

I. PROCEDURES FOR ANIMALS ON ACPS PROPERTY

- A. Animals are not permitted in schools or offices during the student day, on school grounds during ACPS-sponsored events at any time, or in ACPS work sites, except for:
 - 1. "Service animals," as defined in ACPS Policy IMG – Service Animals and Regulation IMG-R – Service Animals. This exception includes service animals in training as provided by IMG-R (16) and Md. Code, Human Services §§7-704 and 7-705.
 - 2. Animals taking part in a school-sponsored activity with the permission of the principal, as described in Section II below, or
 - 3. Therapy animals prescribed/authorized by a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), as provided in Section III.B. below.
- B. Principals may identify a waiting area for owners and their animals on school grounds during arrival and dismissal times. Even when in restricted areas, animals must remain under restraints and handler/owner's control at all times.
- C. Any animal permitted under subsection I.A, above, must be under the direct control of their owner by a leash or similar restraining device.
- D. Animal handlers shall immediately remove and dispose of pet feces by a sanitary method.
- E. When an uncontrolled animal is discovered on school property or in the school building during the student day, especially during arrival and dismissal time, the principal/designee should call Allegany County Animal Control.
- F. Principals/designees and animal handlers will observe further restrictions set forth by local communities.
- G. Animals may not be present on school grounds during the period of one hour before school through one hour past the normal school hours, without the prior permission of the person in charge of the administration of the school or his or her designee.
- H. In the event that an animal bites an individual while on school property, the injured person should seek medical attention as needed.
 - 1. Principals/supervisors shall report the incident to the Superintendent and contact the Allegany County Health Department to report the animal bite.
 - 2. If an ACPS employee is injured at work, the employee must inform their supervisor, who then reports the incident to the ACPS benefits coordinator for workers' compensation.
- I. A service animal in training may be excluded where admitting the animal would create a clear danger of disturbance or physical harm to an individual or facility.

II. ANIMALS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

- A. It is the responsibility of the principal/designee to ensure a specific and appropriate instructional purpose if any animal is housed in a classroom or invited to a school as a guest or visitor.
- B. Special attention should be given to animals with fur or feathers in the classroom in terms of their effect on allergic students and staff. School staff members should follow ADA rules regarding allergens from service animals for students and staff with allergies.
- C. Pet handlers and owners will be responsible for the proper control of animals brought to school for instructional purposes.
- D. ACPS is not responsible for the care or supervision of service animals brought on ACPS property by students, employees, or visitors, as further described in ACPS Policy IMG - Service Animals.

III. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS AND THERAPY DOGS NOT PERMITTED; EXCEPTION

- A. Emotional support animals and therapy dogs do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Emotional support animals are not permitted on school property. Therapy dogs are not permitted on school property, except pursuant to a MOU, as provided in subsection B, below.
- B. Animal-assisted support providers, such as therapy dog-handler, are permitted on ACPS property only as part of a MOU between ACPS and a therapy dog provider organization.
 - 1. MOUs for therapy animals may be negotiated only at the request of the Director of Special Education and Student Services and will set forth terms to require the provider to obtain and maintain comprehensive general liability, establish procedures for ACPS to be present to supervise student participant engagement with dog-handler teams, and other requirements as necessary.
 - 2. MOU provisions shall include the following:
 - a) The visit should last no more than approximately one hour.
 - b) The principal will provide appropriate space (not a classroom or office) for the visit where there is no person known to have an animal allergy, phobia, or other concern.
 - c) When possible, the principal will distribute and collect a parent permission slip for students interested in participating in the visit. The visits must be limited to participants who wish to interact with dog-handler.
 - d) The dog-handler shall not engage with students unless an ACPS staff member is present.
 - e) The MOU must establish procedures for appropriately preventing the interaction of the dog-handler with authorized service animals.

Board Reviewed	Superintendent Approved
06/16/2026	06/16/2026