

COMFORT DOG PROGRAM

OVERVIEW



IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE YOU START

- The process of getting your dog therapy dog certified will take half a year to a year to complete.
- The Good Dog Foundation evaluation is \$20 and the classes mentioned in Step 4 is \$475.
- You will need to get recertified and submit a new proposal each year.
- The classes and PDs will be held during school hours and you will need to miss school for it.
- The program requires time and dedication, you will be the only one allowed to handle your dog so make sure your principal knows your schedule should be flexible!

10 STEPS TO GET YOUR DOG THERAPY CERTIFIED AND ENTER THE NYCDOE COMFORT DOG PROGRAM

- **Step One:** Check the criteria and make sure your dog fits them!
- **Step Two:** Schedule a therapy dog exam
- **Step Three:** Take and pass the evaluation
- **Step Four:** Attend in-person training classes
- **Step Five:** Graduate from the classes
- **Step Six:** Pass the shadow visit
- **Step Seven:** Certification time!
- **Step Eight:** Attend PDs and create a proposal
- **Step Nine:** Conduct PDs and collect paperwork
- **Step Ten:** Last shadow visit and your dog is good to go!

STEP ONE: CHECK THE CRITERIA AND MAKE SURE YOUR DOG FITS THEM!

It is very important that your dog is predictable and well-mannered. Click on the link below to check what your dog will be tested on in order to be a therapy dog.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g1GWYqIYob95064vwnJQcUPQ18rNo7gN/view?usp=sharing>

STEP TWO: SCHEDULE A THERAPY DOG EXAM

Next it is time to schedule your therapy dog evaluation. The NYCDOE Comfort Dog Program conducts their evaluations through the Good Dog Foundation. Use the link below to sign up for the evaluation and classes.

<http://thegooddogfoundation.org/doe/>

STEP THREE: TAKE AND PASS THE EVALUATION

The Good Dog Foundation will schedule a testing time for you and your dog needs to pass in order to be considered for the program.

STEP FOUR: ATTEND IN-PERSON TRAINING CLASSES

There will be a weekly classes conducted to teach you and your dog how to be a good therapy dog team alongside other handlers and their dogs. This is during school hours so make sure to get coverage.

STEP FIVE: GRADUATE FROM THE CLASSES

Each week you will be graded on the skills you have worked on in class and at the end you will receive a final grade. You need to graduate to move on in the program. Here is an example of a report card:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y8h9TWyDuSxJSEypo4uurFzflIk1TIny/view?usp=sharing>

STEP SIX: PASS THE SHADOW VISIT

Before getting your certificate, the Good Dog Foundation will conduct a shadow visit where you and your dog will demonstrate your new skills with a small group of students at your school! Here is the checklist stating what you will need to do:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15gjrrqci1IfhKPmkKEpoiMo9EJ6iWumj/view?usp=sharing>

STEP SEVEN: CERTIFICATION TIME!

After you pass this, you will receive your certificate! Make sure to save it!



STEP EIGHT: ATTEND PDS AND CREATE A PROPOSAL

Now it is time to attend some PDs with Kirsten and simultaneously create your school's proposal for how the program will look. Make sure to discuss the budget section with your principal or administrator. Here is the document you can fill out for your proposal:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FeLjiEAxINDp9HdwEjDf2eWTw4vBRc640GGKUfsayHM/edit?usp=sharing>

STEP NINE: CONDUCT PDS AND COLLECT PAPERWORK

Before you bring your dog into the school you need a couple things:

- An approval from Kirsten for your proposal
- Recommendation letters from your principal for each of the members of the Comfort Dog Team
- A letter from the superintendent stating that they are aware that a dog will be in the school
- Conduct 3 separate information sessions: one given to the parents, one for the staff and one for the students
 - You can use this Powerpoint as a template for the presentations:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DhOKHlq06iM6IIW5M1txarNFd4cMN588/view?usp=sharing>

STEP TEN: LAST SHADOW VISIT AND YOUR DOG IS GOOD TO GO!

Kirsten will come in to conduct your last shadow visit and teach your dog some new tricks before you start! Make sure to continue collecting data throughout the year and keep in touch with Kirsten. Good luck!

