Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION:	300 - STUDENTS	**CODE:**	AP 306
PROCEDURE:	**ANIMAL VISITS IN SCHOOLS (SUPPORT, THERAPY, CLASSROOM VISITS)**		

BACKGROUND

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools is committed providing a safe, inclusive, caring, and positive school culture as well as facilitating social and emotional learning. Part of this education may include access to presentations and educational support from outside agencies which include the presence of a support/therapy animal.

Schools are encouraged to communicate with families when it comes to family pets and visiting during school time. To ensure a predictable and safe environment for all students, families are asked to leave household pets at home during pickup, drop-off, and school events.

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools is also committed to ensuring it operates within the legal mandate of all legislation in meeting the needs of all its students with consideration to the rights of all. When determining the appropriateness of a presentation/visit that includes a support/ therapy animal, schools must consider The Education Act, 1995, and The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

DEFINITION

Emotional Support/Therapy Animals – An emotional support/therapy animal is one that has been recognized as alleviating symptoms of certain emotional or mental disorders. Emotional support animals do not have the same training requirements as a service animal.

PROCEDURES

1. Determining Appropriateness of Support/Therapy/Classroom Visit Animals in Schools

    1.1 Schools who wish to have presentations and/or visits from an outside agency which includes the use of support/ therapy animals/animals for visits must consider the following:

        1.1.1 Determine if the presentation/visit is the best way to meet the educational and well-being goals of the school; and,

        1.1.2 Determine if the introduction of the support/therapy presentation or visit will impact on other medical restrictions currently in place for students/staff in the school.

    1.2 Schools must receive prior approval from the Superintendent.

2. If the presence of an animal is approved by the Principal and the Superintendent, then the following shall apply:

2.1 If other students/staff with medical restrictions will be affected by the presence of the support/therapy animal:

2.1.1. The principal shall determine how accommodation of all students/staff can best be achieved.

2.1.2. The parents/guardians of all students with medical restrictions who may be impacted by the presentation/visit will be informed.

2.1.3. The principal shall make the best effort to accommodate all students in consideration with all students' learning needs; and,

2.14. The principal will make plans regarding the entrance and exit of the support/therapy animal to the designated area for the presentation/visit as to restrict unnecessary movement within the school; signage and communication regarding times and dates of the presentation/visit; make the appropriate arrangements with facilities for cleaning after the presentation/visit.

2.2 Determine who will be participating in the presentation/visit and make plans for communication to all parents/guardians of these students.

2.3 The organization/presenter with the animal must:

2.3.1 Accept all liability that might be incurred as a result of the behaviour of the animal while being present at a school and indemnify the school division in writing;

2.3.2 Provide appropriate insurance coverage (third party liability coverage of not less than $2,000,000) naming and stating the Division's interest or injuries caused to the support/therapy animal and shall provide proof of such coverage prior to the presentation/visit; and,

2.3.3 Provide information in writing from the service agency who trained the animal indicating details around the personal care and physical needs of the service animal, including the safest and most environmentally sound place for the animal to relieve itself, the safe removal and disposal of animal waste, and considerations for seasonal changes and inclement weather.

3. The School Principal will:

3.1 Consult with the appropriate superintendent prior to setting a meeting to discuss the purpose of the animal presentation/visit;

3.2 Consider logistical arrangements in classrooms and hallways;

3.3 Inform all staff and the community regarding the presence of an animal for education purposes;

3.4 Post signs on each entry door of the school to advise visitors of the presence of an animal for educational purposes and the procedures and rules pertaining to the animal; and,

3.5 Retain the application, insurance and related documentation from the outside agency/presenters.

4. Considerations and limitations include:

4.1. The school division may impose reasonable conditions or restrictions relating to:

4.1.1 Restricting the presence of the animal to specific areas in the school;

4.1.2 May restrict the entrance and exit of the animal to specific entrance ways; and,

4.1.3 Exclusion from access to specific areas where required by other laws (i.e., food preparation areas).

4.2 The agreement to host presentations/visits by the agency with the support/therapy animal is reviewed annually and may be modified as required following the same process set out in this administrative procedure.

5. The application, insurance and related documentation will be retained on file with the principal.

5.1 Therein, for any damage caused by the animal/visit, the principal will initiate a review and gather any necessary documentation to be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer of the school division.

6. Communication Letters to be distributed are as follows to inform:

6.1 The school community of the arrival of the animal visit, timeline, its purpose and access/restrictions to students; and

6.2 The families of students participating in the presentation to elicit information concerning allergies/phobia considerations from the participants' families.

Appendix A (Agreement); Appendix B (Planning Checklist)

Reference:

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