

Service Animal Policy and Procedures

I. PURPOSE

Goucher College is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that embraces inclusion and accessibility. This policy provides guidelines concerning employees, students, and visitors who bring their service animal to campus or off campus while conducting college business.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the College, including faculty and staff members; students; and to all visitors to the College.

III. DEFINITIONS

Service Animal: Service animal means any dog or, in certain circumstances, miniature horse, that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a documented disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability (e.g. assisting individuals with navigation, balance, or stability; alerting individuals to the presence of others, sounds, allergens; pulling a wheelchair; providing assistance during a seizure; preventing or disruptive impulsive or destructive behaviors resulting from psychiatric or neurological disabilities; retrieving items such as medication). Service animals are not required to wear special identification or have certification.

Service Animals in Training: A dog or miniature horse being trained to become a service animal.

College Property: For the purposes of this policy, college property includes all areas owned or controlled by the College, all campus workspaces of college employees, all class sites for students, all event sites for college events and all other venues in which the college controls the site.

Handler: A handler is a person with a documented disability who has physical possession and control of a service animal or service animal in training or is the owner or person bringing any service animal or service animal in training onto college property or off campus while conducting college business.

Visitors: For purposes of the policy, visitors include but are not limited to alumnae/i, volunteers, donors, event attendees, students and families on college tours, vendors, business representatives, and contractors.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Service Animals on Campus

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Md. Human Svs Code § 7-705, the College allows service animals to enter college buildings and facilities provided they meet the guidelines set forth in this policy. A service animal is not restricted to specific rooms and areas, and instead may live and work in any area of campus in which its handler has access, although there are specific locations and activities on college property where all animals are prohibited for safety and health reasons. Restricted areas may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Private offices, excluding offices assigned to handlers or to individuals that allow the service animal.
- b. Mechanical rooms/custodial closets.
- c. Food service preparation areas.
- d. Areas where protective clothing is necessary.
- e. Research and teaching laboratories.
- f. Areas where there is a danger to the service animal.

Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Risk Management, Insurance, and Contracts or their designee, in consultation with the Director of Accessibility Services for students' service animals and the Benefits & Wellness Manager for employee's service animals. The College reserves the right to designate additional areas (e.g., floors of the residence halls) as animal-free zones, as necessary, to accommodate the needs of others (e.g., individuals with allergies, individuals with fears related to animals).

1. Students Notifying of the Presence of a Service Animal

Students need to notify the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) of the presence of a service animal on college property. Students who reside (or plan to reside) in campus housing need to request permission from the OAS. The student will be asked whether the animal is needed because of a documented disability, and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. New or transfer students must contact OAS prior to their first day of classes. If the student needs any other accommodations while attending the College, documentation of the disability and a request for accommodations must be made as provided on the College [website](#).

2. Employees Notifying of the Presence of a Service Animal

Faculty and staff must notify the Office of Human Resources of the presence of a service animal on college property, including those who reside in (or plan to reside) in campus housing. The faculty or staff will be asked whether the animal is needed because of a documented disability, and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

The College may withdraw approval for the continued presence of a service animal if the service animal is unattended by its handler (see Handler Responsibility section below).

3. Visitors

The department or office a visitor wishes to visit, or the office sponsoring an event a visitor wishes to attend, should be contacted in advance if a visitor has any questions about the guidelines

concerning the presence of a service animal at a specific event or in a specific location on campus.

B. Service Animals in Training

At Goucher College, service animals in training are afforded the same rights as service animals, and they, along with their handlers, must adhere to the guidelines set forth in this Policy.

1. Students Notifying of the Presence of a Service Animal in Training

Students need to notify the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) of the presence of a service animal in training on college property. Students who reside (or plan to reside) in campus housing need to request permission from the OAS. The student will be asked whether the service animal in training is needed because of a documented disability, and what work or task the service animal is being trained to perform. New or transfer students must contact OAS prior to their first day of classes. If the student needs any other accommodations while attending the College, documentation of the disability and a request for accommodations must be made as provided on the College [website](#).

2. Employees Notifying of the Presence of a Service Animal in Training

Faculty and staff must notify the Office of Human Resources of the presence of a service animal in training on college property, including those who reside in (or plan to reside) in campus housing. The faculty or staff will be asked whether the service animal in training is needed because of a documented disability, and what work or task the animal is being trained to perform.

The College may withdraw approval for the continued presence of a service animal in training if the service animal in training is unattended by its handler (see Handler Responsibility section below).

3. Visitors

The department or office a visitor who wishes to visit, or the office sponsoring the event a visitor wishes to attend, should be contacted in advance if the visitor has any questions about the rules ~~concerning~~ the presence of a service animal in training at a specific event or in a specific location on campus.

V. HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Handlers are responsible for ensuring that their service animals or service animals in training are up to date on required vaccinations, are spayed/neutered (i.e., dogs), and are appropriately licensed in Baltimore County. Failure to do so may result in the animal being banned from college property. Verification of this must be provided to the Director of Risk Management, Insurance, and Contracts in advance of bringing the animal on campus and renewed on an annual basis.
- All liability for the actions of the service animal or service animal in training is the responsibility of the handler.
- Handlers are responsible for cleaning up any waste created by the service animal or service animal in training. This includes fees for clean-up and disposal of animal waste. If the

handler fails to clean up after the animal, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal onto college property.

- Handlers are responsible for any damage caused by the service animal or service animal in training to persons or property while on college property. This includes fees related to the replacement and/or repair of college or other individuals' assets, including grounds, personal property and improvements, and the remediation of flea infestation. If the animal causes damage to property, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal onto college property.
- In most cases, service animals and service animals in training must remain with and be personally supervised by the handler, and the handler must retain full control of the animal at all times while on college property or conducting off-site college business, including during emergency situations. Exceptions such as temporarily leaving the animal unattended in the handler's private office or residence must be requested in advance and approved by the appropriate party (i.e., the Office of Accessibility Services or the Office of Human Resources). Service animals or service animals in training may not be tied or tethered to any college property, including but not limited to buildings, railings, bike racks, fire hydrants, fences, signposts, benches, and trees, and may not be allowed to run loose anywhere on campus. Animals must remain leashed and/or harnessed. Any service animal or service animal in training found unattended in or on any college property may be impounded by the Office of Campus Safety. Owners of impounded animals will be held responsible for payment of any impound and/or license fees required to secure the release of their animals.
- Handlers must ensure that service animals and service animals in training do not disrupt or interfere with college activities including, but not limited to, teaching, research, service, events or administrative activities. If the animal is unruly or disruptive, or if the handler fails to maintain control of the animal, the handler must regain control immediately or remove the animal from college property. If the improper behavior continues or happens more than once, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal onto college property, to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Risk Management, Insurance, and Contracts.
- Handlers must sign the form entitled [Responsibility of Persons Living in the Residence Halls with Service or Assistance Animals](#) prior to residing on campus with the animal. The form will be maintained by the Director of Residence Life.
- Service animals or service animals in training may not be left overnight in college housing to be cared for by any individual other than the handler. If the handler is to be absent from their residence overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the handler. The handler will also be required to designate a third party as an emergency contact to care for the animal in the event the handler is unable to do so because of a medical, or other emergency.
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VI. REMOVAL OF SERVICE ANIMAL OR SERVICE ANIMAL IN TRAINING

The Director of Risk Management, Insurance, and Contracts may ban a service animal or service animal in training or require its removal from a campus building, location, or college grounds if:

1. The handler fails to keep the service animal or service animal in training under control. If the uncontrollable behavior (e.g., excessive barking, not leash trained, not housebroken, causing physical damage to college property) is significant or happens repeatedly, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the animal into any college building, facility, or onto college property until the handler demonstrates specific and effective steps taken to mitigate the behavior.
2. The service animal or service animal in training's behavior or condition constitutes (or is reasonably likely to constitute) a threat to the College or a member of the college community. An animal is considered a direct threat if exhibiting behavior observed to be aggressive, violent, and/or hazardous (e.g., growling, biting, kicking, infested) to the health and safety of others.

In the event an animal is temporarily or permanently banned, the College will engage as needed, in a good faith process, with the handler to determine if other accommodations, as needed, will effectively allow the individual to participate in the program, service, or activity.

VII. APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES

Any employee who feels that they have been unfairly denied the ability to bring a service animal or service animal in training onto college property or to a particular area of college property, or who feels that they have been unfairly denied the ability to have a service animal or service animal in training in a college residence or the workplace, may file a complaint under the college's [Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

Students who believe they have been unfairly denied the ability to bring a service animal or service animal in training onto college property or to a particular area of college property, or who feel that they have been unfairly denied the ability to have a service animal or service animal in training in a college residence or in other spaces on campus, may file an appeal under the College's [Disability Accommodation Appeal Policy For Students](#).

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

College personnel shall not be required to provide care or food for any service animal or service animal in training, including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm.

In emergency situations, the Office of Campus Safety will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.

IX. RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO SERVICE ANIMALS AND SERVICE ANIMALS IN TRAINING

The College may impose some restrictions on, and may even exclude, a service animal or service animal in training in certain instances. Restrictions or exclusions will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable laws, but an animal may be excluded if:

- it is out of control and effective action is not taken to control it,
- it is not house broken,
- it poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications, or
- its presence fundamentally alters the nature of a program, service or activity.

In considering whether an animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, the College will make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence, to determine:

- the nature, duration, and severity of the risk,
- the probability that the potential injury will actually occur, and
- whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

X. SANCTIONS

Members of the college community and visitors are prohibited from interfering in any way with a service animal, service animal in training, or the duties it performs. Appropriate behavior around service animals/service animals in training and their handlers includes not petting, feeding, harassing, or attempting to separate a service animal from their handler. When it is not readily apparent that a dog or miniature horse is a service animal or service animal in training, Goucher employees may ask only two questions to verify the animal's status: (1) Is the animal required due to a documented disability? and (2) What are the tasks or work the animal has been trained to perform? Individuals may not request documentation regarding the individual's disability or the training or certification of the service animal or service animal in training. Any member of the college community who interferes with a service animal or service animal in training or the duties it performs, may face sanctions under appropriate misconduct charges.

Sanctions for violations of this policy by handlers will be commensurate with the severity and/or frequency of the offense and may include termination of employment, dismissal of a student, or banning an animal from college property.

XI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

The official responsible for implementing and updating this policy is the Director of Risk Management, Insurance, and Contracts.

XII. HISTORY

Updated: January 2017, November 2020, June 2023, July 2024.

Sample Letter from a Service Provider

(To be used for students requesting service animals/service animals in training in residence halls only)

[Date]

Name of Professional (therapist, physician, psychiatrist, rehabilitation counselor, or other reliable third party)
XXX Road
City, State Zip

To Whom it May Concern:

[Full Name of Student or Employee] is my patient and has been under my care since [date]. I am familiar with his/her/their history and with the functional limitations imposed by his/her/their disability.

Due to the _____ disorder, [first name] has certain limitations regarding [social interaction/coping with stress/anxiety, etc.]. In order to help alleviate these difficulties, and to enhance his/her/their ability to live independently and to use fully and enjoy the college owned and administered housing unit, I have determined that it is necessary for _____ to have a service animal/service animal in training in his/her/their room in order to alleviate the symptoms of his/her/their disability. It is anticipated that the animal will assist [first name] in the following manner:

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I am competent to make an assessment regarding the assistive and/or therapeutic benefits of service animals for people with disabilities such as that experienced by [first name]. Upon request, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning my recommendation that [Full Name of Student] have a service animal. Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name of Professional