

# Service and Support Animal Policy

Barnard College has established the following policy regarding Service Animals and Support Animals, to assist individuals with disabilities. Being mindful of health and safety concerns of the campus community, Barnard College generally limits the presence of privately-owned animals on campus.<sup>1</sup> However, the College will reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities who require the assistance of Service or Support Animals, as appropriate. The ADA/Section 504 Director, who oversees the Office of Disability Services, is responsible for implementing this policy and for guiding students with disabilities in documenting their specific request for a necessary accommodation. Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, considering the needs of the individual and the concerns of the College community. The successful implementation of this policy requires the cooperation of all students, faculty, staff and visitors of the Barnard community. Barnard College reserves the right to amend this policy as circumstances require.

## I. Service Animals

These guidelines have been developed with the understanding that Services Animals (as defined herein) working on campus will most often be dogs. The requesting individual must have a disability as defined by the ADA and the accompanying animal must be trained to do specific tasks for the qualified requesting individual.

### Types of Service Animals:

- A) Guide Dog is a carefully trained dog who serves as a travel tool by persons with severe visual impairments or who are blind.
- B) Hearing Dog is a dog who has been trained to alert a person with significant hearing loss or who is deaf when a sound (such as a knock on the door) occurs.
- C) Service Dog is a dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a mobility or health impairment. Types of duties the dog may perform include carrying, fetching, opening doors, ringing doorbells, activating elevator buttons or steadying a person while walking. Service dogs may also be referred to as assistance dogs.
- D) SSigDog is a dog trained to assist a person with autism. The dog alerts the handler to distracting repetitive movements common among those with autism, allowing the person to stop the movement. A person with autism may have problems with sensory input and need the same support services from a dog that a dog might give to a person who is hearing or vision impaired.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that pets are not permitted to visit campus. These specific policy provisions do not apply to campus visitors utilizing Service Animals.

- E) Seizure Alert/Response Dog is a dog trained to assist a person with a seizure disorder; how the dog serves the person depends on the person's needs. The dog may stand guard over the person during the seizure, indicate to their handler in advance of a seizure, or the dog may go for help.
- F) Psychiatric Service Dog is a dog trained in helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

## **II. Support Animals**

A Support Animal is a dog or other common domestic animal that provides therapeutic support to an individual with an identified disability. Support Animals may not be brought to housing without prior approval. Approved Support Animals are only permitted within the student's on-campus housing assignment. Each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and requires advanced documentation as outlined in this policy.

## **III. Procedures for Approval of Service and Support Animals in College Housing**

Incoming residential students must submit their request for the accommodation of a Service or Support Animal in college housing with their initial housing application (by the deadline). The request form is available on the Office of Disability Services webpage. Existing residential students must submit requests by the appropriate fall housing selection deposit date for the following academic year. Spring semester requests are due no later than November 1st. All requests are subject to review and require current documentation as outlined in this policy. While requests made after the designated deadline will be accepted and considered, there is no guarantee that Barnard will be able to meet late applicants' accommodation request, including any needs that develop during the semester. To make a request, students must contact the ADA/Section 504 Director and provide appropriate and timely documentation as outlined in this policy. This policy will be carefully reviewed with the person at that time.

## **IV. Documentation for a Service Animal**

- A) Requests for Service Animals in housing do not require documentation of disability. However, students should submit documentation based on the following guidelines in this section.
- B) A letter with the prospective resident's explanation of the tasks or function the animal has been trained to perform as a disability-related accommodation, (provide certification information, if applicable) and the type/description of animal.
- C) Individuals seeking permission to have a Service Animal on campus must provide information establishing the existence of an impairment and sufficient information concerning his or her functional limitations to show that the work or tasks performed by the animal is related to those limitations. Insufficient documentation that does not fulfill the outlined requirements may result in accommodation delays or denial.

## **V. Documentation for Support Animal**

- A) Requests for a Support Animal in housing require complete documentation to be submitted before review and rendering of a decision and/or recommendation. Documentation must be dated within the last 6 months and detailed documentation requirements are available on Barnard College's Office of Disability Services website at [www.barnard.edu/ods](http://www.barnard.edu/ods). Documentation of the need for a Support Animal should follow the Office of Disability Services guidelines for documentation of disability, and should include the following information:
1. The credentials and contact information of the evaluator(s);
  2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability;
  3. A description of the diagnostic methodology used;
  4. A description of the current functional limitations;
  5. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability;
  6. A description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications;
  7. Statement on how the animal serves as an accommodation for the verified disability;
  8. Statement on how the need for the animal relates to the ability of the resident/student or live-in family member to use and enjoy the living arrangements provided by the College.
- B) Any individual approved for a Support Animal accommodation must:
1. Follow all established College policies (including the Code of Conduct);
  2. Register the animal with the Office of Disability Services prior to moving into campus housing each year (deadlines noted above);
  3. Provide documentation at the start of each academic year with proof the animal is licensed (pursuant to applicable laws) and in good health;
  4. Review and sign appropriate forms as requested at the start of each academic year;
  5. Produce, upon request of any College Official, the Animal Authorization Card, provided with approval of such accommodation. The animal must wear an identification symbol/tag, identifying the animal as a working animal, but not disclosing the individual's disability.

## **VI. Conflicting Needs/Health Concerns**

The Offices of Disability Services and Residential Life and Housing will make a reasonable effort to notify residents in the building where the Service or Support Animal will be located. Individuals who have medical issues and are affected by animals (e.g., asthma, severe allergies) should contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. The person may be required to provide verifiable medical

documentation to support such claim. Reasonable accommodations may be made to consider the needs of both persons to resolve the problem as efficiently and effectively as possible.

If there is an allergy/animal conflict within a residence hall, or elsewhere, that cannot be resolved between the two parties, then the Residential Life and Housing Office and Office of Disability Services will collaborate on a solution.

## **VII. Damages**

If a Service or Support Animal damages the assigned residence hall room or other College property, the cost of the damage will be assessed and assigned to the student's account. The owner is responsible for insuring cleanliness and proper care and treatment of the animal and its environment.

## **VIII. Responsibilities of Owners Using Service & Support Animals in Housing**

- A) Students with disabilities who utilize Service or Support Animals at the College must register annually with the Office of Disability Services. Students who are seeking College residential housing must complete the appropriate housing request process in addition to the request for accommodation for an Approved Animal as described in this policy.
- B) The Owner is responsible for assuring that the Approved Animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
- C) The animal must have a health statement, including vaccination record, from a licensed veterinarian dated within the past year. Proof of good health must be provided on an annual basis.
- D) The animal must meet legal requirements. All licensure requirements of the town of the animal's residence must be met. Proof of such license must be provided to the Office of Disability Services (e.g. – New York law requires that every dog be licensed. Service dogs are exempt from the license fee).
- E) The owner is responsible for any damage caused by their animal and must take appropriate precautions to prevent property damage or injury. The cost of care, arrangements and responsibilities for the well-being of an authorized animal are the sole responsibility of their owner at all times.
- F) For students with roommates: All roommates or suitemates of the owner must sign an agreement acknowledging that the Approved Animal will be in residence with them. In the event that one or more roommates or suitemates later do not approve, either the owner and animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates, as determined by the Offices of Disability Services and Residential Life and Housing, may be moved to a different location.
- G) The animal must be well groomed, and measures taken at all times for flea and odor control. The residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks and other pests once a semester or as needed. If

necessary, college approved pest control services will be utilized and the animal owner will be billed for the expense of any necessary pest treatment.

- H) Service Animals may travel with their owner throughout the campus, except in prohibited areas that are outlined in Section IX. Support Animals must be contained within the owner's housing assignment at all times, except when transported outside the private residential area en route off campus in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness.
- I) Service and Support Animals are not to be left alone overnight in campus housing or left to be cared for by another student/individual. If the owner leaves the campus for a prolonged period of time, the animal must be taken with them.
- J) The College reserves the right to place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the animal depending upon the nature and characteristics of the animal. If an individual feels he or she is unable to comply with any of the requirements contained in the policy she or he should contact a member of the disability services staff to address the matter.
- K) The owner is responsible for removal and proper disposal of the animal's waste. Removal must be immediate. The animal's waste must be removed into a proper receptacle located off-campus. Individuals unable to clean up after their animals or who need assistance should notify Office of Disability Services staff so that alternative arrangements may be agreed upon. If an animal urinates or defecates inside of a building, or in another area that requires cleaning or maintenance, the owner must notify staff, and will be responsible for the cost of such cleaning.
- L) The Owner agrees to continue to abide by all other residential and College policies. Reasonable accommodation which may constitute an exception to a policy that otherwise would prohibit having an animal does not constitute an exception to any other policy.
- M) The Service or Support Animal must be under the control of the owner at all times. Reasonable behavior is expected from Service or Support Animals while on campus. If a service dog, for example, exhibits unacceptable behavior, the owner is expected to employ appropriate training techniques to correct the situation. The animal shall have a harness, leash or other tether unless the owner is unable to use such devices or they interfere with the safe performance of the animal's work or tasks. Service Animals are prohibited from food preparation areas, unless this is a kitchen within the owner's assigned residence space.
- N) If a Service or Support Animal is determined to be out of control, the infraction will be decided on an individual basis. The owner is fully responsible for the actions of the Service or Support Animal. The owner is held to the code of conduct in relation to any behavior caused by the animal. Consequences for misconduct may include, but are not limited to, a plan for correction of disruption (e.g. muzzling a barking dog), and refresher training for the animal and owner, or exclusion from College facilities.

- O) Any violation of the above rules may result in immediate removal of the animal from the College, pending disciplinary action. The College may remove an authorized animal when the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, the animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of the College's program, the owner does not comply with the responsibilities outlined in this policy, or the animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the Barnard community.
- P) Should the Approved Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

## **IX. Areas Off Limits to Service and Support Animals**

The College may prohibit Service Animals in specific locations due to health and safety restrictions. Restricted areas may include, but are not limited to, mechanical rooms, custodial closets, research laboratories, wood and metal shops, rooms with heavy machinery, areas where protective clothing is necessary, areas where there is a danger to the animal, and areas outlined in state law as being inaccessible to animals. Authorized animals may be prohibited from labs if the lab supervisor has reason to believe the animal's presence would compromise the environment or if the environment poses a physical danger for the animal. Support animals are only permitted within the student's on campus housing assignment.

## **X. Removal of Approved Animals**

The owner may be directed to remove an animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g. barking, jumping on people). If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be prohibited from bringing the animal into College facilities or events until the owner can demonstrate appropriate steps taken to mitigate such behavior. Any animal that exhibits aggressive or unsafe behavior may be prohibited from College facilities or events.

## **XI. Requirements for Faculty, Staff, Students, and Other Members of the College Community Regarding Service or Support Animals**

- A) The owner of a Service or Support Animal at any College facility or event is expected to maintain appropriate behavior of the animal as follows:
  1. Animal must not be allowed to initiate contact/approach/sniff people, tables in eating areas, or personal belongings of others.
  2. Animal must not display behaviors or noises that are disruptive to others, such as barking, growling, or other behavior not a part of the task the animals is trained to conduct.
  3. Animal must not block an aisle or passageway; impede access to ingress/egress of a facility.
  4. Animal must be trained not to be attracted to food that may be in common areas.

B) Community Members (students, staff, faculty, and visitors) are to recognize the working role of Service or Support Animals and adhere to the following:

1. They are to allow a Service Animal to accompany its owner/handler at all times and allow Support Animals as authorized for the individual circumstance.
2. They are not to feed, pet or touch an authorized animal without the express invitation of the owner. Service Animals are trained to be protective of their owner, among other tasks, and petting the animal can distract them from their working responsibilities.
3. They are not to deliberately startle, tease or otherwise distract a Service Animal.
4. They are not to separate or attempt to separate a owner from their Service or Support Animal.
5. They are not to inquire details about the owner's disability or the nature of work of the authorized animal. As the College does not generally allow animals, staff may inquire (if not obvious) whether the animal is required for a disability or what work/task the animal provides for the owner.

## **XII. Grievance Procedures**

If the decision is made to deny a request or remove a service or support animal, the owner may request an appeal of the in writing to the ADA/Section 504 Director. Appeal requests must state a specific reason for reconsideration. Appeals will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee including relevant personnel.

### **Definitions**

**Approved Animal:** an "Approved Animal" is a Service or Support Animal that has been granted as a reasonable accommodation under this policy.

**Disability:** defined as a physical or mental condition or impairment that is medically recognizable and diagnosable, and substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities. These limitations may include performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning. A person is substantially limited in major life activities if the individual is unable to perform the activity, or is significantly restricted as to the manner in which he or she can perform that activity when compared to the average person. Acceptable documentation of a disability can be from either a licensed medical or mental health provider. It should verify the disability as well as describe the need for a Service or Support animal.

**Owner:** the owner is the student or person who is responsible for any type of Authorized Animal on campus.

**Pet:** a domesticated animal that serves a role in providing leisure companionship to its owner. Pets are not the same as Service or Support Animals and are generally not permitted inside College facilities. The

only pets permitted in the residence halls are fish that can be kept in a tabletop aquarium no larger than five gallons, in compliance with the policies of Residential Life and Housing.

**Service Animal:** an animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items.

**Support Animal:** an animal that is prescribed or otherwise documented by a healthcare or mental health professional as treatment for a disabled individual and that is beneficial in alleviating one or more identifiable symptoms or effects of that individual's disability. Support Animals are only permitted within the owner's on-campus housing assignment.

**Contacts:** questions or concerns related to Service or Support Animals, or other accommodation information, should be directed to the ADA/Section 504 Director for the Office of Disability Services, 212-854-4634.

**By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by the guidelines in this policy.**

---

Student Signature

---

Date

---

Office of Disability Services

---

Date

---

Residential Life and Housing

---

Date