

**MOUNT PLEASANT COTTAGE SCHOOL UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT****SUBJECT: Animal Assisted Therapy Dogs**

The School District supports the use of Animal Assisted Therapy Dogs (Therapy Dogs) by administrators, teachers or other qualified school personnel (“Owner”) for the benefit of its students subject to the conditions of this policy. Therapy Dogs are, and remain at all times, the personal property of the employee owner, and are not owned by the School District.

An “Animal Assisted Therapy Dog” is a dog that has been individually trained and certified to work with its owner to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship to School District students. Therapy Dogs are not “service animals” as that term is used in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Nothing herein shall permit a student, employee or visitor to be accompanied by his or her own comfort animal or emotional support animal for his or her own personal use or individual benefit on School District property.

**Therapy Dog Standards and Procedures**

The following requirements must be satisfied before a Therapy Dog will be allowed in school buildings or on school grounds:

**Requests**

Any school/employee wishing to bring a Therapy Dog to a school must submit a written application to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. That application will be reviewed by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee, or, in the case of an individual wishing to apply for a District sponsored Therapy Dog in training, the application will be reviewed by the Superintendent for that purpose. The request must be renewed each school year or whenever a different Therapy Dog will be used. No Therapy Dog may be placed in a school until approved by the Board of Education.

**Training and Certification**

The owner must submit the East Coast Assistance Dogs, Inc. (ECAD), Educating Canines Assisting with Disabilities or similar certification for Animal Assisted Therapy Dogs to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The certification must remain current at all times that the Therapy Dog is present in any Mount Pleasant Cottage School UFSD school building. Recertification must occur annually. The School District will not be responsible for the cost of the training or retraining.

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### Health and Vaccination

The Therapy Dog must be clean, well groomed, in good health, housebroken, and immunized against diseases common to dogs. The owner must submit proof of current licensure from the local licensing authority and proof of the Therapy Dog's current vaccinations and immunizations from a licensed veterinarian. The School District will not be responsible for the cost of vaccinations, immunizations or other veterinary services.

### Control

A Therapy Dog must be under the control of the employee owner or other trained employee at all times, through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would interfere with the Therapy Dog's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks.

### Identification

The Therapy Dog must have appropriate identification clearly indicating that it is an Animal Assisted Therapy Dog.

### No Disruption/Removal from District Property

The Therapy Dog must not disrupt the educational process by barking, seeking attention, or engaging in any other disruptive behavior.

A Therapy Dog may be excluded from a school building or District property if a District administrator determines any of the following:

1. The owner or other trained handler does not have control of the Therapy Dog;
2. The Therapy Dog is not housebroken;
3. The Therapy Dog presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school building or on District property; or
4. The Therapy Dog's presence otherwise interferes with the educational process.

### Health and Safety

The Therapy Dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any student, employee, or other person at school.

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### Supervision and Care of Therapy Dogs

The owner 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 District property. The school district is not responsible for providing any care, supervision, or assistance for a Therapy Dog or for the cost thereof. Therapy Dogs that are part of the Mount Pleasant Cottage School UFSD Therapy Dogs program will be required to have designated “co-handlers” whose role it will be to assist with the care of the dogs and their integration into the entire school community.

### Authorized Area(s)

The owner shall only allow the Therapy Dog to be in areas in school buildings or on District property that are authorized by the building administrator.

### Parent Notice

The Building Principal shall ensure that parents are notified in writing prior to the Therapy Dog being permitted to enter a school building. Such notice may be electronic.

### Allergic Reactions

If any student or employee assigned to a classroom in which a Therapy Dog is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the Therapy Dog, the owner will be required to remove the Therapy Dog to a different location designated by a building administrator.

### Fund Raising

Any fund raising implemented for the care of the Therapy Dogs will be handled through an extra-classroom account established specifically for that purpose. The District will not be responsible for the fund-raising revenues or expenditures, except as the District Treasurer is involved in any other extra-classroom account.

### Damage to School Property and Injuries

The owner of a Therapy Dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to a school building or District property, or injury to students, employees or others caused by the Therapy Dog.

Adopted: July 2, 2019