

## **Kent County Public Library Animals in the Library Policy**

**Policy:** The Kent County Public Library considers the safety and health of all its patrons, the public, and library staff to be of utmost priority. With the exception of service animals and service animals in training, patrons are not permitted to bring animals into any library building. Patrons who bring pets onto library property, in outdoor areas or in vehicles, will be asked to remove them if they impede anyone's progress into or out of the library or are determined by library staff to pose a risk to others.

### *Service Animals*

Service animals, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), are welcome in library buildings in order to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with disabilities. All service animals must be under the full custody and control of their handler at all times. Service animals and service animals in training are permitted in all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go.

In accordance with the ADA, library staff may ask two specific questions related to service animals: 1) is the animal a service animal required because of a disability? And 2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Staff are not permitted to request documentation, require that the animal perform its task, or inquire about the nature of a person's disability.

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove their service animal or service animal in training from the library unless the presence, behavior or actions of the service animal constitutes an unreasonable risk of injury or harm to property or other persons. In these cases, if the handler does not immediately take effective action to control the animal, library staff may request that the animal be removed from the building. If this happens, they will also give the person with the disability the option to obtain library services without having the service animal in the building.

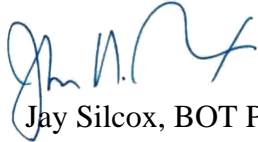
Fear of allergies, annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees, or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access to people with service animals or service animals in training.

### *Library Programs*

The library may choose to offer educational programs for the public that include various animals. Such animals are permitted in the library building for the duration of the program and must be accompanied by the owner at all times.

**Date Revised:** September 30, 2024

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Silcox".

Jay Silcox, BOT President

**Definitions:** “Service animals”– Animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person’s disability.