

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>SERVICE ANIMALS FOR EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility:</b>
<b>Policy Section:</b>	<b>STUDENT SERVICES</b>	<b>VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, SAFETY, SECURITY &amp; FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</b>
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**5.29 SERVICE ANIMALS FOR EMPLOYEES**

**Preamble**

St. Clair College is committed to serving all students and staff. As such, the College welcomes and supports the use of service animals for students and staff, where there is a legitimate need for such support. As St. Clair College is accredited by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), and due to potential concerns that may arise from animals on campus, the following is St. Clair’s policy.

**Definition**

Service animals are animals, typically dogs, trained to help people with disabilities maintain independence. Service animals have training to perform specific tasks for people with disabilities.

**Policy:**

It is the policy of St. Clair College that:

1. The College will adhere and implement practices according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Personal Health Information Protection Act and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
2. The College will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the person with a disability and their Service Animal. The College will be committed to preventing and removing any barriers to services, spaces, or resources by welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a Service Animal.

3. The College will ensure the person with a disability and their Service Animal is permitted to enter the premises unless the Service Animal is otherwise excluded by law. Every effort will be made to accommodate and ensure the surroundings allow the individual to effectively maintain their relationship with their Service Animal.

If the service animal is prohibited by another law (for example, Ontario Regulation 562 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act states that animals are not allowed in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold, or offered for sale. However, it does make an exception to allow service animals in areas where food is normally sold, served, or offered for sale), the College will endeavor to provide another way for the person to access college services. It is the obligation of The College to explain to the Service Animal Partner why the Service Animal is prohibited and discuss other ways to service them, including alternate spaces. This process may include:

- Serving the individual in another area where the Service Animal is allowed; or
- Leaving the Service Animal in a safe area where it's allowed and helping the individual while they are separated from the animal.

The College, as a best practice and proactive measure, will identify any areas in the institution, such as the culinary kitchens and other food laboratories that can create a potential health hazard due to the presence of an animal, where a Service Animal would be prohibited by law and consider options ahead of time to ensure that alternatives can be offered in a timely manner.

4. Under the AODA, there are no restrictions on what type of animal can be used as a Service Animal. An animal is a Service Animal for a person with a disability if:
  - The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
  - The person confirms the status of the Service Animal with a license or certification upon request; or
  - The person formalizes their accommodation, providing documentation from a regulated health professional to the relevant parties confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability;
    - Employees would provide this documentation to Human Resources
5. If the Service Animal cannot be readily identified:
  - Don't make assumptions; remember that not all disabilities are visible, and that the individual is not required to disclose their disability or demonstrate how the animal assists them.
  - If it is unclear whether the animal is a pet or a Service Animal, ask the individual; anyone can request to see the certification for the Service Animal to confirm its status.
  - Please note, the certificate for an official Service Animal is distinct from the documentation from a regulated health professional which can only be requested by Human Resources.

- If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a Service Animal being used by a person for reasons relating to their disability and they would like their Service Animal to be reflected in a formal accommodation plan, the person shall provide a letter from a regulated health professional to the relevant parties verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to their disability. In such a circumstance, employees would provide this documentation to Human Resources.

If the employee submits valid documentation, they must be allowed to be accompanied by their Service Animal.

All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the employee and their Service Animal. Whenever possible, the College should endeavour to pre-plan for the accompaniment of a Service Animal within the community.

6. It is essential that all college staff are properly trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a Service Animal, including the following key principles:
  - Maintain a respectful distance from the Service Animal.
  - It is not appropriate to pet, feed or startle a Service Animal while it is working.
  - Ask permission before touching the animal as this might distract it from its work.
  - If it is unclear whether the animal is a pet or a Service Animal, ask the individual.
  - The individual / Service Animal Partner is responsible for the care and supervision of their Service Animal.
  - If another person's health or safety could be seriously impacted by the presence of a Service Animal (such as a severe allergy), all options should be considered to find a solution that meets the needs of both individuals such as but not limited to:
    - Creating distance between the two people
    - Eliminating in-person contact
    - Changing the time, the two parties receive the service.
    - Any other way that would allow the person to use their Service Animal on the premises
7. Management & Care of the Service Animal is the responsibility of the Service Animal Partner:
  - Service Animals must be accompanied by and be always under the full control of their Partner.
  - The Partner must always remain near the Service Animal unless the Partner is in an area where the animal is not allowed. At such times, the Service Animal must be cared for by a designated support person.
  - Service Animals must be housetrained.
  - Service Animals, such as guide dogs, should be always responsive to voice commands and/or non-verbal cues.
  - The Service Animal should be restrained on a leash (no longer than 5 feet) or in a harness. If the Service Animal in use is not conducive to a leash or harness, the Service Animal will be near their Partner and will be prevented from wandering.
  - Barking, growling, biting or aggressive behaviour by a Service Animal will not be tolerated or permitted.
  - Service Animals should not be disruptive to others; this includes interaction with others, disturbing the personal belongings of others, engaging in excessive personal

grooming in public settings, or blocking an aisle, passageway, for fire and/or emergency exits.

- The Service Animal Partner is responsible for providing water, food and timely bathroom and exercise breaks.
  - It is the responsibility of the Service Animal Partner to ensure the animal is kept clean, well-groomed and odour free.
  - The Partner must arrange for the cleaning of any areas necessary due to the presence of the Service Animal. Waste must be cleaned immediately and disposed of properly. This includes on all grounds as well as inside of the College.
  - The partner is responsible for damage caused by the animal; however, the College can only charge for damages if a person without an animal would be charged for the same type of damage.
  - Service animals should not be permitted in lab settings that will compromise their safety, unless appropriate precautions are adopted to safely secure the service animal. Examples of lab settings may include but are not limited to, areas with large moving equipment, labs with chemicals and glassware.
8. Employees with a disability who use a Service Animal should contact Human Resources and follow the procedures outlined in policy 5.16 Request for Permanent Accommodation and submit the Request for a Service Animal form (see Appendix A) along with any documentation which may include but is not limited to:
- Name and credentials of professional or evaluator.
  - Description of current functional limitations
  - Specific tasks the Service Animal will perform to meet the accommodation needs of the individual or assist with the functional limitations.
  - Proof of up-to-date vaccinations, as needed.
  - Local ordinances regarding animals apply to service dogs and cats, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, at-large animals, and dangerous animals. Dogs and cats must wear a license tag and a current rabies vaccination tag from its home municipality.

Additional procedures may be required to ensure the health and safety of individual departmental areas. These procedures should be made in partnership with all relevant parties, including: the person with a disability, the program/departmental area, the practicum/field placement host (as appropriate), Accessibility Services, Health and Safety Services and Human Resources as needed.

9. Employees with a health or safety concern about exposure to a Service Animal should speak with Human Resources. They may need to follow procedures set out in Policy 5.16 Request for Permanent Accommodation.
10. A Service Animal may be excluded when any one of the following conditions exist:
- The Service Animal is disruptive, and the Partner is not effectively controlling it;
  - The Service Animal's presence, behaviour or actions pose a direct threat to property or the health or safety of others.

- When another law specifically states that animals must be excluded, or the animal is excluded by operation of another law.

Reasons for exclusion must be demonstrable, not speculative. Risk may not be remote such as thinking an animal may bite someone or that the animal may annoy others. Assumptions or speculation about how the animal is likely to behave based on experience with other animals are not valid. If another person complains about the presence of a Service Animal (because of allergies, fear, or other reasons not related to the animal's demeanour or the complainant's health), the person with objections to the animal should be separated and/or leave the area where the animal is located.

If the Service Animal is to be excluded for any of the above reasons, the Partner must be given the option of participating in an activity or receiving services without the Service Animal on the premises. If the animal has been excluded because of disruptive behaviour, the Partner must be allowed to participate in the activity with the Service Animal once the animal's behaviour is under control.

### **Animals Brought on Campus for College Events**

During College events where animals are brought on campus (e.g., Family Fun Day), the manager responsible for the event must ensure all paperwork is submitted to the Chair of the Animal Care Committee (ACC). Approval must be obtained prior to the arrival of all animals on campus.

Appendix A



## Request for a Service Animal

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

The employee named above has provided the following in order to proceed with the use of a Service Animal as an accommodation at St. Clair College:

- Letter or Functional Limitations Form has been provided from a regulated medical professional verifying that the individual has a disability and that the animal assists with their disability.
  - Proof of training for the animal has been provided.
  - Name and Breed of Service/Therapy Animal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Proof of current licensing, immunizations and rabies vaccination for the animal has been provided.

HR Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_