

Solon Public Library Therapy Dog Policy

About Therapy Dog Policy

The Solon Public Library supports programs and services that promote community well-being, literacy, and learning. Therapy dogs can enhance these goals by providing comfort, reducing anxiety, and encouraging reading engagement. This policy establishes guidelines for the presence of therapy dogs in the Library.

Definitions

- **Therapy Dog:** A dog that has been trained, evaluated, and certified by a recognized therapy animal organization to provide comfort and support in public settings.
- **Therapy Team:** A certified therapy dog and the handler who has completed required training with the animal.
- **Service Animal:** A dog trained to perform tasks for a person with a disability; service animals are not covered by this policy and are permitted in the Library under applicable state and federal ADA laws.

Eligibility & Documentation

- Therapy dogs must be certified by a recognized organization (e.g., American Kennel Association, Pet Partners, Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Therapy Dogs International).
- Handlers must provide:
 - Proof of current certification
 - Proof of current vaccinations as required by local law
 - Proof of liability insurance (if required by the Library or governing body)

Policy

Scheduling & Approval

- Therapy dog visits must be scheduled in advance with Library staff.
- The Library reserves the right to approve or deny any therapy team based on safety, program needs, or space limitations.
- Therapy dogs may attend only Library-sponsored or Library-approved programs unless otherwise authorized.

Expectations for Therapy Teams

- The handler must remain with the therapy dog at all times.
- Dogs must be well-groomed, clean, calm, and under control.
- Dogs must remain on a non-retractable leash no longer than six feet.
- The handler is responsible for managing all interactions between the dog and participants.

Participant Guidelines

- Participation is voluntary.
- Children interacting with therapy dogs must be supervised by Library staff or a parent/guardian as appropriate.
- Patrons should approach therapy dogs only with permission from the handler.

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Liability & Responsibility

- The handler accepts full responsibility for the therapy dog's behavior and actions while on Library property.
- The Library is not responsible for injury, illness, or damage caused by therapy dogs or arising from interactions with them.

Areas of Access

- Therapy dogs are permitted only in designated program areas.
- They may not roam freely or enter staff-only areas.
- They are not permitted in areas restricted by health codes or local regulations.

Removal

The Library may require a therapy dog to leave the premises if:

- The dog behaves disruptively
- The handler does not follow Library policies
- The presence of the dog creates a safety, hygiene, or operational concern