



Reference: SE_06

Policy: **Assistance Dogs Policy and Procedure**

Owned by: Director of Student & Apprentice Services

Approved by: Strategic Leadership Team

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Date of Next Review: August 2028

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1. Policy Statement

York College values the diversity of its staff and students and is committed to providing a welcoming and supportive environment for all. This policy outlines the College's approach to facilitating the safe and effective presence of assistance dogs on campus.

This policy aims to:

- Support students and staff with disabilities who rely on assistance dogs.
- Ensure the welfare of assistance dogs on campus.
- Maintain a safe and hygienic environment for all.

2. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Equality Act 2010 – protection against discrimination for disabled individuals.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – ensuring safety for all on campus.
- Department of Health Guidelines – recognition of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) standards.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- All students and staff who require the support of a highly trained assistance dog.
- All areas of the College campus, with exceptions based on health and safety, licensing, or sector regulations.

The College:

- Welcomes assistance dogs trained to mitigate physical disabilities.
- May restrict access to certain areas (e.g., food production, laboratories).
- Does not permit wellbeing dogs, therapy dogs, or pets unless they meet the definition of an assistance dog.

4. Definition of Assistance Dog

An assistance dog is:

- Specifically trained to assist a disabled person through task-based behaviours.
- Trained for public access, calm in public spaces, and focused on the handler.

- Covered by public liability insurance and maintained in good health.

Types of Assistance Dogs

- Guide Dogs – for visual impairments.
- Hearing Dogs – for hearing impairments.
- Support Dogs – for physical disabilities.
- Medical Detection Dogs – alert to medical episodes.

Dogs trained by members of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) have formal identification and certification. However, the College welcomes all highly trained assistance dogs regardless of training origin, provided they meet behavioural and welfare standards.

5. Emotional Support and Therapy Dogs

These dogs:

- Provide comfort through presence, not task-based behaviours.
- Are not protected by UK legislation.

The College reserves the right to refuse access but will review procedures regularly in recognition of potential benefits.

6. Expectations for Assistance Dogs on Campus

Dogs must:

- Be calm and well-behaved in public.
- Be focused on the handler.
- Be clean, vaccinated, insured, and well-groomed.
- Not be left unattended at any time when on college grounds.
- Remain on a lead at all times.
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The College will not permit:

- Aggressive or fearful dogs.
 - Dogs that bark, lunge, jump, or pull excessively.
 - Dogs that pose hygiene risks or are not toilet trained.
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7. Responsibilities

College Responsibilities

- Conduct access planning and risk assessments.

- Communicate arrangements and restrictions.
- Identify appropriate spending areas.
- Notify relevant staff and students.

Student/Handler Responsibilities

- Maintain dog's welfare and behaviour.
 - Keep the dog on a lead at all times.
 - Provide documentation of training and insurance.
 - Clean up after the dog and use designated areas.
 - Respect access restrictions and ensure the dog is safe and reliable.
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8. Application and Approval Process

Students wishing to bring an assistance dog onto campus must follow a formal application process to ensure the safety, welfare, and suitability of the dog within the College environment.

Step 1: Completion of Application Form

Applicants must complete the Assistance Dog Access Application Form (Appendix A), which requires submission of the following supporting documentation:

- Evidence of training for public access and task-based support.
- Certification or identification (e.g., ADUK membership or equivalent).
- Current public liability insurance.
- Up-to-date vaccination records.
- Confirmation of flea and worm treatment.
- A description of the dog's temperament and behaviour in public settings.

Step 2: Submission

Completed applications should be submitted to the Learning Support Team via learningsupport@yorkcollege.ac.uk. Applicants are encouraged to submit their forms well in advance of the intended start date to allow sufficient time for review and planning.

Step 3: Panel Review

Applications will be reviewed by a designated panel comprising:

- Head of Learning Support
- Health, Safety & Welfare Manager
- Director of Student & Apprentice Services

The panel will assess the application based on the evidence provided and determine whether the assistance dog meets the College's standards for behaviour, welfare, and public access suitability.

Step 4: Risk Assessment and Planning

Following approval in principle, the Learning Support Team, in collaboration with the Health, Safety and Welfare Department, will:

- Conduct a detailed risk assessment.
- Liaise with relevant departments to identify any access restrictions or adjustments.
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are made to support the student and the dog's integration into the College environment.

Step 5: Notification and Access Arrangements

Applicants will be formally notified of the outcome. Where approved, access arrangements—including designated spending areas, restricted zones, and communication with relevant staff—will be clearly outlined prior to the dog's arrival on campus.

9. Complaints Procedure

Complaints About Assistance Dogs

- Should be raised with the relevant Curriculum and Standards Manager.

Complaints by Dog Owners

- You can find the Complaints and Compliments Procedure, including the Complaints Form, on the York College website.
- The Quality and Compliance Team will acknowledge receipt within three working days and allocate the complaint to the relevant manager for investigation.
- A response and any related policy will be forwarded to the complainant within ten working days.

Appeals

- While appeals regarding assistance dog decisions are generally not accepted due to health, safety, and legal considerations, the College remains committed to fair and transparent processes.
- Students are encouraged to provide any additional information or clarification that may support a reconsideration of their application or concerns.

10. Removal of Assistance Dogs

The College reserves the right to:

Assistance Dogs Policy and Procedure

- Remove dogs that pose a health or safety risk.
 - Bar entry for dogs that consistently fail to meet behavioural or hygiene standards.
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11. Restricted Access Areas

Assistance dogs may be restricted from:

- Laboratories
- Kitchens and food production areas
- Medical facilities
- Boiler rooms
- Areas requiring protective clothing

Requests for exceptions will be reviewed case-by-case by the designated panel.

12. Conflicting Disabilities

Where an assistance dog poses a health risk to others (e.g., allergies), the College will:

- Conduct a risk assessment.
 - Seek equitable arrangements for all parties.
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13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in response to significant changes in legislation or College practice. Feedback will inform improvements.

14. Contact Information

For queries or support regarding this policy, please contact:

Learning Support Team – learningsupport@yorkcollege.ac.uk
