

606.7 THERAPY DOGS

The Washington Community School District believes that therapy dogs can be a vital resource in district schools and classrooms and their use will be encouraged.

Professional School Therapy Dogs certified with their handlers as Certified Assistance Dog Teams provide emotional and physical support in the educational setting. These highly trained dogs model good behavior, tolerance, and acceptance. All Certified Assistance Dog Teams in the Washington Community School District (WCSD) work to support and positively influence both student achievement and student well being.

Professional Therapy Dogs are trained and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the dog as a team, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession.

The WCSD retains ownership of the therapy dog until such services of the therapy dog are no longer needed or when the therapy dog retires from duty.

The daily care health management plan must be managed by the Handler and follow the guidelines recommended by CARES Inc. in Concordia, Kansas. Daily care includes the following: nutritional needs including pet food and water; grooming; and provisions for exercising the animal. The Handler must also provide annual care and vaccinations for the dog.

1. The Handler must provide a record of annual vaccinations received by the dog and signed by the primary veterinarian; these health records should be kept on file in the school building and in the WCSD Central Office.
2. The therapy dog shall be given a comprehensive wormer or fecal check for worms annually.
3. The dog shall be checked for external parasite control.
4. The Handler shall give preventive parasite (fleas and ticks) control and heartworm medication year-round. Annual tests shall be given for heartworm.
5. The therapy dog shall be groomed and bathed regularly as well as regular brushing of the dog's teeth, regular nail trimming, and cleaning/checks of the dog's ears.

The scheduling of therapy dog services will be coordinated with the Handler and/or the following staff: Behavior Interventionist(s), Classroom Teacher(s), Counselor(s), and/or Building Principal.

The Washington Community School District will pay for all expenses in obtaining a therapy dog.

Therapy dog guidelines and procedures will be reviewed at least annually with all staff and students. Public and staff concerns about the use of therapy dogs shall be directed to the building administrator. A school district canine oversight committee may be established to assist with concerns. The oversight committee purpose is to provide general assistance with questions and answers pertinent to the use of therapy dogs;

review therapy dog policies, procedures, and guidelines as needed; and educate the school community regarding the use of and value of therapy dogs in the school setting. This committee's members may include therapy dog handler(s), school counselors, teachers, parents, building administrator(s), a veterinarian, and/or service dog trainers.

Should the therapy dog's Handler leave district employment before the therapy dog retires the handler will pay back a per diem rate of the total cost of the therapy dog/by the expected years of service.