be used based on the animal's hair, skin, and dander concerns.) The owner/handler must also ensure proper health care through regular (several times weekly) brushing of the animal's teeth, regular nail trimming as needed, and weekly cleaning/checking of the animal's ears.
- Therapy animals should have no open sores, diarrhea, cough, sniffles, sneezes or eye conjunctivitis. Visits are restricted for a period of 1 week following any of these conditions. Any surgical incision needs to be totally healed.
- Therapy animals should not be fed raw foods or treats as these are extremely high carriers of Salmonella.

Use of a Therapy Animal

Administrative Approval

- The use of the animal or animals must be approved by the building administrator. The building administrator will notify the District Administrator.
- A letter stating this approval should be written and kept on file in the school building.

Family Notification

Prior to a therapy animal entering onto District property, the building administrator, or designee, of the school to which the therapy animal is assigned will notify families of students enrolled in the school of the therapy animal's presence.

- If the building administrator is notified of a student's or employee's allergy to animal dander or fear of animals, the District will make reasonable accommodations to avoid any negative impact to a student or employee.
- Therapy animals will be kept on a leash at all times during visits with students. The leash should be clean, nylon or leather and no longer than 6 feet in length. The handler may remove the therapy animal's leash when the handler is present and a leash is either not required or an impediment to the therapy animal providing support to a student.
- The therapy animal handler must be the one in control of the leash.
- Therapy animals should be restricted from licking or being fed by staff and students.
 - For anyone who is known to have Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) it is recommended that one's hands be washed before and after touching the therapy animal.
- Therapy animals will be permanently removed from the program if any of the following occur:
 - A bite
 - Any aggressive behavior
 - Any indication that the animal is not house trained.

The presence of a therapy animal is at the sole discretion of the building administrator and the privilege to bring the animal into the school setting may be terminated at any time should the handler or animal behave in a way deemed unprofessional or unsafe.

Legal Reference: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 Wis. Stat. 106.52, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

Cross Reference: Policy 834 Service Animals
 Policy 836 Animals on School Premises
 Policy 861 School Volunteers
 Policy 411 Nondiscrimination/Equal Education Opportunities