

TOPEKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	REGULATION NUMBER: 2840-01
SUBJECT:	DATE OF ISSUE: 04/13/15
USE OF THERAPY DOGS OR PET VISITATION DOGS AT SCHOOL	REVISIONS:
	PREPARING OFFICE:
	TEACHING/LEARNING/ADMINISTRATION

I. PURPOSE:

To establish procedures and guidelines for the care and use of professional therapy dogs, facility dogs, or pet visitation dogs at school.

II. Definitions

- A. A “professional therapy dog” is a dog which is selected, 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. The term does not include dogs, certified or not, which are used by volunteers for pet visitation therapy. Professional therapy dogs are not service animals.
- B. A “facility dog” is a dog specially trained to work with a professional in the field of education, counseling, medicine, rehabilitation, retirement or other specialty agencies.
- C. A “pet visitation dog” is a dog that has been obedience trained and screened for its ability to interact favorably with humans and other animals and has received registration and/or recognition for volunteer pet visitation. The primary purpose of a pet visitation dog is to provide affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, schools, hospices, disaster areas, and to people with learning difficulties. The presence of a dog for comfort, protection or personal defense does not qualify a dog as being trained to mitigate an individual's disability and therefor does not qualify the dog as an assistance dog covered under Kansas law.

III. Professional Therapy Dogs and Facility Dogs

- A. Professional therapy dogs, with their handlers, perform specific physical or therapeutic functions in institutional settings, community-based group settings, or when providing services to specific persons who have disabilities. Similarly, facility dogs are specially trained to work with a professional in the field of education, counseling, rehabilitation or other specialty area relevant to a school.
- B. A professional therapy dog or facility dog must be temperament-tested by a trainer affiliated with an organization recognized as qualified to do temperament testing.

- C. Professional therapy dogs and facility dogs and their handlers must pass a Public Access Test administered by a trainer/evaluator recognized by TPS for this purpose. (A list of approved trainers/evaluators is in the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/Administration.)**
- 1. Handlers and their dogs shall be administered the Public Access Test for re-evaluation during their first year of service and then every two years thereafter.**
 - a. The Public Access re-tests may be administered by a trainer/evaluator recognized by TPS.**
 - b. A certificate showing that the re-test has been taken should be kept in the handler's building and a copy should be kept in the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/ Learning/ Administration.**
 - 2. Professional therapy dogs or facility dogs are owned by a professional educator in TPS who wishes to use the dog to augment his/her educational program.**
 - 3. Dog Handler Ethics: In the school setting, professional therapy dog or facility dog handlers shall comply with the attached Dog Handler Ethics provisions.**
- D. Professional therapy dogs or facility dogs may be used in the school setting on a regular basis when the following documentation is in place:**
- 1. Administrative Approval**
 - a. The use of the animal or animals by their handlers must be approved by the administrator of the building or buildings in which the dog handler works.**
 - b. A letter granting approval should be written and kept on file in the building in which the dog handler works. A copy should be sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/ Administration.**
 - 2. Health Records**
 - a. The owner/handler must provide a record of annual vaccinations received by the dog and signed by a veterinarian; these health records should be kept on file in the school building and the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/ Administration's office.**
 - 1) The dog should receive a bordatella vaccination and a five-way parvo/distemper vaccination annually and rabies vaccination once every three years. Proof of such vaccination or of titer testing for immunity shall be provided to the building administrator on an annual basis.**

- 2) The dog should be given a comprehensive wormer or a fecal check for worms annually.
 - 3) The dog should be checked for external parasite control.
 - 4) The dog should be groomed and bathed regularly.
3. Temperament Test/Public Access Test Documentation
- a. A copy of the Public Access Test certificate of completion should be kept on file in the school building and Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/Administration office.
 - 1) A certificate certifying that the handler and dog both passed the Public Access Test must be sent by the certifying institution directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/Administration.
 - 2) Records of advanced obedience, agility, or other training may be kept updated in the employee's file.
- E. The privilege to bring the dog into the school setting may be terminated should the handler or dog behave in a way deemed unprofessional or unsafe.

V. Pet Visitation Dogs - definition

- A. A pet visitation dog is a dog owned by a volunteer or student who is NOT employed by TPS but who has received registration and/or recognition for volunteer pet visitation.
1. Pet visitation dogs are not Professional Therapy Dogs.
 2. For a pet visitation dog to be used on a volunteer basis, these guidelines must be followed:
 - a. If the handler of the dog is an employee of TPS, the dog and handler should be certified under the Professional Therapy Dog of Facility Dog guidelines listed above.
 - b. Unless permission is granted by the Building Administrator, a pet visitation dog may be used with the same students no more often than one visitation per week for a two-hour interval of time.
 - (1) The building principal may grant exceptions to this requirement if s/he believes it is in the best interests of students.
 - (2) Any exception shall be documented in writing and include an explanation of why the exception was granted and how students will benefit.
- B. The following documents must be kept on file in the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/ Learning/Administration's office and the building in which the pet visitation dog is used.
1. Current certification/registration from the therapy dog organization doing the evaluation and testing. Only dogs registered with Therapy

Dogs International (DI)P, Therapy Dogs Incorporated (TDInc.) or Delta Society Pet Partners are allowed. On-line certification is not acceptable.

- 2. Current veterinary records of worming schedules, annual vaccinations for five-way Parvo and bordatella and vaccinations at least once every three years for rabies.**
 - 3. A letter of approval from the building administrator.**
- C. The privilege to bring the dog into the school setting may be terminated should the handler or dog behave in a way deemed unprofessional or unsafe.**

V. Oversight Committee

- A. A committee of objective persons knowledgeable in the use of therapy dogs is established to help with issues and questions that may arise concerning handlers or dogs and to temperament test puppies.**
- 1. Members of this committee shall be appointed by the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/Administration, and may include:**
 - a. A professional dog trainer;**
 - b. A person qualified to perform public access testing for a professional therapy dog or facility dog and its handler;**
 - c. A local veterinarian (as needed);**
 - d. TPS Counseling Coordinator;**
 - e. A building administrator; and/or**
 - f. One or more staff members who use professional therapy dogs or facility dogs in the schools.**
 - 2. Concerns should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/Administration who will address the issues with the Oversight Committee.**
- B. The purpose of the Oversight Committee will be to:**
- 1. Provide assistance with questions about the use of professional therapy dogs, facility dogs or pet visitation dogs in the schools.**
 - 2. Review policies, procedures and guidelines on the use of professional therapy dogs, facility dogs or pet visitation dogs in the schools.**

- VI. When an employee uses a professional therapy dog or facility dog in compliance with these guidelines, the employee, so long as he or she meets the statutory requirements, will be covered by the Kansas Tort Claim Act. Volunteers bringing pet visitation animals to school should have a private insurance policy that provides coverage for damages or injuries caused by the dog.**

**Administrative Check List for Therapy/Facility Dogs or
Pet Visitation Dogs in Topeka Public Schools**

(This information to be filed in the building or buildings that the professional therapy dog’s handler works in and a duplicate of all documentation in the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/Learning/Administration)

- Administrative Approval**—A letter stating that the dog has been approved for use in the building/district should be written and kept on file in the building.

- Health Records**—Copy of annual and three-year vaccinations signed by a veterinarian.
 - Rabies (every three years)
 - Five-way parvo vaccination
 - Bordatella vaccination
 - Comprehension wormer or a fecal check for worms
 - Check for external parasite control

- Temperament Test/Public Access Test Documentation**—A certificate certifying that the handler and dog both passed the Public Access Test must be sent by the certifying institution directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching/ Learning/ Administration

Building Principal’s Signature

Date

**Assistant Superintendent for
Teaching/Learning/Administration
Signature**

Date

Therapy or Facility Dog Handler Ethics
Topeka Public Schools

- 1. Handlers should evaluate their dog's health and attitude before each working day.**
- 2. The dog should be kept on lead when moving through the halls. It is permissible for the dog to be off-lead while in a supervised situation where it is working, but it should not be allowed to wander through the facility off-lead and unsupervised.**
- 3. Be aware and courteous of the places your dog is welcome or allowed in each facility. Students should be taught to "smile and wave" (or other quiet greeting) at the dog in the hall or other less-structured environments to alleviate disruption of students' attention and conduct.**
- 4. Handlers should always clean up after the dog, inside or outside the facility.**
- 5. Give verbal commands firmly and calmly and praise the dog for exemplary behavior.**
- 6. Do not leave the dog alone with other staff or students unless the adult is a designated alternate handler for the dog. When the dog is left unattended, it should be put in a crate with the door latched or in a room or office with the door closed and possibly locked.**
- 7. Always be alert to signs of stress in the dog. Some signs of stress may be:**
 - a) Excessive panting**
 - b) Dog jumps or climbs on handler for security**
 - c) Dog hides behind handler**
 - d) Shaking or tremors or ears and tail pressed close to body**
 - e) Yawning and changes in facial expression**
 - f) Dog looks for doorway or other escape route**
 - g) Noticeable change in behavior and/or desire to socialize**
- 8. Be aware of small items dropped on the floor and do not allow the dog to rummage through trash containers. Use the "Leave it!" command if this situation arises.**
- 9. When working with handicapped persons, assist exuberant or clumsy hands in handling the dog.**
- 10. Dog "kisses" should not be encouraged.**
- 11. Never knowingly put your dog in questionable or threatening situation.**
- 12. Practice the dog's skills and obedience regularly.**
- 13. Carry proper identification and be aware of the laws, policies and regulations pertaining to the dog.**

Professional Therapy Dogs or Facility Dogs USD 501

Please return completed information to the office of Tammy Austin, Assistant Superintendent Teaching/Learning/Administration at the BOE Office by Aug. 10th.

Professional/Facility Dog Handler _____

Professional/Facility Dog _____

School(s) dog will be in during the normal school day _____

Dog and Handler's Certification Date: _____

Name of Organization Certifying _____

Date for Re-certification _____

Emergency Contact Person and Phone Number for the Dog

1. _____

2. _____

Therapy/Facility Dog's Veterinarian _____

Principal's Approval Signature _____ Date _____

Health Care Records for the Dog

Dog's Date of Birth _____

Rabies Vaccination Date _____

Parvo/Distemper Date _____

Last Health Check _____

Worm Check _____

Please attach a copy of the health records from your veterinarian including photocopy of rabies certificate.