

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Pet Partners has a deep regard and respect for its therapy animal teams and the important role that they play in meeting the needs of the people they interact with. Pet Partners also has high expectations regarding conduct of its teams.

Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program Policies and Procedures

1. I will abide by all Pet Partners policies and procedures, and I will adhere to the guidelines that are set forth in the Pet Partners Handler Guide and in associated updates.
2. I will represent the program in a professional manner: for example, by observing rules of privacy and confidentiality, being on time for visits, not being under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and being well-groomed and professionally dressed in accordance with facility dress codes.
3. I will uphold the code of ethics.
4. I will visit only with animals that are registered with Pet Partners and with only one animal at a time. I understand that, for safety and liability reasons, visiting may not exceed 2 hours per team per day.
5. I will make sure that each facility that I visit has access to these Pet Partners policies and procedures so they understand what guidelines I already follow as a visiting team.
6. I will abide by all policies, procedures and precautions of Pet Partners and each facility I visit. If Pet Partners and my facility have two different policies on the same topic, the more conservative of the two will apply.
7. I will be responsible for my animal at all times, considering its needs and humane care first.
8. I will always stay with my animal and remain in control of the situation with the lead in my hand. I will never tie animals to people, equipment or furniture while visiting.

9. I will clean up after my animal both inside and outside the facility, and I will abide by any facility-required cleanup rules.
10. For safety reasons, all animals must wear a collar or harness and be on lead, and the handler must hold the lead at all times, including during breaks.
11. Before each visit, I will abide by the Pet Partners grooming guidelines.
12. I will visit only in accordance with the Pet Partners health requirements.
13. I understand that animals must not be on a raw protein diet at any time during their role as a therapy animal, and that animals from a household where a raw protein diet is fed are precluded from participating in the Therapy Animal Program.
14. I understand that my animal and I are required to wear our Pet Partners identification badge/collar tag (in addition to any identification required by the facility) while providing or promoting AAI as a registered team.
15. I will not borrow money or personal items or receive any personal gratuity or gift, such as money or jewelry, from the people that I visit. Likewise, I understand that it isn't routinely acceptable to give gifts to the people that I visit, even small gifts such as candy and cookies.
16. I will not charge a fee for services that I perform in my role as a therapy animal handler.
17. In the event of an accident or unusual occurrence, I will stop visiting immediately. I will report, without reservation, all details of the incident to Pet Partners and follow Pet Partners' direction, with the understanding that all information will be treated sensitively and with complete confidentiality.
18. I will not take photographs or video of the people that I visit without first obtaining the signed consent of the client, or a legal guardian or custodian of the client. I will use the Pet Partners photo and video release waiver provided on Pet Partners' website to obtain the client's consent unless a facility provides its own photograph and video release form. Instant photos might be acceptable, but only if the photo is left with the client and if permission has been granted by the client and the facility.
19. I understand that I must obtain approved written permission from Pet Partners for each proposed use of Pet Partners logo or name in conjunction with the logo or name of any other organization.

20. I understand that, as a handler, I am not authorized to administer the Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST) or the Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT) unless I am currently a licensed team evaluator. In addition, I am not authorized to teach the Pet Partners Handler Course unless I am currently a licensed instructor.
21. When approaching a facility for the first time, I will find out whether any other teams are already visiting there or if there are facility animals present. If there are, I will respect those existing relationships while also making the responsible choices for myself and my animal.
22. I understand that my animal must visit in the same type of equipment that it was evaluated in, and that a change in equipment requires a re-evaluation.
23. I understand that, any time that I am re-evaluated, the team qualification rating from the new evaluation will supersede the rating from the previous evaluation. The new rating applies immediately, even if the team's registration period hasn't yet expired. For example, if a renewing team is scored "Not Ready," the team's registration period expires early.
24. I understand that I must receive formal notification from Pet Partners about my registration status and qualifications (for example, an acceptance or renewal letter) before I may visit as a registered therapy animal team.
25. I understand that therapy animals can wear a seasonal or holiday scarf when making visits; however, for the safety of the clients and the animals, animals and handlers may not be dressed in costumes when making visits.

Code of Ethics

1. Perform duties that are consistent with your position and training.
2. Abide by the professional ethics of your profession and organizations.
3. Demonstrate a belief in and attitude of reverence for all life.
4. At all times, treat all animals, all people and the environment with respect, dignity and sensitivity, maintaining the quality of life and experience for all who are involved.
5. Be informed and educated about the aspects and issues that are related to AAI.
6. Demonstrate commitment, responsibility and honesty in all phases of your activities.

7. Comply with all local, state and federal laws and Pet Partners policies that govern AAI.

Standards of Professional Conduct

The following types of unsatisfactory conduct are serious enough that violations might result in termination from the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program:

1. Breach of client confidentiality.
2. Abuse of any client or animal, or conduct that is detrimental to the Therapy Animal Program or Pet Partners.
3. Theft or removal from the premises, without proper authorization, of any property that belongs to a facility, a client, staff or another team.
4. Unauthorized use or possession of intoxicants, narcotics or other drugs while volunteering as a handler.
5. Being unfit to volunteer because of the influence of alcohol or drugs.
6. Harassment of any type.
7. Using the Pet Partners vest to gain public access or otherwise misrepresenting your animal as an assistance animal.