

Animals in District Facilities

Medford School District 549C recognizes that under the proper conditions animals can be an effective teaching aid or an accommodation for a qualified eligible student. Permission is required from the principal or supervisor before animals are brought into the school. Permission to keep the animal may be approved or denied based on any of the following: the purpose of the animal's presence; the ability of the teacher, student, parent or handler to control the animal; or any student or staff health issues (e.g., allergies).

Staff members shall annually notify in writing parents of classroom students of an animal's presence in order for parents to have the opportunity to inform the school of any potential health risk to their student. In order to protect students, staff and animals, the following guidelines shall be followed when animals are present in district facilities.

1. Resident Animals: Resident animals are any animals which are kept or housed for more than one day on district property. The only animals allowed to be housed in a classroom are those that serve a specific and appropriate educational purpose (such as the humane treatment of animals).
 - a. Requesting staff member must complete the Animals in District Facilities form, ING-AR, and agree to the parameters listed on the form and in this policy.
 - b. Before an animal becomes a resident animal in a classroom, students should be provided with an educational unit on the animal, its habitat, eating habits, handling, and how to maintain safety and cleanliness for the animal and themselves.
 - c. The requesting staff member must provide for all care, feeding, watering, cleaning, and waste disposal for the animal. The requesting staff member assumes all costs associated with the keeping of the animal, including any damages that may occur to the facility. All fecal material must be cleaned from the cage of any mammal or rodent on a daily basis and an appropriate sanitizer used. Reptiles, fish and insects must be cared for in a manner that minimizes odor and maintains a health learning environment. Custodial staff is not responsible for any maintenance of any animal in the classroom.
 - d. No animals shall be kept in the classrooms during school vacation periods. Aquariums are an exception to this as long as the teacher has provided for care and feeding of the fish.
 - (1) The district will not provide additional heating/cooling or aeration of a site before, during or after school or during vacations to provide an appropriate climate for an animal.
 - (2) It will be the responsibility of the teacher to provide for a plan of care for classroom-housed animals in the event of an emergency school closure which might cause disruption of the routine care of the animals.
 - (3) The requesting staff member is responsible for compliance with all state, county or city regulations regarding animals, birds, and insects. This includes, but is not limited to, licensing and confirmation that a licensed animal has the appropriate vaccinations.

- (4) An animal in the classroom must be appropriate to the age, maturity and interests of the students.
- (5) Any animal evidencing any aggressive tendencies toward staff, students or visitors shall be removed from the premises immediately.
- (6) Dogs and cats are not allowed as resident animals in district facilities.
- (7) No wild or exotic animals, birds, fish or insects will be housed in district facilities.

- 2. Guest Animals: Guest animals are animals brought onto district property for a short period of time for a program or assembly.
 - a. A guest animal will only be allowed in a district facility if permission has been granted by the building supervisor.

Students may be allowed to bring pets for show and tell as long as the parent brings the pet to school for the show and tell period, and then takes the pet home immediately afterward. Pets must be on a leash or in a secure cage or container.

- b. District staff is not to bring household/family pets to the workplace, regardless of whether students are present or not.

- 3. Service Animals: Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with an identified disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. The law and its regulations also make an allowance for miniature horses.

Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals. Animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, companionship, or therapeutic benefit are not considered service animals.

- a. Only qualified individuals with disabilities are eligible to use or bring service animals into school facilities or on to school grounds. An individual who believes he/she may be eligible should contact the building supervisor (see policy ING-AR).
- b. Use of a service animal by a student with a disability will be allowed in school when it has been determined that the student's disability requires such use for the student to have equal access to and benefit from the services, programs or activities offered by the school.
- c. Use of a service animal by an employee with a disability will be allowed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and when such use is deemed necessary for the employee to perform essential functions of the job with equal access to District employment benefits and privileges.

- d. All service animals must be housebroken, properly licensed and certified, and not disruptive to the school environment. While at school, service animals must function in the capacity for which they are trained at all times.
 - e. All service animals shall have a harness, leash or other tether unless the handler is unable because of a disability. Service animals shall wear a harness, vest, or other item that identifies them as service animals while in district facilities.
 - f. A handler for the service animal is required at all times the animal is on campus, unless the student is able to independently provide all care and management for the animal. The handler must be provided by the student's family. The district must approve any person who is authorized to assist in the care and supervision of the service animal while on school property. The district shall conduct a background check on any person filling this role.
 - g. The person requiring the service animal or the animal's handler is responsible for all care and supervision of the animal, including cleaning up and disposal of waste. The school district shall not be responsible for the training, feeding, grooming or care of any service animal permitted under this policy.
 - h. The employee, or in the case of a student, the student's parents/guardians, are liable for any and all damages to school or personal property and any injuries to individuals caused by the service animal.
 - i. Service animals may be limited, removed, or excluded from district facilities for any of the following reasons:
 - (1) The service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of a student, employee, or others at school;
 - (2) The service animal causes a significant disruption of school activities;
 - (3) The service animal jeopardizes the safe operation of a school or school event;
 - (4) The service animal is unable to perform reliably the service for which it has been approved;
 - (5) The student or employee with the disability cannot maintain appropriate care or control of the service animal;
 - (6) The service animal is a public health threat as a result of being infested with parasites or having a communicable disease of the skin, mouth or eyes;
 - (7) The service animal is unclean, unsanitary or not housebroken; or
 - (8) The service animal lacks proof of current rabies or other appropriate vaccinations and/or is not properly licensed;
 - (9) The service animal's presence significantly impairs the learning of students;
 - (10) The service animal's presence fundamentally alters the nature of any school program
 - (11) The employee, or in the case of the student, the student's parents/guardians, fail to provide or maintain current documentation required by this policy;
 - (12) The employee, student, or student's parents fail to abide by any additional conditions or the terms of an individual plan regarding their service animal.
4. Exotic Animals: Exotic animals are not allowed in district facilities except as part of an approved assembly program. Exotic animals, as defined by federal law, are animals that are native to a foreign country or of foreign origin or character, not native to the United States, or were introduced from abroad.
5. Other Dogs: Dogs, such as "drug dogs" or other dogs used by law enforcement agencies are allowed in District facilities for law enforcement work or as a part of a student assembly program. Other dogs may be allowed under specific circumstances and must be approved by the superintendent on a

case-by-case basis. These include but are not limited to Reading Dogs, Service Dogs in training, and Search and Rescue dogs in training. Handlers of these dogs must provide proof of appropriate license, vaccination and training. The Canine Good Citizen Program and Therapy Dogs International certification are examples of such training organizations.

6. Employees or parents of students with medical issues that are impacted by animals (such as respiratory diseases) should contact the school principal if they have a concern about exposure to an approved animal. Documentation that identifies the disability or the medical condition will be required in order to provide an accommodation for the person involved.
7. No sick or injured animals will be maintained in district facilities.
8. Animals in or on district facilities must be humanely contained in secure cages or containers; shall not freely roam the premises or have unsupervised contact with students or the public. All approved dogs shall be on a leash or harness at all times unless caged. No animals shall be allowed in cafeterias, food preparation areas, mechanical rooms, custodial closets, or areas with moving machinery. In the event the service animal is required to be with the student at all times, alternative arrangements for meals may be necessary.
9. No poisonous animals shall be brought into district facilities.
10. Animals, other than service animals, may not be transported on a school bus.

Exceptions to this policy require approval by the superintendent.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 332.107](#)
[ORS 659A.400](#)

[OAR 581-053-0010](#)
[OAR 581-053-0230\(9\)\(j\)](#)
[OAR 581-053-0330\(1\)\(q\)](#)

[OAR 581-053-0430\(16\)](#)
[OAR 581-053-0531\(15\)](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213 (2006); 28 CFR §§ 35.104, 35.136 (2006).
Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008.