1. Policy Information

Section: Transporting Students with Service Animals
Document Type: Specialized
Policy Name: TS04 Transporting Students with Service Animals

2. Rationale

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) recognizes the necessity of a fully supportive integrated student transportation system for all students where it is safe and practical to do so. This may include the requirement of a service animal to be transported with a student as part of their daily life and activities.

3. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the SCSTC to accommodate service animals for students identified and approved by the Member District School Boards.

4. Overview

4.1.   For the purpose of transporting students with service animals, 'service animal' includes guide dogs, hearing dogs, autism service dogs and other certified working animals. A service animal is considered to be an accommodation that is required to allow a student to access the Ontario Curriculum and should be readily identified as one that is being used by a person for reasons related to their disability. The SCSTC will take every step reasonable to accommodate the transportation of a service animal.

4.2.   Service animals are trained to assist children who have physical or developmental disabilities with their daily lives and living activities.

4.3.   The Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) identifies the use of service animals as a right of the individual.

4.4.   Transportation requests for students with service animals - home-to-school

    4.4.1. The respective Member District School Board will make the decision as to whether or not home-to-school transportation will be considered for requests to transport students with service animals.

4.5.   The School shall:

    4.5.1. Obtain appropriate Member District School Board approvals for transportation and forward the decision to SCSTC as per respective Member District School Board policy, process and/or decision.

    4.5.2. Inform SCSTC of student transportation information and complete SCSTC Form TF022 - Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP).

4.5.3. Confirm that no students riding in the respective school vehicle has an adverse reaction to the approved service animal, including but not limited to allergies to the service animal.

4.5.3.1. Where a possible risk to the health and safety of another student as a result of the service animal's presence has been identified, consideration will be given to other suitable options prior to transportation arrangements being confirmed or the exclusion of the service animal from transportation.

4.5.3.2. Identified alternate suitable options will be confirmed through respective Member District School Board process and/or decision.

4.5.4. Support the student with the service animal in boarding and/or disembarking the vehicle at the school and finding an appropriate space for the service animal.

4.5.5. Inform the SCSTC of any changes to the student's transportation requirements.

4.6. SCSTC shall:

4.6.1. Consult with the School Vehicle Operator to ensure that the driver(s) do(es) not have an allergy to the animal.

4.6.2. Provide transportation accommodation for the student and service animal where reasonably able to do so as approved by the respective Member District School Board.

4.7. The Parent and/or Guardian of the transported student shall:

4.7.1. Support the student in boarding and/or disembarking the school vehicle at their home stop and finding an appropriate and safe space for the service animal.

4.7.2. The use of the service animal is the responsibility of the Parent and/or Guardian and additional costs associated with the transportation will be assumed by the family.

5. References
SCDSB APM #A8535

Ontario Human Rights Code

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA)

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