

CATEGORY: Public Space

POLICY TITLE: Animals in the Library

FIRST ADOPTED: September 23, 2021

EFFECTIVE as of: September 23, 2021

APPLICATION: Patrons and visitors, employees

RESPONSIBILITY: Director and employees

### **Animals in the Library Policy**

#### **Introduction:**

The Kirkland Town Library recognizes that patrons with disabilities may have service animals that are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of a disabled individual. The Library recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. The Library also considers the safety and health of all its patrons, the public, and library staff to be of utmost priority.

#### **Service Animals:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are allowed to accompany their handlers into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. The animal may be of any breed, and additionally miniature horses are permitted under the ADA.

The handler is not required to provide documentation about the service animal or to prove a disability. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified, or to be identified by a special harness, vest or collar. Service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times, unless the use of a leash or harness interferes with the animal's effective performance of its task. If the animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be under the handler's control via voice, signals or other effective means at all times. The animal's handler is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal and must be in full control of the animal at all times. Service animals are not allowed on library furniture or fixtures and must remain on the floor or be carried. Owners must keep the service animal directly with them at all times.

If unsure whether the animal is a service animal, staff are permitted to ask the animal's handler:

- (1) Is this a service animal required because of a disability and
- (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

A staff member ascertaining whether an animal is a service animal will never ask about the nature of a person's disability.

If it is determined that the animal is not a service animal the patron will be asked to leave and welcomed back into the library without the animal. Misrepresenting an animal as a service animal is a violation of the library's Patron Code of Conduct, and may result in suspension of library privileges. If the patron refuses to leave library staff will contact the local authorities.

The library may ask a person with a disability to remove their service animal from the library if and only if the animal is out of control or otherwise threatens the health, safety and welfare of staff or patrons and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or if the animal is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff will offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain items and services without the animal's presence.

### **Library-Sponsored Programs**

The library may choose to offer educational programs for the public that include various animals. Such animals are permitted in the library building for the duration of the program and must be accompanied by the owner or trained handler at all times.

### **Other animals/pets**

Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

No pets or animals other than service animals are allowed inside the library. Owners of pets will be asked to remove them from the library. The library does not condone leaving non-service animals outside the library in a way that may endanger the animal or library visitors; cause a disturbance or impede anyone's progress into or out of the library. The library reserves the right to contact the police regarding any unattended animals on its premises.