

**Regulation 604.11-R(1): Guidelines for the Use of Professional Therapy Dogs -  
Professional Therapy Dog Handler Ethics**

**Original Adopted Date:** 07/01/2018 | **Last Revised Date:** 10/28/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 10/28/2024

1. Handlers should evaluate their dog's health and attitude before each working 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 greeting) 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 or outside the facility.
5. Give verbal commands firmly and calmly and praise the dog for exemplary behavior.
6. Students are NEVER to be left alone 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 any 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 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 may be:
  - Excessive panting
  - Dog jumps or climbs on handler for security
  - Dog hides behind handler
  - Shaking or tremors, or ears and tail pressed close to body
  - Yawning and changes in facial expression
  - Dog looks for doorway or other escape route
  - 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 persons, the handler(s) will assist in commanding and handling the dog.
11. Never knowingly put your dog in questionable or threatening situation.
12. All DCGCSD 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.