ANIMALS ON COLLEGE FACILITIES POLICY 2026-2027

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Jason Lancaster
Principal and CEO



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1. INTRODUCTION

Northampton College has a duty under Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all staff, students, contractors and visitors on their premises.

Under this Act, the College must ensure risks are adequately assessed and controls are put in place to mitigate these risks.

Additionally, Northampton College has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure protection of individuals from discrimination based on nine protected characteristics, to make reasonable adjustments.

Full approval needs to be obtained (following a risk assessment process), to allow for necessary adjustments to be made.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Director of Estates.

3. SCOPE

This policy outlines the conditions under which animals are permitted on college premises, ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing and inclusivity, of all members of the college. It applies to all areas of the college, including teaching spaces, offices and communal areas.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Northampton College is committed to:

- ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing of all students, staff, and visitors in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- mitigating the risks associated an animal being on college premises.
- fostering an inclusive, accessible, and supportive environment for all students, staff, and visitors, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- recognising the vital role that assistance animals play in supporting individuals to ensure their safe and respectful integration into college life.
- ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing of the animal on college premises in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

The college will work collaboratively with individuals who request an animal to be permitted on site to make reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate facilities, while also considering the needs of others, including those with allergies, phobias, or religious sensitivities.

This policy is designed to:

- Promote equality and inclusion.
- Ensure compliance with legal obligations.
- Maintain a safe and respectful environment for all.

5. DEFINITIONS

Person with a disability	A person with a disability is an individual with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The condition must have lasted, or be likely to last, at least 12 months, or for the rest of the person's life.
Assistance animal	Highly trained animals that perform specific tasks to help a person with a disability. The animal can be trained by either an organisation or individual. Assistance animals are mainly dogs due their

	versatility and ability to be highly trained. Assistance dogs are also known as service dogs or guide dogs.
Highly trained (in context of an assistance animal)	An assistance animal that is highly trained as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This means: • The animal is likely to sit or lie quietly on the floor next to their owner. • The animal is unlikely to wander freely around the premises. • The animal is unlikely to foul in a public place.
Emotional support animal (ESA)	Provides comfort and companionship to a person with a mental health condition through its mere presence. They are not highly trained.
Therapy dog	Is a highly trained, social dog owned by a volunteer or organization that provides comfort and affection to many different people
Detection dog	Is a highly trained dog that can detect the scent of items such as explosive material, drugs or other illegal substances.

6. KEY PRINCIPLES

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE

- The presence of animals must not compromise the health, safety, or wellbeing of employees, students, or visitors.
- Risk assessments must be conducted before any animal is allowed on site.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

The policy must comply with relevant legislation, including:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010 (especially regarding assistance dogs)
- Animal Welfare Act 2006

INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Reasonable adjustments must be made to support individuals who require assistance animals due to a disability.
- The policy must not discriminate against individuals with protected characteristics.

ANIMAL WELFARE

- Any animal brought into the workplace must be well cared for, healthy, and appropriately trained.
- Owners are responsible for the animal's needs, including toileting, feeding, and exercise.

PROFESSIONALISM AND PRODUCTIVITY

- Animals must not disrupt work, learning, or professional conduct.
- Clear boundaries should be set regarding where and when animals are permitted.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- Consideration must be given to colleagues or students who may have allergies, phobias, or cultural/religious sensitivities regarding animals.
- Alternative arrangements should be made where necessary.

- The college will seek to meet these standards by delegating responsibility through the line management structure and through regular review at the Policy and Strategy Group and Safety, Health, and Environment Committee meetings.

7. THE PROCEDURE

ANIMALS ON NORTHAMPTON COLLEGE PREMISES

Animals will only be allowed on Northampton College sites, if the animal is:

- A member of the Police Force and only when performing their duty.
- A detection dog and only when performing their duty.
- An assistance dog.
- Emotional support animal or Therapy dog may only be allowed be on a college site if authorised to do so by the principal. When an emotional support animal or therapy dog has been authorised to be allowed on a college site, the same process for bringing an assistance dog onto a college site is to be followed.

POLICE ANIMALS ON SITE

No permission is needed for police animals to be on any college site, in a case of an emergency. If it is for non-emergency, then the principal must be consulted prior to the police animal being allowed on any college site.

A DETECTION DOG

The staff member organising the attendance of a detection dog needs to request written permission from the principal, to gain authorisation for the attendance of a detection dog on any college premises.

If authorisation is given then the college must obtain of risk assessments, method statements and in date public liability insurance of the organisation bringing the detection dog to college premises.

The staff member organising the attendance of a detection dog, must also conduct a risk assessment ensuring all risks are covered and controlled.

The staff member organising the attendance of a detection dog will be responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of the detection dog, their handler and anyone who will interact with them, during the time the detection dog is on college premises.

ASSISTANCE DOGS IN COLLEGE

Student or staff members

The individuals (owner) who require an assistance dog must request their intentions to bring an assistance dog to a college site via:

- Student Services if a student.
- Human Resources if a staff member.

The owner must provide the following:

Medical statement from a medical professional stating the need for the owner to have an assistance dog.

- Evidence that the dog has received a minimum of one year's training.
- Copy of the public liability insurance certificate for the assistance dog.
- Evidence that the dog is up to date with their inoculations.
- Evidence that the dog is microchipped.

Under no circumstances will dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 be allowed on college premises.

The owner and assistance dog will be invited to the college for an initial meeting. During this meeting, the following will be observed and recorded:

1. The control of the dog by the owner and,

2. The behaviour of the dog especially in busy public areas will be assessed to ensure it is highly trained.
3. Discussion of any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to facilitate the owner attending with the assistance dog.

The college will then decide, based on all the evidence, if the animal is allowed to be on site.

A risk assessment must be completed with control measures outlining any reasonable adjustments.

Under no circumstances will any dog assessed as not highly trained or dangerous be allowed onto any college premises.

As part of the risk assessment, allergic reactions must be considered. Staff, students, and visitors known to have allergic reactions to dogs and animals must be consulted and suitable control measures put in place.

When the assistance dog has been approved to be on site, the following must be adhered to:

- For the first 6 weeks, catch up meetings will be arranged with the owner and the college, every 2 weeks.
- For the subsequent academic year, catch up meetings will be arranged with the owner and the college every month.
- Dogs that are unwell must not be brought into any college premises.
- Dogs must not come to any college premises if they have worms or fleas. Proactive treatment for worms and fleas is required.
- Allowance is made for the assistance dog to eat and drink when required.
- Regular breaks must be allocated to the owner to allow the assistance dog to have toilet breaks at a designated area.
- Any animal waste/fouling made by the assistance dog, must be cleaned immediately and disposed of suitably by the owner.
- Dogs must be always kept on a lead. The dog can only be allowed off the lead when being supervised when exercising in the designated exercising area.
- Owners of an assistance dog are responsible for the dog's health, safety and welfare.
- Students attending classes in which an assistance dog is present must be advised that interaction with the dog, including touching or distracting it in any way, is prohibited unless permission has been granted by the owner.

Northampton College reserves the right to withdraw permission for the assistance dog to be onsite, if the dog's behaviour falls below the standard required.

Visitors

If visitors with an assistance dog need to attend any college premises, then a dynamic risk assessment must be carried out taking into consideration:

- Time the visitor will be on the premises
- Number of students that will be in contact or near the assistance dog
- The behaviour of the assistance dog.

8. MONITORING

Policy and Strategy Group, Safety, Health and Environment Committee, annual periodic review.

9. REPORTING

Director of Estates.

10. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Health and safety policy.
- Quality assurance & improvement policy.
- Student behaviour and disciplinary policy.
- Disciplinary policy and procedure.

11. APPROVAL PROCESS

- Periodic review.
- Policy and strategy team.