

Hope College Guidelines for Service Animals

Questions about this policy may be directed to Louise Shumaker, Director of Disability Services, 395-7800

Hope College is pleased to provide these guidelines to individuals using service animals on our campus.

While legal access rights are afforded to users of service animals, with that comes the responsibility of ensuring that the animal behaves and responds appropriately at all times in public and that the partner/handler, as a team, must adhere to the same socially accepted standards as any individual in the college community. This policy addresses those standards expected of both the individual and the animal. At Hope College the individual, the animal, and the College have responsibilities to ensure the success of using a service animal.

Background: Service animals are trained to assist people with disabilities in the activities of normal living. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals as "... any... animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items." If an animal meets this definition, it is considered a service animal. Hope College complies with the ADA in allowing use of service animals. However, because of health and safety concerns, the Office for Disability Services oversees use of such animals.

Definitions:

Partner/handler: A person with a service animal. A person with a disability is called a partner; a person without a disability is called a handler.

Pet: A domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. Please see Student Behavior Policy 13.7 for information regarding pets on campus.

Service Animal: Any animal individually trained to work directly or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

Therapy Animal: Therapy animals and their owners provide comfort and companionship while visiting patients in hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions and wherever else the Therapy animal is needed. This is done in a way that increased emotional well being, promotes healing, and improves the quality of life for the people being visited. Therapy animals are NOT entitled to the same benefits as service animals (not covered by ADA).

Team: A person with a disability, or a handler, and his or her service animal. The two work as a team in accomplishing the tasks of everyday living.

Types of Service Animals:

- *Dog Guides* are trained to assist blind or visually impaired handler in navigating their physical environment.
- *Hearing Dogs* are trained to alert a deaf or hard of hearing handlers to specific important sounds in the environment.
- *Mobility Assistance Dogs* are dogs that have been trained to assist a person who has mobility impairment.
- *Medical Alert Dogs* are trained to notify persons with a medical disorder to a change in physiologic status.
- *Diabetic Alert Dogs* alert to a change in a blood-glucose levels of their diabetic handler.
- *Migraine Alert Dogs* alert to an oncoming migraine headache in their susceptible handler.
- *Seizure Alert Dogs* alert to oncoming seizure in their epileptic handler.
- *Asthma Alert Dogs* alert to impending asthma attacks in their asthmatic handler.
- *Psychiatric Alert Dogs* alert to mood cycling in bipolar handlers, or impending panic and anxiety attacks in handlers with these conditions. No one knows for certain what cue a Medical Alert Dogs is responding to when the alerting behavior is displayed.
- *Psychological Service Dogs* are trained to assist persons living with psychiatric disabilities such as Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Dissociative Identity Disorder, Panic Disorder, Anxiety Disorder or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- *Social Signal Dogs* are trained to assist a person with autism.

Requirements of Service Animals and their Partners/Handlers: Identification and Other tags: The animal must have tags or

some other method of indicating ownership and rabies clearances. It is strongly suggested but not required that service animals be fitted with some type of identifying equipment such as a harness, cape, or backpack as appropriate. If state or local licenses are required for the service animal, they must be obtained and kept current in compliance with the local jurisdiction (i.e. dog license) requirements. The Office of Disability Services reserves the right to request proof of licensing at anytime during the animal's residency.

Health and Vaccinations: The animal must be clean and in good health. All animals on campus must have an annual well care visit with a licensed veterinarian. They must have had a general maintenance vaccination series appropriate to the species. All vaccinations must be current. Applicable animals must wear a current rabies vaccination tag. Proof of vaccinations must be filed with Disability Services. Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public settings. A person with an ill animal may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities.

Grooming: The animal must be well groomed, and measures should be taken at all times for flea and odor control. College housing facilities and bathrooms cannot be used for animal bathing or grooming.

Physical control: The animal must be on a leash at all times. It should never be permitted to wander around off leash except if the animal is working. The animal must be kept on a leash and under the control of the handler when outside of residential room. The partner/handler must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is the sole responsibility of its partner/handler. The animal must be maintained and used at all times in ways that do not create safety hazards for other persons.

Campus Responsibility: Partner/Handlers are responsible for any damage caused by their animal. When service animals are left unattended in a residence or office, they are required to be kenneled or restrained with a tie down. It is the responsibility of the handler to ensure that others are not disrupted by an unattended animal (e.g. no vocalizing).

Cleanup: Always carry equipment and bags sufficient to clean up the animal's feces. Properly dispose of the feces in a prearranged area. Persons who are not physically capable of picking up and disposing of the feces are responsible for making all necessary arrangements for assistance. The college is not responsible for these arrangements.

Disruption: The partner/handler of an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, running around, aggressiveness towards others, bring attention to itself) may be asked to remove the animal from college facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the partner may be disallowed to bring the offending animal into college facilities until the partner take significant steps to eliminate the behavior.

Registration Required: All service animals must be registered with Disability Services. Failure to register or maintain an animal, as required above, may subject the partner/handler to fines or refusal by the College for the animal to remain on campus.

Public Etiquette by Students/Staff/Faculty/Administration on Campus:

- Allow a service animal to accompany the partner at all times and everywhere on campus, except where service animal are specifically prohibited.
- Do not pet or touch a service animal; petting the animal while it is working distracts it from the tasks at hand and may cause the animal to be corrected or the handler to be injured.
- Do not feed a service animal. The animal may have specific dietary requirements. Unusual food may cause the animal to become ill.
- Do not deliberately startle, tease or taunt a service animal.
- Do not attempt to separate a partner/handler from his or her service animal.

Responsibilities of the Partner/Handler:

- Register the service animal with the Office of Disability Services by completing the Registry Form for Service Animals.
- State specific plans for maintenance of the animal while on campus. Maintenance includes feces removal. If the individual is unable to collect and properly dispose of animal feces, an alternative person must be identified for this service. Do not assume that college personnel or roommates are responsible for this service.
- The owner of the animal is financially responsible for the actions of the service animal including bodily injury or prop-

erty damage including, but not limited to, any replacement of furniture, carpet, wall coverings, etc. This could include extensive damage to floors and carpets from animal paws which are not kept clean. The owner is expected to cover any costs upon repair and/or cleaning. The owner could be asked to move out if the damage is deemed excessive and/or the result of negligence. Any costs incurred for cleaning above and beyond a normal cleaning or repair are assessed after vacating the premises.

- The owner's room/office may be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests as needed. The room will be treated if fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected, and the owner will be billed for the inspection and for pest treatment.
- If there is a roommate, that individual must sign an agreement allowing the service animal to be in residence with them. In the event of disapproval, either the owner and the animal or the non-approving roommate may be moved to a more suitable location.
- The owner agrees to all other residential policies. An exception to the animal policy does not constitute an exception to any other policy.

Areas Off-Limits to Service Animals:

Teaching Laboratories: The natural organisms carried by dogs and other animals may negatively affect the outcome of experiments. At the same time, the chemicals and organisms used in the experiments may be harmful to service animals.

Mechanical Rooms/Custodial Closets: Mechanical rooms, such as boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, electric closets, elevator control rooms, and custodial closets are off-limits to service animals. The machinery and/or chemicals in these rooms may be harmful to animals.

Kitchens: All kitchen areas are to be considered off-limits to services animals as they could potentially contamination to the food being prepared.

Areas Where There is a Danger to the Service Animal: Any room, including a classroom where there are sharp metal cuttings, or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from the surface; where there is hot material on the floor; where there is a high level of dust; where there is moving machinery is off-limits to animals.

Exceptions:

- A laboratory director or faculty member may open his or her laboratory to a service animal.
- Access to other designated off-limits area may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

To be granted an exception: A students who wants his /her animal to be granted admission to an off-limits area should contact the Office of Disability Services. An employee should contact the Director of Human Resources. Visitors should contact the Office of Disability Services.

Emergency Situations:

In the event of an emergency, the individuals that respond should be trained to recognize service animals and to be aware that the animal may be trying to communicate the need for assistance. The animal may become disoriented from the smell of smoke in a fire or a laboratory emergency, from sirens, or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The partner and/or animal maybe confused in a stressful situation. The individual should be aware that the animal is trying to be protective and, in its confusion, is not to be considered harmful. The individual should make every effort to keep the animal with the partner.

Visitors with Service Animal:

All visitors to campus with service animals must adhere to the same guidelines as students/staff attending the college.

Grievances:

Concerns may be directed to the Office of Disability Services.