Animals in the Library

The Pittsylvania County Public Library prohibits bringing a pet (a domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship) or animal to work or having a pet or animal in the Pittsylvania County Public Library buildings and premises, with the exception of animals providing medically necessary support for the benefit of individuals with disabilities (service animals) or service animals in training as part of a service animal training program.

Exotic or wild animals are restricted from entering the Library although exceptions for special events or programs may be granted.

Animals may never be left unattended on Library premises.

This policy applies to all patrons, employees, temporary employees and volunteers of the Pittsylvania County Public Library.

Service Animals

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are welcome in all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. This policy also applies to service animal in training.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section, a service animal is an animal that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the purpose of assisting or accommodating a disabled person's sensory, mental, or physical disability. The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Examples of work or tasks provided by a service animal include, but are not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals to an impending seizure or protecting individuals during one, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to the presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair and fetching dropped items, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications or calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack.

The provision of emotional support, well-being, or companionship do not constitute work or meet the definition of a service animal under the ADA.

• If the need is not obvious, staff may ask if an animal is a pet or a service animal, and what task(s) the animal has been trained to perform. Users of service animals are not required to show papers to prove a disability or certification of the service animal's status. Staff may not ask about the owner's disability.

• The owner is solely responsible for the supervision and care of the service animal and must maintain full control of the animal at all times. Owners must keep the service animal with them at all times.

• Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

• Reasonable behavior is expected from the service animals while at the Library. Owners of disruptive or aggressive service animals or service animals that are not housebroken may be asked to leave the Library. If this occurs, Library staff will give the person with the disability to opportunity to obtain Library services without having the service animal on the premises.

• Service animals are not permitted on Library chairs or other furniture. Owners are responsible for damage caused by their service animals.

• Library patrons and staff should not pet, talk to, or otherwise distract service animals while they are working.

• Patrons of the Library with allergies to or fear of a service animal may request assistance from Library staff to identify a different location to do their work. Allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.

• Misrepresenting a pet as a service animal is a violation of the Library's Patron Code of Conduct, and may result in suspension of library privileges.

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Approved by the Board of Trustees: December 11, 2017. Submitted for review July 2020. Approved without changes Sept 2025.