

POLICY

SUBJECT: Therapeutic Dog Program
NUMBER: RF-746-19
APPLICABLE TO: Residential Operations

APPROVED: _____ /s/ signature on original

Sam Abed, Secretary

DATE: _____ 3/8/19

I. POLICY

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), in addition to other resources such as counseling and special programming, shall utilize approved therapy dogs as a tool to aid in the treatment, education and well-being of DJS youth.

All therapy dogs must meet the requirements contained in this policy prior to having any contact with any youth under the care of DJS.

All therapy dog handlers shall be properly trained and approved prior to handling any therapy dog within a DJS facility.

II. AUTHORITY

A. Md. Code Ann., Human Services, §9-203 and §9-204.

III. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES RESCINDED

None

IV. FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to comply with the Department's Policy and Procedures shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

V. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Standard operating procedures have been developed.

VI. REVISION HISTORY

DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE OF REVISION
New policy issued.	March 2019
Revised procedures issued: Employees who wish to become a Dog Handler must be employed by DJS for 3 years after being approved as a Handler.	April 24, 2019

PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Therapeutic Dog Program
NUMBER: RF-746-19
APPLICABLE TO: Residential Operations

APPROVED: _____ /s/ signature on original
Wallis Norman, Deputy Secretary
REVISION DATE: _____ 4/24/19

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for the implementation of a Therapeutic Dog Program within DJS. All therapy dogs are the responsibility of DJS and will remain the property of DJS. All costs for their care and treatment must be approved and will be incurred by the Department.

II. PROCEDURES

A. THERAPY DOG HANDLERS

1. The Therapeutic Dog Program (Program) within each facility shall be operated by an approved staff member referred to as a therapy dog handler (the Handler).
2. The Handler must be employed by DJS for 3 years after approval is granted.
3. The Handler shall be approved by the Deputy Secretary for Operations.
4. The Handler shall be responsible for the overall care and welfare of assigned therapy dog.
5. The therapy dog shall reside with the Handler and shall remain the responsibility of the Handler at all times.
6. Only persons trained and approved by the Handler shall be allowed to handle the therapy dog while interacting with the youth.

B. THERAPY DOG SELECTION

1. Each therapy dog must be observed and evaluated using the **Volhard Aptitude Test (Appendix 1)** for its disposition. The therapy dog must be friendly and confident; it must love people and thrive for physical contact with people. It must be calm and completely non-aggressive, controllable, predictable and reliable. It must not be easily spooked or unsettled.
2. Each therapy dog must be examined by a veterinarian and have up-to-date immunization records to include the required rabies vaccinations. All

therapy dogs shall be seen yearly by the veterinarian for flea and tick prevention treatment and any other required treatments. DJS shall reimburse the Handler for any veterinary costs.

3. Each therapy dog must be currently registered in the local jurisdiction in which the Handler resides.
4. Every therapy dog and handler must complete the American Kennel Club (AKC) Good Citizen certification. (See at <https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/>)
5. The therapy dog must be “house broken” and trained to not destroy property items such as furniture, shoes, etc.
6. For any therapy dog within the Program which shows signs of aggression such as growling, nipping, or biting, the Handler shall **immediately remove** the therapy dog from contact with the youth until the Superintendent determines the therapy dog can be returned to the Program.
7. If the therapy dog bites a youth or staff:
 - a. If a **youth** has been bitten or otherwise injured, the Handler shall ensure the youth is evaluated by the nursing staff. The nurse shall provide initial assessment and first aid and if necessary, will consult with the on-call physician to determine if a youth needs further treatment and/or referral for emergency medical services;
 - b. If a **staff** has been bitten or otherwise injured, first aid shall be rendered at the facility. If emergency medical services are required, the staff shall be referred to the emergency room; the staff will otherwise be referred to the state medical director for a medical evaluation;
 - c. In either case above, the DJS Medical Director may be contacted for consultation;
 - d. In all cases, the Handler shall remove the therapy dog from the facility; and
 - e. The Handler shall complete a DJS Incident Report in accordance with the *Incident Reporting Policy – Residential Facilities and Community Operations* and notify Animal Control.

C. THERAPY DOG HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Every Handler must be able to provide a healthy and caring living environment for his/her assigned therapy dog. The environment must be clean and safe, and must provide a positive atmosphere where the therapy dog can feel secure and safe from outside dangers or exposure to the elements.
2. The Handler shall remain responsible for the therapy dog at all times. Only persons trained and approved by the Handler will be allowed to handle the therapy dog during youth interactions.

3. When moving about the facility the Handler shall keep the therapy dog on a leash and collar or harness. The Handler is responsible for disposing of dog waste in a sanitary manner.
4. The Handler should maintain a portable kennel in their office, a vacant office, or room specifically designated for the therapy dog and under the direct control of the Handler to allow the therapy dog rest time and a secure environment.
5. The Handler shall secure the area in which the therapy dog is kenneled, to ensure no other persons have unauthorized access to the therapy dog when the Handler is temporarily unable to provide direct supervision of the therapy dog. When the Handler must respond to a call for assistance, the therapy dog shall be secured in the portable kennel or other safe environment.
6. The Handler or any other approved staff shall ensure that therapy dogs are not exposed to any scenario that could incite aggression or cause them to feel as if they need to protect the Handler or staff.
7. The Handler shall maintain a strict diet and eating schedule for their assigned therapy dog as prescribed by the veterinarian.
8. The Handler will physically groom and inspect the therapy dog daily checking for signs of illness, injury or parasites. The Handler is responsible for the regular brushing, bathing and nail clipping of the therapy dog.
9. The Handler shall monitor the physical contact of others with the therapy dog. The Handler shall not allow under any circumstances any rough handling or abusive treatment of the therapy dog. The Handler shall educate any persons coming into contact with the therapy dog on how to conduct themselves in a safe and acceptable manner.
10. Before contact with any youth, the Handler shall determine if the youth has any known allergies to dogs. In addition, the Handler should always be alert to any signs that a youth has a strong fear around dogs. The Handler shall not prevent the youth from interacting with the therapy dog, but shall ensure any contact occurs in a more controlled environment to ease the youth into contact with the therapy dog.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

Superintendents are responsible for implementation and compliance with this procedure.

IV. INTERPRETATION

The Deputy Secretary for Operations shall be responsible for interpreting and granting any exceptions to these procedures.

V. LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED

Yes

VI. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES REFERENCED

DJS Incident Reporting Policy

VII. APPENDICES

1. Volhard Aptitude Test (For more information also see:
<http://www.volhard.com/pages/pat.php>)



DJS POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Statement of Receipt and Acknowledgment of Review and Understanding

POLICY: Therapeutic Dog Program
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APPLICABLE TO: Residential Operations
REVISION DATE: April 24, 2019

I have received and reviewed a copy (electronic or paper) of the above titled policy and procedures. I understand the contents of the policy and procedures.

I understand that failure to sign this acknowledgment form within five working days of receipt of the policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

I understand that I will be held accountable for implementing this policy even if I fail to sign this acknowledgment form.

SIGNATURE

PRINT FULL NAME

DATE

WORK LOCATION

SEND THE ORIGINAL, SIGNED COPY TO DIRECTOR OF THE DJS OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR PLACEMENT IN YOUR PERSONNEL FILE.