

TMCSEA Facility Dog Policy & Procedures

DEFINITION: A Facility Dog is a specially trained dog that works with a volunteer or professional in a residential or clinic setting. The dog must be trained to do specific, skilled tasks in various situations within the facility environment with multiple clients/students; it is more than just a presence within the facility. Assistance Dogs International (ADI)-certified Facility Dogs and their handlers are trained to the same standards as ADI-certified Assistance Dogs.

POLICY: Animal-assisted activities provide opportunities for motivation, education, recreation, and/or vocation to enhance the quality of life. TMCSEA employs facility dogs as an intervention in which an animal meeting specific criteria is an integral part of the educational process.

The facility dog(s) and handlers will be assigned to both Schramm Educational Center and Rogers Academy. The use of the facility dog will be primarily for the benefit of the students within these facilities. However, other member districts may request the use of the facility dog for limited purposes, such as for student emotional support in the event of a crisis affecting the school. All requests by member districts for use of the facility dog(s) are subject to the availability and must be approved by the Director.

PROCEDURES:

1. Use of facility dog(s) at both facilities: Schramm Educational Center and Rogers Academy
 - a. Promote and support the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive functioning of children
 - b. As a means to alleviate anxiety in students
 - c. To reinforce and assist in the educational progress of students
 - d. To enhance and increase functional and social communication skills for the students
 - e. As an incentive or support in behavior modification programs and/or strategies
 - f. To help boost overall staff and student morale and to create a positive connection within the school setting
 - g. Member districts may request the use of the facility dog(s) with an established trained handler using the district referral process
 - i. Requests are subject to the facility dog and handler's availability and must be approved by the Director
2. Facility dog(s) to be used at TMCSEA will reside with the designated trained handler/owner and meet the following criteria:
 - a. Extensive temperament testing
 - b. One year of formal obedience and service dog work
 - c. Has passed multiple public access tests
 - d. Is certified by Paws Giving Independence (PGI) or other qualified organizations to work in the building/facility to which the dog is assigned
 - e. Has worked with large groups of children
 - f. Has worked with children with disabilities

- g. Has updated vaccination history, provided yearly
 - h. Has been awarded the Good Citizen Award by the American Kennel Club.
3. Requirements for the use of a facility dog
- a. Staff Training
 - i. An established Paws Giving Independence (PGI) trained handler/owner will have completed a minimum of 25 direct contact training hours with the facility dog before handling the dog on the premises. They will also have access to consultation provided by PGI.
 - ii. All staff of Schramm Educational Center and Rogers Academy will receive basic information regarding the use of the facility dog(s), including the use of commands, signs of stress, introducing the dog into the classroom, giving treats, equipment use, when to remove the dog from a situation, feeding, and bathroom protocols.
 - iii. When required by the trained handler/owner, staff interested in utilizing the facility dog(s) without a trained handler/owner will be willing to train at Heartland Training Facility with Paws Giving Independence (PGI) for a minimum of 10 direct contact training hours with the facility dog(s).
 - iv. Staff interested in utilizing the facility dog(s) for instruction must complete an additional training checklist consisting of: time spent with the dog, use of the dog, and demonstrating the ability to independently manage the dog with trainer observations, until deemed competent by an established handler.
 - v. Staff will check the facility dog(s) schedule for availability and use of the dog.
 - b. With students
 - i. Parent/guardian must sign a consent form/waiver before a student is permitted to have contact with the facility dog.
 - ii. If students have an allergy, aggressive tendencies, or phobia of dogs, trained staff and handlers will make reasonable efforts to ensure students are not placed in situations where they would have direct interaction with the facility dog(s)
 - iii. Staff utilizing the facility dog will be knowledgeable of students' medical restrictions and allergies.
 - c. Interactions with the facility dog(s)
 - i. Students are welcome to interact with the facility dog(s), but only under the guidance of the handler/owner and/or trained staff.
 - ii. Students must ask for permission before touching or approaching the dog, or the trained handler must use appropriate commands for the dog to engage with students.
 - iii. Staff and visitors must adhere to the same guidelines and must ask the handler for permission to interact with the dog
 - iv. The facility dog is a working animal and should not be disturbed unless it is appropriate and in a supervised setting. This will help to maintain the dog's focus on its work.

4. Infection Control Procedures

- a. Avoid the use of a facility dog with students who have an open wound.
- b. Children and staff are to be trained on appropriate and sanitary procedures when using the dog, such as washing their hands before and after interacting with the dog. All usual infection control procedures should be followed.
- c. If needed, there will be rooms that will remain “dog-free” and will be marked. This will allow children, staff, and visitors who have allergies or other aversions a space that the dog has not occupied.
- d. Maintenance staff to ensure dog-populated areas are vacuumed/cleaned each night.
- e. The facility dog(s) will be kept clean with proper grooming, regular treatment to prevent fleas and ticks, required vaccinations, and nail trimming.
- f. There will be a clearly marked “potty area” for the dog outside the building. The trained staff member who is currently in possession of the dog (or person designated by the established handler) is responsible for cleaning and disposing of dog waste. Clean-up materials will be made available.
- g. If the dog has an accident inside the building, the maintenance staff will clean the area with a vinegar-based deodorizing agent.

5. General Information

- a. Notice will be posted on entry doors at Schramm Educational Center and Rogers Academy regarding the presence of the facility dog(s) on the premises.
- b. Information regarding the facility dog (including rules, uses, procedures, dog-free areas, certifications, vaccination records, etc.) will be available upon request.
- c. The established handler/owner may submit receipts via TMCSEA’s reimbursement process. The following expenditures are allowable for reimbursement:
 - i. flea/tick prevention, grooming, annual wellness visits, required vaccinations, and additional training requested by TMCSEA to meet the Good Citizen Award status.
 - ii. Other non-routine expenses and/or emergent medical bills may be reimbursed up to \$300/year at the discretion of the Director.
- d. If a facility dog is sick, they will not be allowed to come to work. The handler/owner will keep the dog home until the dog is not exhibiting any signs of illness.

6. Emergency Procedures

- a. In the event of an emergency, the handler and/or staff member in possession of the facility dog(s) are responsible for following school emergency procedures.
- b. The handler will ensure the dog’s safety and well-being during such events.

7. Review and Updates

- a. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with the needs of the schools and updated as necessary.