



# PROCEDURE

# SO-033

## ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS, INCLUDING STUDENT USE OF GUIDE DOGS, SERVICE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

<b>Superintendent Responsible:</b> Superintendent of Education, Specialized Services	<b>Initial Effective Date:</b> 2020/02/24
<b>Last Updated:</b> 2023/02/24	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 2026/02/24

### Purpose:

To provide individualized accommodation(s) to students of the Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) with disabilities, including access to Guide Dogs, Service Dogs or Service Animals in exceptional circumstances, to enable them to have meaningful access to education services in a manner that respects their dignity, maximizes integration and facilitates the development of independence. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and regulations, a school building is not a place to which the public is customarily admitted. Pursuant to the *Education Act* and *Ontario Regulation 474/00 Access to School Premises*, Grand Erie requires each school to have a process for visitors.

### Guiding Principles:

- 1.0 Grand Erie utilizes a variety of placements, differentiated programming, and evidence-based interventions and strategies to provide meaningful access to education for students who have disability-related needs that impact their learning.
- 2.0 Grand Erie does not provide guide dogs, service dogs or service animals to students.
- 3.0 Grand Erie encourages any family considering the purchase of a guide dog, service dog or service animal to meet with the Administrator(s) or Superintendent of Education before making a commitment.
- 4.0 Identify the individualized process (refer to Animals in Schools, Including Student Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals Resource Package) to be followed when a parent(s)/caregiver(s) or adult student applies to have a guide dog, service dog or service animal accompany the student while the student is attending school or a school-related event. This includes guidelines about animals in schools for educational purposes.
- 5.0 Any determination of whether a guide dog, service dog or service animal is an appropriate accommodation for a student while receiving education services is a decision of the Administrator(s), in consultation with the Superintendent of Education. A regulated health professional cannot unilaterally prescribe that a guide dog, service dog or service animal be a specific accommodation while the student is receiving education services at school.
- 6.0 When an adult student or parent(s)/caregiver(s) seeks to have their child attend school or school related events with a guide dog or service dog, both the guide dog or service dog **and** the student handler must be certified as having been successfully trained by an accredited training facility.
- 7.0 Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, will Grand Erie consider an application for a student who will not be acting as the primary trained handler of the guide dog, service dog or service animal.
- 8.0 Only in exceptional circumstances subject to the standards of undue hardship pursuant the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, will Grand Erie consider service animals, other than dogs, as an accommodation for a student and only if other reasonable methods of

accommodation in the school setting have been unsuccessful in meeting the demonstrated disability-related learning needs of the student.

- 9.0 The process of accommodation shall also consider the competing human rights of other students and of employees; the impact of the guide dog, service dog or service animal on the learning environment; and the health and safety of all individuals who are or might be in the school, on school grounds or at a school-related event.

Grand Erie shall retain data regarding the requests for guide dogs, service dogs and service animals within the Ontario Student Record.

**Reference(s):**

- Animals in Schools, Including Student Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals Policy (SO-33)
- Animals in School, Including Student Use of Guide Dogs, Service Dogs and Service Animals Resource Package
- Accessibility Policy (SO-31)
- Accessibility Procedure (SO-031)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 \(AODA\)](#)
- *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*
- [Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2](#)
- Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (SO-14)
- Equity and Inclusive Education Procedure (SO-014)
- Grand Erie's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2022-27
- *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11*
- Integrated Accessibility Awareness Resource Package
- Management of Potentially Life-Threatening Health Conditions Including Administration of Medication in Schools Policy (SO-30)
- Management of Potentially Life-Threatening Health Conditions, Including Administration of Medication in Schools Resource Package
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M.56](#)
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Ontario Regulation 474/00 Access to School Premises*
- [Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 13](#)
- Volunteers Procedure (SO-126)