



# RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

660 West Daley Street

≈

Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588

≈

Phone: 608-588-2551

---

834.1

## Certified Therapy Animals

Certified therapy animals with their qualified 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.

Certified 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 qualified handler's occupation or profession.

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

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

The definition of a certified therapy animal DOES NOT include a service animal, as that term is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and Policy 834 Service Animals. All requests by District employees, students, and members of the public to have animals on District property shall be made through Policy 836 Exhibit Animals in the School Request Form.

## Documentation for Certified Therapy Animals

Professional Certified Therapy Animals may be used in the school setting on a regular basis when the following documentation has been provided by the animal's qualified handler and a request is made using Policy 836 Exhibit Animals in the School Request Form:

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

### **Maintenance of a Certified Therapy Animal**

For the wellbeing of the certified therapy animal and safety of the students and staff, 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 qualified handlers 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.
- Certified 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.
- Certified therapy animals should not be fed raw foods or treats as these are extremely high carriers of Salmonella.

### **Use of a Certified 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 certified therapy animal entering onto District property, the building administrator, or designee, of the school to which the certified therapy animal is assigned will notify families of students enrolled in the school of the certified 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.
- Certified 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 qualified handler may remove the certified therapy animal's leash when the qualified handler is present and a leash is either not required or an impediment to the certified therapy animal providing support to a student.
- The certified therapy animal qualified handler must be the one in control of the leash.
- Certified 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 certified therapy animal.
- Certified 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 certified 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 qualified 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 836 Exhibit Animals in the School Request Form  
                          Policy 861 School Volunteers  
                          Policy 411 Nondiscrimination/Equal Education Opportunities

APPROVED:     June 8, 2023