Managing a School Dog at School

Having a trained Facility Dog has immeasurable benefits to both students and faculty members. Just a trained dog’s calm presence can change the atmosphere in a room.

Service Dogs Alabama wants every school who acquires a trained facility dog to be able to maximize the benefits of having a dog. In order to do this, there are simple instructions and protocols to follow to keep your dog working to maximize your success.

1. Utilizing the Follow the Lead program during the first year is important in order to allow the dog to pair the scent of anxiety, escalating emotions or behaviors, or depression with the body language of the same and/or the word commands.
2. Do not allow students to feed the dog. Always keep food in the classrooms and cafeteria out of reach of the dog. Never let your dog sniff for food or lick the floor. Use the “leave it” command.
3. Always keep fresh water available to your dog in the classroom and outside areas.
4. Do not allow petting in hallways while changing class or while in the cafeteria or during assemblies.
   - At the beginning of the school year, send out notices to all teachers so that they can educate their students.
   - Make announcements over the intercom system to remind students not to pet dogs when changing classes or in the cafeteria.
   - Facility Dogs are trained to wave from afar as students move through the halls if needed.
5. Allow students to shake hands, high five, or wave to their school dog as they come to class each day so all students have a chance to interact with the dog daily.
6. Provide designated “potty” areas for the dog to go each day with an outside receptacle for the closed poop bags.
7. Train several teachers and counselors to to handle the dog properly and allow the school dog to work in different classrooms when needed.