

Animals on School Property Policy
Halton Waldorf School
February 2026

Halton Waldorf School (HWS) is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all students, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines expectations regarding animals on HWS property.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who are present on HWS property, including parents, guardians, students, staff, contractors, and other visitors.

Definitions

In this policy,

“AODA” means the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005, SO 2005, c 11*.

“approved service animal” means an animal approved by HWS as a disability-related accommodation.

“guide dog” means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications required of a guide dog under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* and its regulations.

“HWS property” means HWS owned or controlled property, including campuses, buildings, fields, pathways, private sidewalks, parking lots, drop-off/pick-up areas, playgrounds (including play structures), outdoor learning spaces, and vehicles.

“pet” means any animal that is owned or is within the care and control of a person.

“service animal” means a service animal as defined in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* under the AODA.

General Policy

HWS property is not public space and is not generally accessible to the public. The AODA does not apply to the use of a service animals or guide dogs when accessing education services in school buildings. The determination of whether a service animal is an appropriate accommodation in the school setting to accommodate an established disability-related need is a decision of HWS.

To maintain a safe environment, pets are not allowed on HWS property unless expressly authorized by HWS or exempt under this policy. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, pets are not allowed on HWS property:

- during school hours;
- during recess or outdoor class time;
- during pick-up or drop-off times;

- outside of school hours; or
- at school or school community-related events (including festivals or fairs).

Exemptions

The prohibitions against pets is subject to the following exemptions:

- Pets confined to a private vehicle during drop-off/pick-up times are permitted in designated parking areas (e.g., parking lots) provided the pets remain within the vehicle, under the owner's control, and pose no safety risk.
- Pets may be permitted on HWS property with the prior written authorization from HWS administration for a specific educational purpose (e.g., a controlled class visit by a therapy dog or farm animal). Requests to bring a pet to HWS property must be submitted to HWS administration for consideration.
- Approved service animals are permitted on HWS property.
- Guide dogs and service animals required by visitors to public events are permitted subject to, and in accordance with, the requirements of this policy.

Public Event Visitor – Disability-Related Needs

If a visitor (including a parent or guardian) is attending an event on HWS property that is accessible to the public or third parties and requires a guide dog or service animal for a disability-related need, the visitor must notify HWS administration before or upon arrival. If the animal is not readily identifiable as a guide dog or service animal that is being used by the visitor for reasons relating to the visitor's disability (e.g., as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal), HWS may request that the visitor produce documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the visitor requires the animal for reasons related to the person's disability in accordance with the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation.

The visitor's guide dog/service animal remains the visitor's responsibility and must be kept under the visitor's care and control at all times. In the case of a guide dog, both the visitor and the guide dog must be certified as having been successfully trained by an accredited training facility (guide dogs in training are not permitted). The visitor is responsible for the care and cleanliness of the guide dog/service animal and must ensure that any messes (including animal waste) are appropriately cleaned.

A visitor's guide dog/service animal may be excluded if:

- health and safety requirements could be violated;
- the animal is disruptive and the visitor is not effectively controlling it;
- the presence of the animal would fundamentally impact the nature of the event being attended;
- the animal's presence, behavior or actions pose an unreasonable or direct threat to property or the health or safety of others, and HWS administration is unable to identify reasonable alternative options for safely allowing the presence of the animal; or

- the animal's presence is prohibited under other applicable laws.

Responsibilities

All individuals present on HWS property are responsible for adhering to the requirements of this policy.

HWS administration is responsible to:

- receive and assess requests for pets to be present on school grounds for specific educational purposes;
- receive and assess visitor requirements for guide dogs/service animals for attendance at events accessible to the public or third-parties;
- determine whether an exclusion of a guide dog/service animal may be required (including assessing alternative options) and take appropriate steps as necessary;
- communicate school decisions and information regarding pets to appropriate individuals (e.g., staff, parents, guardians, students, other visitors, etc.); and
- determine whether any exemptions under this policy apply.

HWS staff are responsible to:

- support and enforce the prohibition against pets on school property consistently and respectfully;
- support and facilitate the presence of guide dogs/service animals as approved to attend on HWS property under this policy; and
- notify HWS administration of any concerns related to this policy or any contraventions of this policy.