

Animals on Campus Policy

Patrick & Henry Community College

Accessibility & Accommodation Services

I. Policy Statement

Patrick & Henry Community College is committed to maintaining a welcoming and accessible campus environment for all students, employees, and visitors. To promote public safety and protect the campus community, no person is permitted to bring an animal onto campus except as expressly permitted under this policy.

This policy is guided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Virginia Code § 51.5-44 (as amended through 2025, c. 378), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all students, employees, faculty, administrators, contractors, community members, and visitors on any P&HCC campus property, including college-owned or leased buildings, outdoor spaces, parking areas, and college-sponsored events.

III. General Provisions

Except as provided in the Exceptions section of this policy:

- Animals are prohibited inside all P&HCC-owned or controlled facilities and buildings.
- Animals are prohibited at any public gathering held on P&HCC-owned or controlled property, including but not limited to events, demonstrations, exhibits, and fairs.
- Animals may not be tethered or left unattended on campus.
- Animals should not be left in closed vehicles on campus.
- No pets are permitted indoors on any P&HCC-owned or controlled property.

IV. Exceptions to this Policy

A. Service Animals

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Virginia Code § 51.5-44, this policy does not apply to service animals as defined by federal and state law. Service animals are permitted in all areas of campus open to the public.

Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. On a limited, case-by-case basis, a miniature horse that has been individually trained may also qualify as a service animal.

Service animals are working animals, not pets. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

B. Service Animals in Training

Virginia Code § 51.5-44(E) extends access rights to service dogs in training, provided the dog is at least six months of age, and the handler is an experienced trainer or is conducting continuing training of the animal. Service animals in training must be in appropriate identifying equipment as required by state law (see Definitions). P&HCC honors these Virginia state protections.

C. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

Emotional support animals are not service animals under the ADA and are not permitted inside P&HCC buildings or facilities.

D. Law Enforcement and Emergency Animals

This policy does not apply to animals used by law enforcement, campus security, or emergency personnel in the official exercise of their duties.

E. Academic and Student Services Programs

Animals authorized for use in approved academic programs, research, or student services programming (including therapy animal programs) are permitted subject to prior written authorization from the appropriate academic dean or vice president. Such animals must comply with all applicable care, health, and supervision requirements.

F. Community Events and Other Animal Requests

Requests to bring animals onto campus for community events, college-sponsored fairs, SPCA or animal welfare events, or any other purpose not covered by the exceptions above must receive prior written approval before the event. All approved events must comply with applicable handler responsibility and animal control requirements outlined in this policy.

Requests should be directed to: Kaylyn Gary, Accessibility Specialist
(kgary@patrickhenry.edu)

V. Handler Responsibilities

The handler is the individual with a disability or a designated responsible party. The handler is solely responsible for:

- All care, supervision, toileting, feeding, grooming, and veterinary care for the animal
- Keeping the animal under control at all times through a harness, leash, or tether, or through voice or signal control when required by the animal's task or the handler's disability
- Ensuring the animal wears all required identifying equipment consistent with Virginia Code § 51.5-44(E) (see Definitions)
- Compliance with all applicable county and state laws, including animal license requirements and vaccination requirements
- Ensuring the animal has an identification tag with the owner's name and contact information
- Cleaning up all animal waste promptly; solid waste must be disposed of in an outdoor trash receptacle
- Financial responsibility for any damages to persons or property caused by the animal, beyond ordinary wear and tear

The college is not obligated to supervise, care for, feed, or provide a relief area for any animal on campus.

VI. Removal of Animals from Campus

College officials may ask an individual to remove an animal from campus or a specific area under the following circumstances:

- The animal is not housebroken.
- The animal is out of control, and the handler fails to take effective action to regain control.
 - Examples of out-of-control behavior include lunging, biting, repeated disruptive barking in a classroom or quiet environment, or aggressive behavior toward persons or other animals.
 - This determination may not be based on breed stereotypes or past experience with other animals. It must be based on the specific animal's actual behavior.
- The animal's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of a specific college program or service.
- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated through reasonable modifications.

VII. Inquiries Regarding Service Animals

When it is not immediately obvious that a dog is a service animal, college personnel may ask only the following two questions:

- **Question 1:** Is this dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- **Question 2:** What work or task has this dog been trained to perform?

College personnel may not ask about the nature or details of the individual's disability, require documentation or certification, require the animal to demonstrate its task, or require the animal to wear identifying equipment as a condition of access.

VIII. Fraudulent Misrepresentation

Under Virginia Code § 51.5-44.1, any person who knowingly and willfully represents a dog as a service animal or hearing dog to fraudulently gain public access, including through the use of a harness, collar, vest, sign, or identification card, is guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.

IX. Conflict Resolution

If a member of the campus community has a documented allergy, health condition, or other concern related to the presence of an animal, the college will work to address both parties' needs through reasonable modifications. This may include seating changes, scheduling adjustments, or space-based solutions. The presence of a personal concern or preference does not automatically override the access rights of a person with a disability.

X. Definitions

- **Service Animal:** A dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. On a limited case-by-case basis, a miniature horse may also qualify. The work or task must be directly related to the individual's disability. Animals that provide comfort through presence only (ESAs, therapy animals, comfort animals) are not service animals under the ADA.
- **Service Animal in Training:** Under Virginia Code § 51.5-44(E), a dog at least six months of age that is being trained by an experienced trainer of guide, hearing, or service dogs, or by a person conducting continuing training of such a dog, while wearing appropriate identifying equipment (harness, blaze orange leash, vest, backpack, or organizational jacket). Virginia law provides these access rights; the ADA does not.
- **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** An animal that provides emotional support or comfort to a person with a disability through its presence, but is not trained to perform a specific disability-related task. ESAs are not service animals under the ADA and do not have general campus access rights.
- **Therapy Animal:** An animal trained to provide comfort and affection to groups of people in therapeutic or community settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and schools. Therapy animals are not service animals under the ADA and require prior authorization for use in P&HCC programs.
- **Handler:** The individual responsible for the care, supervision, and behavior of an animal on campus, typically the person with a disability or a designated responsible third party.

- **Housebroken:** An animal trained to avoid excreting in inappropriate places.
- **Leashed:** An animal restrained on a cord, chain, or similar device not to exceed eight (8) feet in length, controlled by the handler.
- **Direct Physical Control:** The owner or responsible person is physically holding the animal in a manner that prevents escape.
- **Virginia Identification Requirements (§ 51.5-44(E)):** Guide dogs for blind or visually impaired persons must be in a harness. Hearing dogs for deaf or hard-of-hearing persons must be on a blaze orange leash. All other service dogs must be in a harness, backpack, or vest identifying the dog as a trained service dog. Service dogs in training must also meet these standards or wear a jacket identifying the recognized training organization.

XI. Responsibilities and Authority

All students, faculty, staff, administrators, contractors, and visitors are expected to adhere to this policy. Authority to enforce this policy and to revoke the privilege of bringing an animal onto P&HCC property rests with the Dean of Student Services, the Accessibility Specialist, and campus administration, in coordination with appropriate personnel.

XII. Contact

Kaylyn Gary, Accessibility Specialist