**Hank’s Work Rules**

**A dog with a frisbee in its mouth

Description generated with high confidence**

We are all so excited that Hank has joined our staff to support the important services that SAGE provides. It is important that staff understand that Hank is more than just the office pet, he is in fact a working dog, with a very unique and special job to do. Here are a few rules for staff members who are not Hank’s handlers. Seeing that everyone follows these rules will keep Hank’s ability to do his job (which he loves) instead of becoming an office pet.

1. **No food during working hours for Hank.** - This is often the hardest rule for staff

members to follow, but it is essential to keep Hank on task. Dogs love to eat, and food can be a big distraction. Some centers have had problems in the past with facility dogs gaining weight or becoming ill due to inappropriate food. In one case, Ellie, a very experienced facility dog in King County, Washington, began to whine during some forensic interviews but not during others. The forensic interviewer was surprised to find out that Ellie was whining when a certain detective was behind the one-way mirror. The detective confessed to feeding Ellie behind the handler’s back. Ellie was unable to concentrate on her command to lie quietly when there was a chance that that detective might give her a yummy bit of food.

1. **Let a sleeping dog lie!** Dogs sleep many hours during the day if left to themselves. Hank will need regular rest times in his crate or office. Staff members should ignore Hank and let him enjoy some down time, so he can concentrate his energies on supporting your clients.
2. **Ignore Hank when he is working**. When Hank is working, he should be essentially invisible to all staff members except the handler. This means that other staff members should not say his name or pet him. The reason for this is that Hank needs to have a way to distinguish working time from playing time. Hank will learn quickly that his job is that he is there to work with children and families. There is only a certain time and location that Hank will be able to have time off means it might be time to play with staff members. Staff members can help Hank learn his job by not interacting with him at all when he is working.
3. **Only his handler can give Hank commands.** – Hank is trained to respond to commands from his handler only, who has spent a lot of time learning to give the commands with consistency and in a way that Hank understands. If other people give Hank commands casually, he could rapidly become less responsive to those words.
4. **“Hank happy hour”** - There will be a Hank Happy Hour at 4:30 p.m. on the days that Hank is available in the classroom. This will provide a place and time where staff can interact with Hank. He will look forward to visiting with staff members during this time. Playtime will give Hank something to look forward to every day. You are welcome to pet Hank or throw a soft toy for him, but no rough housing allowed.