**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to

* provide guidance on the admittance of animals into the home
* comply with legislative requirements
* comply with infection prevention and control practices

**POLICY**

The only animals permitted to enter the home are certified therapy pets, registered service animals and personal pets.

Staff are not permitted to bring their personal pets to work while they are working.

Prior to entering the home, the owner of the animal/pet is required to provide proof (e.g. health certificate or signed letter from a veterinarian) to the Perley Health staff that the pet is up-to-date on their rabies vaccination.

Pets must be free of any known or suspected infectious illness, wound or skin infection.

While visiting, the pet must remain on a leash (no longer than one meter) or inside of a cage. Pet owners/handlers are responsible for cleaning up their pet messes inside the home and anywhere on Perley Health property.

If the pet has vomited or had diarrhea in the last week, it is not permitted in the home.

Animals are not permitted in public common areas where food is prepared, served and sold, (i.e. cafeteria, dining rooms, pub/ice cream parlour and gift boutique), diagnostic areas and areas where additional infection-control precautions must be maintained. A service animal is the exception to this rule.

Exotic, zoo and farm animals can visit outside of the home.

Perley Health is committed to assisting and accommodating residents with disabilities. In some cases, this may include accommodating a resident and a service animal.

Perley Health may restrict the use of a service animal for health, security or safety concerns and may impose further restrictions at its sole discretion and in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and Ontario legislation.

**APPLICABILITY/SCOPE**

This policy and procedure applies to all pets entering the long-term care Home of Perley Health.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Service Animal:** A service animal has been specifically trained to work for or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. A service animal is not a pet.

**Certified Therapy Pet:** provides invaluable care and support through animal-assisted therapy and other animal-assisted activities

**Personal Pet:** These pets are owned by an Essential Visitor and/or General Visitor of the resident.

**Essential Visitor:** a caregiver, a support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents, a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care, or a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.

**General Visitor:** a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

**PROCEDURES**

**Authorized Animals**

The only animals permitted to enter the home are certified therapy pets, registered service animals and personal pets.

Prior to entering the home, the owner of the animal/pet is required to provide proof (e.g. health certificate or signed letter from a veterinarian) to the commissionaire that within the last year the pet is up-to-date on their rabies vaccination.

**Unauthorized Animals**

If you see an animal that does not appear to be a certified therapy pet, service animal or personal pet, please inform your manager or supervisor.

**Harm from Animals**

In the event an employee is scratched, bitten or becomes ill as a result of a pet, an employee incident report in compliance with the employee incident reporting procedures must be completed. In the event a resident is scratched, bitten or becomes ill as a result of a pet, a risk management report must be completed in the resident’s health record. The manager/supervisor/delegate in the area in which the incident took place must report the incident to Ottawa Public Health (OPH) as soon as possible. OPH will complete a risk assessment and determine next steps.

**Harm to Animals**

In the event that a pet becomes ill or injured, the owner is responsible for immediately isolating the pet from the resident(s) ensuring the pet receives the required care needed.

**Personal Pets visiting a Resident**

During their visit, the pet’s purpose is to visit the designated resident only.

The pet must not interact with anyone in the facility (including staff members) except for the resident it intends to visit.

The resident is encouraged to wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after the visit.

The pet owner is responsible for “poop and scoop” functions.

**Pet Therapy**

All Pet Therapy teams must be registered volunteers of Perley Health and wear their identification at all times.

The pet must be supervised at all times by the owner who is a therapy trained registered volunteer. All Pet Therapy teams must follow policies/guidelines of the outside organization they are representing.

All pet therapy animal handlers must ensure that anyone, including residents, performs hand hygiene with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching the animal. The product is available throughout Perley Health.

**Service Animals of a Visitor**

The owner shall ensure the service animal is clearly identified/recognizable as a service animal (e.g. harness or jacket with markings of the training school, identification card).

The service animal must remain in the owner’s care and control at all times

Staff members shall not

* touch, pet, speak to, distract, deliberately startle, feed, or provide care for the service animal
* ask about the nature of the owner’s disability

**Admitting a Resident with a Service Animal**

Prior to admitting a resident in which a service animal is relied on by the resident and necessary to assist with their disability, the resident or substitute decision maker must provide documentation from a regulated health professional confirming

* the service animal is required due to the disability
* the extent of accommodations required
* up to date vaccinations as required by Ontario law

In addition, the following must be agreed upon prior to admitting a resident in which a service animal is relied on by the resident and necessary to assist with their disability

* Who is responsible for regular care (e.g. feeding, elimination services)
* Who is responsible for veterinary care (annual check-up, regular care and in the case of illness)
* Temporary or permanent removal from the facility where the service animal poses a serious health, security or safety risk to others
* Arrangements for temporary removal from Perley Health, if necessary
* Annual or more frequent, as necessary, evaluations regarding the resident’s need of the service animal and related restrictions and responsibilities

**Restriction or Removal of Service Animal / Eviction**

Perley Health reserves the right to restrict, temporarily remove or permanently remove a service animal for health, security or safety concerns, including but not limited to circumstances where the service animal has substantially interfered with the reasonable enjoyment of other residents, has caused serious allergic reactions or the presence of the service animal, the species or breed is inherently dangerous to the safety of others, and as otherwise permitted by the Ontario Human Rights Code and Ontario legislation.

Perley Health also reserves the right to initiate eviction proceedings of the resident as permitted by the Ontario Human Rights code and Ontario legislation.

**REFERENCES**

Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 567, Rabies Immunization

Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 557, Communicable Diseases

Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1919, Regulation 493/17: Food Premises

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990. C. H.19

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Animals and Pets Policy