

School District of Lodi Therapy Dogs Program Policy

Definition of Therapy Dog

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

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

A therapy dog has been temperament tested by a trainer affiliated with an organization recognized as qualified to do temperament testing. Such dogs, 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 dog does not include a service animal as that term is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and Board of Education Policy 383.1. 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 383.1 and not through this Policy.

Documentation for Therapy Dogs

Professional Therapy Dogs may be used in the school setting on a regular basis when the following documentation has been provided by the dog'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 dog 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,
- Parvovirus,
- 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 dog is on preventative medicine,
- Heartworm check and/or listing of preventative medications,
- Kennel cough vaccine is strongly encouraged,
- It is required that the therapy dog is on a flea/tick control program-dogs should not make a visit within 24 hours of topical application.

Maintenance of a Therapy Dog

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

- The dog should be groomed and bathed regularly. For dogs in a working environment, monthly to bi-monthly baths are recommended, as is daily brushing (good judgment should be used based on the dog's hair, skin, and dander concerns.) The owner/handler must also ensure proper health care through regular (several times weekly) brushing of the dog's teeth, regular nail trimming as needed, and weekly cleaning/checking of the dog's ears.
- Therapy dogs 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 dogs should not be fed raw foods or treats as these are extremely high carriers of Salmonella.

Use of a Therapy Dog

- Administrative Approval
 - The use of the dog or dogs 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 dog entering onto District property, the building administrator, or designee, of the the school to which the therapy dog is assigned will notify families of students enrolled in the school of the therapy

dog's presence.

- If the building administrator is notified of a student's or employee's allergy to dog dander or fear of dogs, the District will make reasonable accommodations to avoid any negative impact to a student or employee.
- Therapy dogs 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 dog's leash when the handler is present and a leash is either not required or an impediment to the therapy dog providing support to a student.
- The therapy dog handler must be the one in control of the leash.
- Therapy dogs 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 dog.
- Therapy dogs will be permanently removed from the program if any of the following occur:
 - A bite,
 - Any aggressive behavior
 - Any indication that the dog is not house trained.

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