

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton
Pets and Service Animals at FPC Facilities

Policy # 020

Revision # 00

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Any pet at FPC must be well managed by their owner. Pets will not be allowed in certain locations within FPC grounds, excepting service dogs where it is required by law that they be allowed to be present.

II. SCOPE

As part of the UUA's seventh principle, pets are generally welcome at FPC. FPC also follows state and federal regulations for certified service animals. In addition, it is imperative for the health and safety of our members that pets be well managed by their owners. The following are specific requirements in keeping with this policy and state and federal regulations.

Please note that the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) defines service animals (under Title II and Title III of the ADA) as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. The laws under ADA only extend to animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Due to this distinction, emotional support animals are not protected by the same laws that govern service animals.

1. No animal, except for a certified service animal, is allowed in the kitchen areas in either the Fellowship Hall or the Vestry.
2. Animals must be kept on a leash at all times while on FPC grounds and in FPC buildings.
3. Animals are not allowed to be near food tables.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

Owners are completely responsible for the behavior and physical needs of their animals.

FPC makes strenuous efforts to ensure that people's special needs do not exclude them from attending functions. A conflict may exist if attendees at a church function fear, are allergic to, or have conditions aggravated by animals.

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- Service animal owners are obliged by our principles to strive to be aware of any such conflict, be welcoming of relevant information, and take steps acceptable to the affected party to mitigate the conflict. Likewise, attendees affected by the service animal are similarly obliged to make their issues known to the owner and sincerely strive to find a compromise. However, according to the ADA, allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility — FPC will do its best to accommodate both parties by assigning them to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility, if it is at all possible.
- For all other animals, owners must take responsibility for checking with other participants in any activity as to whether anyone has a serious animal allergy or fear before bringing their animal into FPC buildings. If no compromise can be reached, the health and safety of the person overrides the presence of the animal.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Service animals (under Title II and Title III of the ADA) are defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

Emotional support animals are companions for individual with an emotional or psychological disability. While emotional support animals are used as part of some medical treatment plans, they are not considered service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Emotional support animals are simply that - providing support for those in need.

V. REFERENCES

“Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals”, booklet published 2014 by the ADA National Network (with updates)

“Emotional Support Animal Laws” published 2018 by Service Dog Certifications

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VI. APPROVAL SIGNATURES

[Katherine R. Weeks] 4/25/2019
Originator / Date

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

[Mark Koenig] 4/25/2019
FPC President / Date