

Conditions for “Therapy Dog” Attendance in Schools Archuleta School District 50-JT

The District wishes to allow for visits by properly trained therapy dogs or therapy dogs in training as an enrichment opportunity for District students. The following list of conditions will allow therapy dogs to be welcomed into the school community with a minimum of disruption.

1. In these Conditions, the term “Handler” refers to a person who has been given permission to bring a therapy dog to school. The term “Owner” refers to the actual owner of the animal, whether or not that person is different from the Handler. The Handler’s sole responsibility and focus must be for the dog. The Handler may not have any other duties, particularly the supervision of students, therefore no district employee may be a Handler. For purposes of these Conditions, the term “therapy dog” means and includes any dog that has been trained or is being trained to benefit the social, emotional, and/or cognitive well-being of one or more persons, including without limitation a “certified therapy dog” that is part of a recognized Animal Assisted Therapy program. Archuleta School District recognizes the following Animal Assisted Therapy programs: American Kennel Club and Animal Assisted Therapy.
2. The Owner of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or injury to personnel, students, or others caused by the dog. The Owner and Handler must each submit a copy of their homeowner’s insurance policy that provides liability coverage for any dog related liabilities for the therapy dog while on school property, and must also sign a waiver releasing and indemnifying the district from and against any and all liabilities and financial responsibilities associated with using a therapy dog at school.
3. A person who wants to bring a therapy dog to school must submit a written request to the building Principal. The request must include the number of visits requested and the length of each visit, not to exceed two hours in a given day per building, and a description of how the requesting party intends to comply with the Conditions set forth herein, and a general statement of what the therapy dog will be doing during the visit. The requesting party will then meet with the building Principal or designee regarding the visit(s), overview of the dog’s training, and more detail concerning the tasks and functions the dog will be performing at school and will clarify how others are to view/interact or not interact with the therapy dog. If the requesting party has written materials on these topics, these would be appreciated, and would be used to help inform staff, students, parents, and school volunteers about the dog.
4. The Handler and the school principal or designee will meet as needed to review the success of these arrangements. The Principal or designee will determine the arrival and departure times and areas of the building that the therapy dog may accompany the Handler during the visit, and will communicate this information to the Handler in

writing. In no event will a therapy dog be permitted in locations where individuals with identified pet dander allergies or disability-related issues with dogs are present.

5. Any therapy dog permitted at school will not be assigned to any classroom or location where there are students and/or teachers or other staff members with identified pet allergies or disability-related fears. If no appropriate classroom or location is available, the therapy dog will not be permitted at school. If, after the dog has been admitted to a school or other District location, the District learns that any student or staff member at the school or other location where a therapy dog is present has a medically identified allergic reaction that is or may be tied to the presence of the therapy dog, the dog may be excluded from the school or other location.
6. The Handler will bring the therapy dog to the school prior to the first scheduled visit, to introduce the dog to the school environment, to consult with teachers and other staff to determine placement of the dog and resolve any concerns or issues. Any necessary decisions will be made in consultation with the school Principal and the final decision shall be made by the school Principal. Arrangements for this preliminary visit will be made through the school Principal.
7. The therapy dog must:
 - a. be clean, well groomed, in good health, house broken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs.
 - b. wear appropriate vests, halters or tags identifying it as a therapy dog while on school grounds.
8. The Handler:
 - a. must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the therapy dog at school's current vaccinations and immunizations.
 - b. will provide a water dish, at the Handler's cost, for the dog's use while in the school and will see that the water dish is full at the beginning of the visit and will be responsible to fill the water dish as needed during the visit.
 - c. is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the therapy dog; including any feeding, exercising, and clean up while the animal is in a school building or on school property. The District is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a therapy dog. Without limiting the foregoing, the Handler will be responsible for any outside toileting of the therapy dog during the visit and resulting clean-up. An area will be designated by the Principal for this purpose.
9. If the therapy dog will be present in a particular building or location through the lunch period, the Handler will provide a kennel of suitable size, and during the lunch period the dog may be required to be in the kennel. The Handler may choose to take the dog out of the school during the lunch period instead of having the dog kenneled.

10. The therapy dog must be under the control of the Handler in a way that ensures the safety of students and staff and promotes the learning environment, and must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or any other behavior. Permission for the therapy dog to be on District premises will be revoked by the District at any time if the Parents or the Student or the Employee, as the case may be, do not follow the conditions listed above, or for any reason consistent with legal requirements. It is further understood and agreed that the District may exclude the therapy dog from school grounds if the Principal deems that: (a) the dog is out of control; (b) the dog is not housebroken; (c) the dog poses a threat to the health or safety of others; (d) the dog's presence interferes with the educational process; or (e) any of the requirements set forth in these Conditions have not been met.

11. The Handler shall remove the therapy dog from school premises immediately upon expiration of the time scheduled for the visit, and immediately upon notification that permission for the dog to be at school or on District premises has been revoked.

Adopted: August 10, 2016
Revised: November 14, 2023