

PROFESSIONAL THERAPY DOG HANDLER BEST PRACTICE

1. Handlers should evaluate their dog's health and attitude before each work day.
2. It is permissible for the dog to be off-lead while in a supervised situation where it is working , but it should not be allowed to wander through the facility unsupervised.
3. Be aware and courteous of the places your dog is welcome or allowed in each facility. Students should be taught to "smile and wave" (or other quiet greetings) at the dog in the hall or other less-structured environments to alleviate disruption of students' attention and conduct.
4. Handlers will always clean up after the dog, inside and outside the facility.
5. Give verbal command firmly and calmly and praise the dog for exemplary behavior.
6. Students are NEVER to be left along with a dog; a designated handler must always be present. Dogs may be left with a non-handler adult for brief periods of time when children are not present/will not have access to the dog. When the dog is left unattended, it should be put in a crate with the door latched or in a room or office with the door closed and locked as needed.
7. If treats are used, students should be taught to give the treat with a flat hand or drop the treat on the ground.
8. Always be alert to signs of stress in the dog. Some signs of stress may be:
  - a. Excessive panting
  - b. Dog jumps or climbs on handler for security
  - c. Dog hides behind handler
  - d. Shaking or tremors, or ears and tail pressed closed to body
  - e. Yawning and changes in facial expression
  - f. Dog looks for doorways or other escape routes
  - g. Noticeable change in behavior and/or desire to socialize
9. Be aware of small items dropped on the floor and do not allow the dog to rummage through trash containers. Use the "Leave it!" command if this situation arises.
10. When working with disabled person(s), the handler(s) will assist in commanding and handling the dog.
11. Never knowingly put your dog in questionable or threatening situations.
12. All OCSD handlers/trainers will follow the district guidelines to ensure the safety of their dogs and students; in addition, following these guidelines will help provide for the appropriate hygiene and veterinary care for their dogs, ensuring a long and healthy certified assistance dog team relationship.

Approved August 11, 2025 Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ Revised \_\_\_\_\_

OGDEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS