

<h1>POLICY</h1>	2010	8470
	Instruction	

SUBJECT: Service Animals in the School District

The Williamson Central School District will comply with all state and federal laws, regulations and rules regarding the use of service animals by disabled staff or students under appropriate circumstances.

Guide dogs, signal dogs, or other animals individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items are considered to be service animals.

The Williamson Central School District also supports the implementation of a Therapy Dog program for the academic, social, and emotional benefit of its students with disabilities as part of their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan.

A therapy dog is a dog trained to provide affection and comfort to students. The most important characteristic of a therapy dog is its temperament. A good therapy dog must be friendly, patient, confident, at ease in all situations, and gentle. Therapy dogs must enjoy human contact and be content to be petted and handled, sometimes clumsily. A therapy dog's primary job is to allow unfamiliar people to make physical contact with it and to enjoy that contact. Therapy dogs are not considered trained service dogs as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Therapy dogs are independently owned by school employees and must meet standards of health as prescribed by veterinarians at the owner's expense. The school district bears no financial responsibility for the care or feeding of the animal.

The following minimum standards shall be in effect for all service animals and therapy dogs approved to serve students with disabilities in the Williamson Central School District:

- has documentation of appropriate training
- is in good health with appropriate inoculations as evidenced by a veterinarian
- is clean, well-groomed, and does not have an offensive odor.
- does not urinate or defecate in inappropriate locations.
- does not annoy any member of the student body or school personnel by seeking attention.
- does not vocalize unnecessarily.
- shows no aggression towards people or other animals.

POLICY	2010	8470
	Instruction	

SUBJECT: Service Animals in the School District (Continued)

- does not solicit or steal food or other items from the student body or school personnel.
- does not in any way interfere with the educational process of any student.
- does not pose a health or safety threat to any student, personnel, or other persons.

The use of service animals or therapy dogs in the school setting shall be approved by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. Specific procedures for the use of service animals and therapy dogs in the District will be developed under the direction of the Superintendent.

Approved: Board of Education
February 24, 2010