

# Service Animal Policy

*Grove City College reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.*

Grove City College ("GCC" or "College") is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to individuals with disabilities. This policy explains the requirements for the presence for a service animal, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), while on campus and in College housing.

## Definitions

**Service Animals:** The Department of Justice, [defines service animals as dogs](#) that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Services animals are working animals not pets. The work or task the dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

**Handler:** An individual who requires the assistance of a service animal.

## Voluntary Registration of Service Animals While on Campus

Individuals who are enrolled in courses and who have a service animal are welcome to register their service animal with the College. Registration is **NOT** mandatory. However, registration of the service animal may aid one in accessing College premises and would allow emergency personnel to be aware of individuals who are accompanied by a service animal in the event of an emergency. Individuals who would like to voluntarily register their service animal may contact the Director of Disability Services at 724-264-4673. Registration is not available for visitors to campus or service dogs in training.

## Handler Responsibilities

1. Service animals are subject to state and local laws/ordinances regarding licensing and vaccinations. Pennsylvania requires all dogs to be licensed and have current vaccinations.
2. The animal cannot pose a direct threat to the health and safety of persons while on College premises.
3. The handler must always be in full control of the animal. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
4. As a courtesy to others and as much as possible, the handler should ensure that the service animal does not approach and sniff others, dining tables, or personal belongings of others.
5. The handler must assure that the service animal does not block emergency exits.
6. The animal must display good behavior and not disrupt others unless alerting the handler as appropriately trained.

## Access to Facilities

Generally, service animals are welcome anywhere on campus that is open to the public. However, there may be individual exceptions in place where the presence of the animal may compromise a sterile environment. Please refer to the “Exclusions” section of this policy for more information.

## Service Animals in College Housing

Grove City College is a residential campus that generally requires all students to reside on campus for the entire four (4) years. Grove City College is committed to providing equal access to individuals with disabilities; as such, the College is aware that individuals may need the assistance of a service animal to access College housing.

1. A Handler, who plans to have a service animal in residence (college housing) must provide sufficient notice to the Disability Services Office. Providing sufficient notice allows the College an opportunity to make appropriate arrangements regarding housing placement, roommates, etc.
2. College personnel are not required to provide food or care for the animal.
3. The Handler is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner and, when provided, must use animal relief areas designated by GCC. Waste disposal via College plumbing is prohibited. The Handler should always carry equipment sufficient to clean up and properly dispose of the animal's waste. In the event an individual's disability prevents them from cleaning up and dispose of the animal's waste, the Handler is responsible for making appropriate arrangements. The College is not responsible for these services.
4. The animal will not be bathed or its cage/crate/bedding cleaned using student housing or college facilities.
5. An individual with a disability may be charged for any damage caused by his or her service animal beyond reasonable wear and tear to the same extent that it charges other individuals for damages beyond reasonable wear and tear. The Handler's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a College-approved pest control service. The Handler will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls. The College shall have the right to bill the Handler's account for unmet obligations under this provision.
6. The Handler is responsible for instructing others on appropriate interactions with the service animal and setting clear expectations.

## Inquiries

An individual's disability may not be visible. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides and the Handler has chosen not to voluntarily register their service animal with the Disability Services Office only limited inquiries are allowed. College personnel may ask two questions in determining the validity of the presence of a service animal:

1. **“Is the animal required because of a disability?”**
2. **“What work or task is the animal trained to perform?”**

College personnel cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

## Exclusions

A service animal may be excluded from any authorized area and/or be removed from campus, and its Handler may be subject to disciplinary action if, including, but not limited to:

1. The service animal displays aggressive or disruptive behavior or noises, and effective action is taken to control it, unless said noise/behavior(s) are part of the needed disability service to the Handler;
2. The service animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
3. The service animal is not housebroken;
4. The service animal is not in good health, well groomed, or cared for;
5. The service animal infringes inappropriately into other's personal space;
6. The Handler intentionally uses the service animal to block identified fire/emergency exits.

## Potential Facility Exclusions

Service Animals are generally allowed to accompany their handlers anywhere their handlers are permitted on campus, including academic classrooms. However, some facilities may be off-limits for service animals, including:

1. **Classroom and research laboratories:** The natural organisms carried by service animals may negatively affect the outcome of research or classroom activities. Additionally, the chemicals and/or organisms used in the research may be harmful to service animals.
2. **Areas where protective clothing is necessary:** Typically, any room where protective clothing is required is off-limits to service animals. Examples impacting students include the kiln, chemistry laboratories, and metal/machine shops.
3. **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 a surface; where there is hot material on the floor (e.g., molten metal or glass); where there is a high level of dust; or where there is moving machinery is off-limits to service animals.

Each location's safety will be evaluated by a group of individuals including Disability Services staff, the laboratory director or professor, and other staff who can assess and manage risks on campus. When an area is determined to be unsafe for the service animal, reasonable accommodations will be provided to assure the student equal access to the activity. Students utilizing service animals are encouraged to work with the Disability Services Office, prior to beginning a class, to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be made.

## Service Animals "In Training"

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assures people with disabilities who are accompanied by service animals that they will not be excluded from public places or activities, nor charged any additional fees, because they are accompanied by their service dog. However, the ADA does not provide the same protection to service animals in training (that is, the ADA assures access for the handler/partner only if the dog is fully trained to give some disability-related service).

Pennsylvania state law (18 Pa.C.S.A. §7325) provides those same rights of access for people with disabilities, accompanied by service animals, and for individuals who are training service animals for a recognized authority

(agency). For example, any nonprofit member or candidate of Assistance Dogs International, Guide Dogs for the Blind or an individual employed by Canine Partners for Life, who is preparing future service dogs to be paired with someone who is disabled, may bring the dog onto campus and interact with the campus community in public areas, campus offices, and so on.

Because Pennsylvania state law does not clarify further its use of the term “in training,” the College has established policy, based on accepted practices suggested by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). A service-dog-in-training is a dog, accompanied by its trainer, that is undergoing individual training to provide specific disability-related work or service for an individual with a disability. Such task-specific training is generally undertaken with an adult dog, only after having completed a period of obedience and socialization training (obedience training, being housebroken, getting acclimated to public places and everyday activities as pets).

As service animals in training in Pennsylvania are only given access rights when accompanied by someone employed by a nonprofit agency, they generally cannot be in-residence in College housing, nor be present in other areas of campus except those places where all students are welcome to bring pets. Similarly, puppies who are being raised/trained in preparation for participating in formal service animal training generally are not welcome in College housing or on campus except where pets are allowed.

## **Misrepresentation of Service Animal**

Under Pennsylvania State law (ASSISTANCE AND SERVICE ANIMAL INTEGRITY ACT, PA § P.L. 733, No. 118 (2018) <https://www.palegis.us/statutes/unconsolidated/law-information/view-statute?txtType=HTM&SessYr=2018&ActNum=0118.&SessInd=0>), a person who intentionally misrepresents their need for a service animal and/or misrepresents an animal as a service animal can face misdemeanor charges and fines. Individuals convicted of such may also face sanctions under the College’s code of conduct policy.

## **Non-Retaliation**

Grove City College will not retaliate against any person because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in College housing, including a request for access for a Service Animal.

Any student who feels they have been discriminated against, on grounds of their disability may file a grievance through the College’s grievance procedure.

## Emergency Contact Information

In the event of an emergency in which I, the Handler, am unable to care for or my service animal must be removed the contact person stated below will be responsible for the care of my service animal. ***(All information is required to be completed – Please print.)*** By signing this agreement, I agree to pick-up and care for the service animal within **48 hours**, until the owner is able to resume care.

### Off-Campus Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

This emergency contact information may be shared with:

- Housing and Residence Life
- Campus Safety
- Student Health Center

After this page is received by Disability Services, our staff will reach out to the individuals listed to verify their contact information. In the event contact information for this individual changes, please be sure to reach out to our office to update the information. If the individual(s) above are not able to be reached the College may seek alternative arrangements to place the animal in the care of a professional agency at the Handler's expense.

Signature of Staff Verification: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_