

**John Curtis Free Library
534 Hanover Street
Hanover, Ma 02339
781-826-2972**



Therapy and Emotional Support Dogs

The Town of Hanover supports the use of Therapy/Emotional Support Dogs in its building and premises. Therapy/Emotional Support Dogs have been trained to provide emotional support which positively impacts emotional functioning and communication skills. In addition, the use of Therapy/ Emotional Support Dogs may decrease anxiety while improving self-esteem. However, they are not categorized as service animals. It has been through training and is registered with the handler to provide support to identified activities and interactions. The handler must be with the dog at all times and assumes full responsibility for the dog's care, behavior and assessment of ability to interact with others.

Therapy/Emotional Support Dogs are family owned pets with the demonstrated temperament and obedience skills to make social/emotional support during public visits. Although a Therapy/Emotional Support Dog is a valued companion serving an important purpose, it is not considered a service animal under the law and therefore is not mandated to serve as a service animal. However, as outlined in this policy, there are situations in which a therapy/ emotional support dog may be permitted into Town buildings.

Specific permission will be obtained through a formal process from the Town Manager and/or Department Head in question in order for a Therapy/Emotional Support Dog to enter a Town building and to interact with other patrons, visitors, or staff. This formal process may include documentation from a medical or mental health professional.

The therapy dog owner may be required to provide written proof of training and endorsement as a handler of said animal by a Therapy/Emotional Support Dog organization, a current certificate of insurance of the owner, proof of all vaccinations required by Massachusetts Law signed by a practicing veterinarian, and copies of identification tags for the therapy dog.

Therapy dogs must be leashed at all times and the endorsed handler must be holding the leash at all times.

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Exclusion or Removal from Town Property: A Therapy/Emotional Support Dog may be excluded from Town property if a Department Head or the Town Manager determines that the dog poses a threat to the health or safety of visitors and staff and/or detracts from the use of the building by others. The handler shall immediately remove his/her therapy dog from Town property when instructed to do so by a Department Head or Town Manager, or his/her designee.

Legal References: ADA (2010) and US Code of Federal Regulations: USC 35.136 & 36.302

Approved, Board of Library Trustees – February 11, 2019