

# Unicamp Dog and Service Animal Policy

The Board has set this Policy and Guidelines with the integrity of the natural environment, accessibility and disability needs, and the safety and happiness of all Unicampers in mind.

This policy provides information about pet dogs as well as service animals.



## Dog Friendly Dates 2025

- Aug 1-15
- Aug 29-Sept 29
- Oct 10-13

## Some Housekeeping Rules

1. Rules Dogs must always remain on leash and under the full control of their owner.
2. Dogs are never permitted on Cowpye Hill (including service dogs).
3. Dogs are never permitted inside the Dining Hall.
4. Owners must carry bags to scoop up after their dogs (on any part of Unicamp property, even in the woods), and dispose of the bags in the container marked for that purpose near the Dining Hall.
5. Beach times: Dogs are only allowed on Bob's Beach from 10-11am and again from 4-5pm.

For a complete list of rules regarding dogs at camp (both as pets and service animals), please see our Dog Policy below. Please note that all dog owners need to sign that they have read and understood this document before arriving on Unicamp property with their dogs.

*\*Note that all cottage and dorm rentals with a pet dog will include a \$50 non-refundable cleaning fee.\**

## INTRODUCTION

Some Unicampers have expressed a concern about the limited options for dog owners to bring their pets to camp, others have said they favour limiting the number of days when dogs are present on site. There is concern about the disruptive effects of dogs on the ecosystem within and surrounding Unicamp's property and some campers have expressed fear of dogs. On the other hand, there has been extensive research that demonstrates important health benefits provided by canine relationships and there is

new legislation in Ontario to ensure greater access for people with disabilities. We hope to strike a balance between the diverse needs within our broader Unicamp community.

Unicamp was largely dog-free from the mid 70's onwards, and had a 'no dogs' policy from 1987 to 2011 inclusive. The dates permitting dogs were first introduced in 2012; the number of days was doubled in 2015, reflecting the needs and interests of Unicamp dog owners. Following informal consultations with Unicamp staff and campers, the number of days was reduced in 2019 due to a growing concern about the increased presence of dogs on-site and their effect on the natural environment. The Board made a commitment to engage in further research and consultation in order to develop a comprehensive policy regarding dogs at Unicamp.

Our intention is to minimize the impact on our natural environment, to accommodate those who prefer to camp away from dogs, as well as to support those who derive benefit from canine companionship and/or therapeutic support.

**Dogs at Camp Policy:** We welcome our dog-owning campers to bring their pets during the specified Dog-Friendly days. (See the Unicamp Program Calendar or website for dates) We ask that those bringing dogs be mindful of their canine friends at Unicamp and respect these designated dates and the conduct policy.

We acknowledge Unicamp's natural ecosystem—our interdependent web of life—and we respect the Bruce Trail Conservancy regulation in its hikers' code of conduct, and Mulmur Township by-law 11-02 which indicate that dogs must be on-leash at all times on camp property, including the pond. Dogs must be kept back from people who do not wish to interact with them: please do not approach any other campers unless they have communicated they are comfortable with close proximity to dogs. This may be difficult at campfires and at the beach, as smaller spaces; dog owners are asked to make a reasonable effort to respect those around them.

Please keep your dog away from other dogs that may interact aggressively with yours; wait for consent before approaching other dogs.

Excessive barking disturbs everyone at camp and drives away wildlife; if your dogs bark when you leave them alone, then someone must stay with them at all times. Continued disturbance will be handled as per the Camp Director's discretion.

Dogs are never permitted on Cowpye Hill, which is not part of Unicamp but is our neighbour's ranch property. The Unicamp Program Center and Dining Hall and deck are off limits to all animals at all times, with the exception of service animals (see further information below). Owners must carry bags to scoop up after their dogs (on any part of Unicamp property, even in the woods), and dispose of the bags in the container marked for that purpose near the Dining Hall.

During Dog-Friendly dates, dogs are permitted in the pond at Bob's Beach (clothing optional) only and between 10–11 am and 4–5 pm only, and must be discouraged from relieving themselves on the beach sand. (Please try to have them do their business

before arriving at the beach). Dogs digging on the beach disrupts the natural habitat of turtles, and this has been observed to repel turtles to migrate further away from the beach to lay their eggs. We ask you to be mindful of this when your dog is on the beach.

**Responsibility:** Unicamp is an outdoor space. By bringing your dog into Unicamp, you understand Unicamp will not be held liable if your dog sustains an injury while at camp. Dog owners are responsible for any damages their dogs create to property (Unicamp property or other campers' property) and will be held responsible for any injuries caused to others.

**Service Animals:** Those with service animals are welcome to public spaces within Unicamp. The animal must be identified in one of two ways: wearing an identifying vest, or documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the owner requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability. Service dogs must be kept on their leash/harness and under the full control of their user/owner at all times. Campers are encouraged to alert the Camp Director of their situation before their arrival at Unicamp.

Service Animals are never allowed in the kitchen at Unicamp, due to health regulations. If a service animal belongs to a Unicamp kitchen staff member, accommodations will be made to ensure the animal is well-cared for outside of the kitchen, but available in case their presence is needed.

If accommodations are required for a Kid's/Youth camper with a Service Animal, the Camp Director will determine the best accommodation on a case-by-case basis. Please notify the staff as soon as possible to allow a reasonable amount of time to make this important decision.

## **SUMMARY**

We ask that those bringing dogs be mindful of their canine friends at Unicamp and respect these designated dates and the agreeable conduct policy.

1. Dogs must be under the owner's control and leashed at all times, including in the pond. Dog owners are responsible for any damages their dogs create to property (Unicamp property or other campers' property) and will be held responsible for any injuries caused to others.

**Tips:**

- a. When approaching a dog, ask the owner if the dog is people-friendly.
- b. When your dog is approaching another dog, ask the owner if the dog is dog-friendly

2. Dogs are not permitted:
  - in the buildings (Program Center and Dining Hall and deck)
  - on Cowpye Hill or any other part of our neighbour's ranch property.<sup>1</sup>
3. Dogs are only permitted at Bob's Beach and in the pond during specified dog swim times
  - the dog swim times are from 10-11am and 4-5pm
  - they are not to relieve themselves on the beach sand
4. Excessive barking disturbs everyone at camp; if your dogs bark when you leave them alone then someone must stay with them at all times. Dogs barking more than a few minutes, must be responded to. This is up to the Camp Director's discretion.
5. Owners must carry bags to scoop up after their dogs (on any part of Unicamp property, even in the woods) and dispose of the bags in the container marked for that purpose near the Dining Hall.
6. Please be respectful of others in some of the camp's more highly communal spaces, such as at the beaches, campfires etc. There may be some people here who do not like dogs, who may be afraid of dogs, and/or who have an allergy to dogs.
7. By bringing their dog onto Unicamp property, dog owners recognize Unicamp this is an outdoor space with the risks such a space would entail (elements, tripping hazards, etc). Unicamp will not be held liable for any injuries the dogs may incur while at camp.
8. Dog owners are responsible for any damages their dogs create to property (Unicamp property or other campers' property) and will be held responsible for any injuries caused to others.
9. Service animals are welcome at Unicamp.

### **Enforcement**

Two warnings in the form of yellow cards will be given if these rules are broken. If a third red card is issued you and your dog will be asked to leave without a refund. A record is kept by staff throughout the season; this procedure applies for all the campers' visits to Unicamp.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REASONING**

Hennings' (2016) study, *Impacts of dogs on wildlife and water quality*, found that:

The evidence that dogs negatively impact wildlife is overwhelming. It is clear that people with dogs—on leash or off—are much more detrimental to wildlife than people without dogs. Wildlife perceive dogs as predators. The presence of dogs

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Cosak who owns Cowpye Hill and the farm next door has adamantly stated that no dogs should be on his property.

causes wildlife to move away, temporarily or permanently . . . Animals become less active during the day to avoid dog interactions. Furthermore, the scent of dogs repels wildlife and the effects remain after the dogs are gone . . . Repeated stress causes long-term impacts on wildlife including reduced reproduction and growth, suppressed immune system and increased vulnerability to disease and parasites . . . Loose dogs kill wildlife.

Therefore, we protect the integrity of our ecosystem's interdependent web of life by limiting the total number of days dogs are allowed at camp, and keeping our canine friends "on a leash and under control at all times".

### **Background about Service animals**

Unicampers with service animals relating to a disability are welcome to bring their dogs onto all public spaces within Unicamp. The service animal must be identified in one of two ways: it must be wearing an identifying vest or harness, or documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the owner requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability must be provided to the Camp Director.

There are various types of service animals besides guide dogs that support people with various types of disabilities, such as:

- vision loss
- epilepsy
- autism
- anxiety disorder

There are no restrictions on what type of animal can be used as a service animal.

Service animals have a job to do. They are not pets. Avoid touching or addressing another camper's service animal.

Unicamp is in full compliance with the Accessibility for Ontario Disability Act (AODA) which ensures that a person is permitted to be accompanied by his or her guide dog or other service animal in the areas of their premises that are open to the public or third parties.

### **Appendix – History of Dog Friendly Dates at Unicamp 1988-2018**

#### **Dog Friendly Dates at Unicamp 1988-2018**

**1987-2011:** Dogs not allowed on site.

**2012: 6 days**

Family Camp 3 (Aug 19-24) Kitchener/Waterloo

**2013: 9 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend (June 7-9)  
Family Camp 3 (Aug 18-23) Kitchener/Waterloo

**2014: 9 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend (June 6-8)  
Family Camp 3 (August 17-22) GTA

**2015: 19 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend (June 5-7)  
Family Camp 2 (August 9-14) Kitchener/Waterloo  
Family Camp 3 (August 16-21) GTA  
Thanksgiving (October 9-12)

**2016: 19 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend (June 3-5)  
Family Camp 2 (August 7-12) Kitchener/Waterloo  
Family Camp 3 (August 14-19) GTA  
Thanksgiving (October 7-10)

**2017: 19 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend (June 3-5)  
Family Camp 2 (August 13-18) Kitchener/Waterloo  
Family Camp 3 (August 20-25) GTA Thanksgiving (October 6-9)

**2018: 17 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend, June 1-3 (Fri-Sun)  
Family Camp 1—Kitchener/Waterloo, August 12-17 (Sun-Fri)  
Dog Friendly Weekend, August 17-19 (Fri-Sun)  
Family Camp 3—GTA, August 26-31 (Sun-Fri)

**2019: 12 days**

Dog Friendly Weekend, August 9-11 (Fri-Sun)  
Family Camp 1—Kitchener/Waterloo, August 11-16 (Sun-Fri)  
Thanksgiving, October 11-14 (Fri-Mon)

**REFERENCES**

Hennings, L. (2016, April). (*PDF*) *Impacts of dogs on wildlife and water quality*. Retrieved from ResearchGate:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301800852\\_Impacts\\_of\\_dogs\\_on\\_wildlife\\_and\\_water\\_quality](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301800852_Impacts_of_dogs_on_wildlife_and_water_quality)