

October 19, 2018

Dear Tahanto Families,

This school year, the Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee approved a Therapy Dog Policy that allows for Tahanto to utilize a therapy dog during school hours. I am pleased to welcome Hannah, a 4-year-old non-shedding Golden Doodle as Tahanto's therapy dog. Dr. Trainor, Tahanto's School Psychologist and Hannah's handler, adopted Hannah from a rescue and together they have passed the Canine Good Citizen and Pet Partners Therapy Animal Team evaluations. They currently volunteer several times a month visiting patients in a local hospital, and have previously volunteered at Special Olympics events and in a hospice home.

Hannah is a therapy dog, not a service or emotional support animal. Research supports numerous physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and environmental benefits to interactions with therapy dogs in school settings, including improvements in reading, attendance, social skills, empathy, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, overall school environment, and reduction in reported anxiety symptoms.

Hannah will be at Tahanto working with Dr. Trainor on an as needed basis, with increased frequency around stressful times of the year, such as holidays, before vacations, mid-term and final exams, as well as during MCAS and AP testing.

During visits, Hannah will wear appropriate identification stating she is a therapy dog. Understanding that some staff and students may have an aversion or allergy to the therapy dog, Dr. Trainor will remove Hannah to a separate area when there is a known aversion or allergy present.

Attached is a release form that needs to be filled out and returned to the counseling office by Monday, October 29th if you would like your child to be able to interact with Hannah. If you have more than one child at Tahanto, you may put all children's names on one form. No students will be permitted to interact with Hannah if a parent signed release form has not been received.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of a therapy dog at Tahanto, please feel free to contact Dr. Kim Trainor via email at ktrainor@bbrsd.org .

Thank you,

Diane Tucceri
Principal



Therapy dog Hannah during Refresh Day with Sophia Morena and Matt St. Denis

PLEASE RETURN TO THE COUNSELING OFFICE BY MONDAY, 10/29/18

File: IMG

Berlin-Boylston Voluntary Release Form-Therapy Dog Usage

I, the undersigned parent/guardian of _____, a minor, do hereby consent to my child's participation in using the services of a Therapy Dog at the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools.

I also agree to forever release the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools, the Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee, and all their employees, agents, board members, volunteers and any and all individuals and organizations assisting or participating in voluntary athletic or recreation programs of the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools ("the Releasees") from any and all claims, rights of action and causes of action that may have arisen in the past, or may arise in the future, directly or indirectly, from personal injuries to my child or property damage resulting from my child's participation using a therapy dog at the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools.

I also promise to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Releasees against any and all legal claims and proceedings of any description that may have been asserted in the past, or may be asserted in the future, directly or indirectly, arising from personal injuries to my child or property damage resulting from child's participation using a therapy dog at the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools.

I further affirm that I have read this Consent and Release Form and that I understand the contents of this Form. I understand that my child's participation in these programs is voluntary and that my child and I are free to choose not to participate in said programs. By signing this form, I affirm that I have decided to allow my child to participate in the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools Therapy Dog program with full knowledge that the Releasees will not be liable to anyone for personal injuries and property damage my child or I may suffer in voluntary usage of a therapy dog at the Berlin-Boylston Public Schools.

Signed: _____

Parent or Guardian of

Date: _____

Berlin-Boylston Public Schools

Berlin-Boylston Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, disability, veteran status, genetic information, homelessness or any other class protected by state or federal law.