



SC07 Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support Animals Policy

Version Date: March 2023

Review Date: July 2025

1. Purpose

North East Scotland College is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all of its students, staff, contractors and visitors.

The College recognises that some students will need to bring in an assistance dog wholly or mainly for the purpose of assisting that person to carry out day to day activities and will therefore require access to the College's premises and its relevant buildings. In exceptional circumstances and when there is clear medical evidence consideration will be given to requests by students to bring emotional support animals to the College.

This policy draws upon guidance given within the Equality Act 2010 and advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission to inform how or if we can make reasonable adjustments to best meet student needs.

2. Scope

The purpose of this Policy is to set out guidance to provide clarity for students and the College staff with regard to bringing assistance dogs and emotional support animals on College premises.

3. Definitions, Processes and Guidelines

3.1 Assistance Dogs

An assistance dog can support disabled people (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) by carrying out a variety of practical tasks as well as supporting their independence and confidence. Assistance dogs are also trained to help people with hearing difficulties, epilepsy, diabetes, physical mobility problems and more.

Assistance Dogs are highly trained and some may wear a distinct harness or jacket.

Assistance Dogs are permitted to accompany their owners at all times and in all places (UK) unless there is a genuine health and safety risk.

3.1.1 Processes

Students who wish to bring an Assistance Dog to College must:

- Meet with the Student Advice and Support Team in order to complete a Needs Assessment which would also include a risk assessment
- Complete the College's Assistance Dog and Emotional Support Animal application form and conduct agreement

3.1.2 Guidelines

Owners must comply with the following guidelines when Assistance Dogs are on College premises:

Information

As part of the Needs Assessment process, owners are requested to discuss the nature of the support provided by the assistance dog to inform assessment of any reasonable adjustments.

Insurance

As part of the risk assessment, owners must accept full responsibility for their assistance dog and its behaviour.

Access restrictions

Owners of assistance dogs must respect access restrictions established by the College on grounds of health and safety. This information would be included in the risk assessment as mentioned in section 3.1.1.

Animal misbehaviour

Owners must ensure that their assistance dog does not cause harm or injury to others and damage to College property. Preventing and correcting misbehaviour of the assistance dog is the owner's responsibility.

Cleanliness

Owners must take responsibility for the clean-up of their assistance dog's waste and shall use reasonable endeavours to use the designated toileting areas identified by the College. Registered blind people are not required to clean up after their assistance dog but they are expected to have received the appropriate training to avoid dog waste on campus.

Animal Care and Supervision

Owners are fully responsible for their assistance dog care and they must ensure that all requirements of the assistance dog in relation to feeding, watering and toileting are fully met. Owners must also ensure that the animal is kept on a lead or harness at all times when on College premises.

Animal Training

Owners are responsible for any additional training needs of their assistance dog and for correct and safe performance of their duties.

Advice and Guidance

Assistance dogs are working animals and advice will be provided to staff and students as required.

3.2 Emotional Support Animal

Emotional support animals are considered those that provide emotional support to help alleviate identified symptoms or effects of disability. This type of animal is different to assistance dogs and will only be permitted on College premises in exceptional circumstances and will be assessed on a case by case basis. Consideration will be given as to whether the adjustment of bringing such animal onto College premises is reasonable or if the student can be supported effectively through other services.

3.2.1 Processes

Students who wish to bring emotional support animals to College must:

- Meet with the Student Support and Advice Team in order to complete a Needs Assessment which would also include a risk assessment
- Complete the College's Assistance Dog and Emotional Animal application form and conduct agreement

The decision on the request will be made by the Associate Vice Principal. If the student is unhappy with the decision a review of the decision can be requested in writing to the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality. If the student is still unhappy following a review they will be entitled to follow the complaints procedure.

3.3 Pets

A pet is considered a domesticated animal and is not considered to be an assistance dog or emotional support animal. The College does not permit to bring or keep pets on College property.

4. Conflict Situations

Students are responsible for the behaviour of their assistance dog or emotional support animal and the College reserves the right to exclude an animal from the College premises and/or facilities.

4.1 Threat and Behavioural Issues

The College reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an assistance dog or emotional support animal when it poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Animal misbehaviours may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken.

4.2 Damage

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or College property.

4.3 Restricted access

The College may restrict access of assistance dogs or emotional support animals to certain areas for health and safety reasons. Any applications of exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis.

4.4 Conflicting disabilities

Where an assistance dog or emotional support animal poses adverse health risk to an/other student/s or staff, the College will require medical evidence from the affected party/ies to determine suitable alternative arrangements for either or both parties.

4.5 Religious or cultural conflicts

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Religious and cultural beliefs cannot be used to deny/prohibit access to assistance dogs or emotional support animals and their owners.

Status:	approved	Summary of changes Updates to job titles and to reflect updated information and advice from Equality and Human Rights Commission.
Approved by:	Executive Team	
Date of version:	March 2023	
Reviewed by DPO:	26/10/20	
Responsibility for Policy:	Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality	
Responsibility for Review:	Head of Student Support and Engagement	
Review date:	July 2025	
EIA date:	09/08/2022	

DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA)

1. Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to use personal data in any way? (Use may refer to collecting and gathering; storing electronically; storing by paper; sharing with other parties (internal or external to college); use of images as well as written information; retaining and archiving; or erasing, deleting and destroying)	Yes
2. Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to use special category personal data in any way? (Special category data is data about: race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation)	Yes
3. Does the activity that this policy or procedure relates to involve the use of social media or a third-party system?	No

If the answer is 'yes' to one or more of the above questions, the Data Protection Officer must be consulted.

Date of DPO consultation:	Oct 2020
Description of outcome and actions required (if any): The assistance dog application form should only contain questions that are necessary for the purpose of managing assistance dogs onto campus, that data is kept to a minimum and that the data is only used for assistance dogs related purposes. A full DPIA will be completed if the DPIA screening document indicates that it is required.	
DPIA screening/full DPIA required:	Yes
DPIA screening completed but a full DPIA is not required.	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT (EIA)

Part 1. Background Information

Title of Policy:	Assistance Dog and Emotional Support Animals Policy
Person Responsible:	Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality
Date of Assessment:	March 2023
What are the aims of the Policy?	The aims of this Policy is to set out guidance to provide clarity for students and the College staff with regard to bringing assistance dogs or emotional support animals on College property.
Who will this Policy impact upon?	College staff and students

Part 2. Public Sector Equality Duty Comparison

(Consider the proposed action against each element of the PSED and describe potential impact, which may be positive, neutral or negative. Provide details of evidence.)

Need	Impact	Evidence
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	The Policy provides clear guidelines to staff and students relating to bringing Assistance Dogs and emotional support animals on College premises. It ensures a meaningful and pre-planned approach is implemented and monitored thoroughly ensuring any unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation is avoided. The College considers the need/s identified and through a student-centred process, liaising with curriculum staff and external agencies and professionals as appropriate and considers the placement of the student on the course and the reasonable adjustments and support required. This practice actively supports students with disabilities, mental health issues; learning difficulties which could be related to race, gender reassignment, sexuality bullying or any issue under the protected characteristics. The Policy ensures all staff across the College are implementing appropriate,	Records relating to a Needs Assessment detailing students and staff input. Application form and Conduct Agreement and Risk Assessment.

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	discrimination free practice in their approach to inclusive practice.	
Advancing Equality of Opportunity	The consistent approach in the implementation of the Procedure ensures Equality of Opportunity is promoted and achieved for all students within the College. The SAST's proactive and thorough approach to meaningful collaboration within the teaching teams ensures the College remains compliant with legislation and provides the best opportunities for student success. Promoting education and opportunities for learning by providing a mechanism to remove barriers and support access to courses at all campuses.	Student outcomes; staff feedback; student feedback; Documentation related to the Needs Assessment process.
Promoting good relations	The positive approach promotes good relations between the College, students and the teaching staff. Students build effective relations within the College with other students as an open dialogue is encouraged, raising awareness of differences; they feel they are supported with their individual support needs, and also develop good relations with College staff as they welcome the support provided by Curriculum and Support teams who work in partnership to ensure the measures, approach and support is relevant to their specific circumstance.	Student outcomes; staff feedback; student feedback; engagement data.

Part 3. Action & Outcome (Following initial assessment, describe any action that will be taken to address impact detected)

No action required. Review of procedure will be automatic should changes to procedures be required.

Sign-off *	
Name:	Gwen Watt
Position:	Head of Student Support and Engagement
Date of original EIA:	16/10/2020
Date EIA last reviewed:	17/03/2023

**Please note that an electronic sign-off is sufficient*