



Policy Code – Version: T15 – V1

Policy Name: Transportation of Service Animals

Approved by motion of Board on

08/11/2010

Cross Reference

T2 – Adult Passengers on Contract Vehicles;

T14 – Transportation Services

Related Forms

Sample Letter for Parents

Policy Statement

1. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority shall make reasonable efforts to support the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and member school board policies and procedures with respect to the provision of transportation services to students requiring the assistance of service animals.
2. It is understood that students requiring the assistance of service animals are to be provided with transportation services wherever possible, without the imposition of restrictions that may hamper such service, but which does also not impose upon the rights of other passengers.

Procedure

1. In the spirit of ensuring that the practices and procedures of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity, transportation service will be provided on regular yellow school bus service, wherever possible and practical. Students and service animals will be assigned to small vehicle only if required due to the documented needs of fellow passengers.
2. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority recognizes that service is to be provided in such a way that students with disabilities can travel with students without disabilities. Where integrated school transportation is not possible, establishes a safety concern, or will impose on the needs of other passengers, other accessible transportation will be provided, where possible.

3. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will require contracted service providers to support the provision of transportation to students with service animals. Contracted operators will be responsible for providing training to vehicle drivers regarding the management of service animals during transportation, and the provision of service to students who may require the assistance of a service animal.
4. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will require contracted service providers to develop and maintain policies and procedures for emergency evacuation to ensure that people with various disabilities, including those with service animals, will be safely evacuated from contracted vehicles in cases of emergency.
5. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will be provided with documentation confirming that the service animal is required by the student, will be working at the school during the day, and is appropriately licensed/certified to provide the requisite service prior to the implementation of transportation service.
6. School Principals will provide the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority with confirmation that all passengers riding vehicles where a service animal is to be working, have been notified that the animal will be present before the service animal commences riding the vehicle. (See Appendix A for sample letter to passengers.)

Operational Procedures:

1. School staff is required to provide specific instruction and/or information to the vehicle driver with respect to the appropriate handling of the service animal, where assigned, and in recognition of warnings/reactions.
2. The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority will design transportation services to provide adequate time to ensure that students with disabilities can safely board and disembark the contracted school purpose vehicle.
3. Where a service animal is to be accommodated on a contracted vehicle, the service provider is responsible for determining if their driver and/or their driver's children have allergies that may be aggravated by the presence of the service animal, and make alternate driver assignments as necessary.
4. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for costs associated with the repair of any damage or clean up to equipment caused by the service animal working with their child.
5. Restraints that may be required for the service animal will neither be provided nor secured by the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority nor contracted vehicle driver.

6. Service animals must attend the disabled person at all times.
7. Service animals will be required to sit beside the student or on the floor of the vehicle in front of the student during transport. Service animals that are not able to sit as described must be appropriately restrained during transport.