

F.6.2.1 (Procedure) Personal Care Attendant

Responsible Department: Vice Chancellor for Student Success

Based on Board Policy: F.6.2 – Student Responsibility for Success

Board Adoption: 1-30-13

Amended: 7-27-21

The College District and its colleges are committed to providing all students equal access to its programs, facilities, and services. In keeping with this commitment, the College District and the individual colleges recognize that a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may be necessary to address the personal needs of a student with a disability in order for that student to fully participate in the college's offerings. Students who need personal care, including assistance with activities of daily living or normal life functions, are encouraged to retain a PCA to facilitate integration into the college experience as reasonably possible.

Role of PCA

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is defined as a person who provides personal care/assistance to a student with a disability or other personal or health care needs. PCA services may include transfer from a car/van to a wheelchair; transportation around the campus or to/from the classroom; administering medication; and addressing toilet, feeding or dressing needs. A PCA may not proctor tests, take tests for a student, participate in class discussions in place of the student, or engage in conduct or activities that compromise academic integrity. The student at all times retains responsibility for learning and satisfying course requirements. The presence of a PCA in a classroom or event is subject to available space and seating capacity and must be approved in advance by the Office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS). At all times, the student is responsible for directing the activities of the PCA while on campus. The PCA must abide by the Student Code of Conduct and all District and college policies, rules, regulations, and procedures.

Student Responsibility for a PCA

A student who requires personal care attendant services must make arrangements to provide for his/her own personal care needs, including hiring, training, supervising, and paying (or securing funding) for a PCA to provide these services. It is the student's responsibility to have any needed Personal Care Attendant and Agreement in place prior to participating in any college-related activities, i.e., testing, advisement, registration, and class attendance. The student is responsible for scheduling the attendance of a PCA and having a back-up PCA or an alternative plan of action should the regular PCA not be available to work with the student on a particular day or within a particular class.

It is not the responsibility of the Alamo Colleges to provide personal care attendant services to meet the personal needs of the students, even on an interim basis, for example, while the student is in the process of securing a PCA. It is the sole responsibility of the student, financial and otherwise, to provide a PCA to assist the student should an attendant be required. The Alamo District Colleges are not responsible for locating a PCA for a student or for coordination or financial obligations for personal care attendant services. If the student requests the PCA to provide note taker or tutorial services, neither the College District nor a college will pay the PCA for those services.

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Checklist for Student Responsibility:

- Retain the services of a PCA prior to attending any college-related activity, i.e., orientation, placement testing, registration, and class attendance. (The Alamo District Colleges will not be responsible for providing a PCA on an interim basis.)
- Register with SAS at least 10 business days prior to the end of the semester registration period or before the anticipated event.
- In order for the PCA to be approved by the Alamo Colleges, download a copy of the Personal Care Attendant Agreement and make an appointment with the SAS office to have the form signed and validated. Both the student and the PCA should attend this appointment.
- Sign the Personal Care Attendant Agreement & ID Request form each semester/session at each college at which the student will attend with a PCA.
- Ensure that each PCA registers with SAS and signs the Personal Care Attendant Agreement each semester/session.
- Ensure that if PCA personnel changes occur during the semester, the student and the new PCA register with SAS and sign a new Personal Care Attendant Agreement form.
- Direct the activities of his/her PCA while at the college.
- Have a back-up plan or alternative plan of action should the regular PCA not be available to work with the student on a particular day or in a particular class.
- Follow the Alamo Community College District's (District) policies and abide by the Alamo Colleges Student Code of Conduct.

Expectations of a PCA:

- Adhere to the Alamo Colleges Student Code of Conduct and all other District and college policies, rules, regulations, and procedures.
- Complete and sign the Personal Care Attendant Agreement **each semester/session** and adhere to the requirements therein.
- Conduct him/herself in a courteous and professional manner while on campus.
- Refrain from discussing confidential information about the student with faculty, staff, or other students.
- Allow the student to take responsibility for his/her own progress and/or behavior.
- Refrain from contact with or asking questions of faculty, staff, or others on behalf of the student.
- Refrain from intervening in conversations between the student and faculty, staff or other students, unless the student is incapable of communicating directly with the faculty member or other individual, the student requests the PCA's assistance, and a classroom assistant or appropriate communication aid is not immediately available to the student.
- Refrain from working on or completing any of the student's academic assignments.

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Any PCA who fails to abide by the above policies and procedures and/or those outlined on the Personal Care Attendant Agreement may be subject to removal from the campus, loss of all privileges and/or any other action the College District considers appropriate in the event the College District determines that the PCA has acted in a manner inconsistent with College District policies and/or procedures.

Appeals Process

If a student's PCA is asked to leave the campus for a violation of the Personal Care Attendant Agreement or other misconduct, the student receiving services may file an appeal and request review of the PCA's alleged violation/misconduct under the following procedure:

- An appeal under this Personal Care Attendant Policy must be submitted in writing to the college Vice President of Student Success within ten (10) business days from the date of the removal from campus.
- The appeal must contain the name, address, telephone number, and email address of the person(s) filing the appeal.
- The appeal should briefly describe the circumstances and set out any arguments in support of allowing the PCA to return to campus and why it was not proper to remove the PCA from campus.
- Upon the submitting an appeal, an investigation will be conducted and completed within ten (10) business by the Vice President of Student Success or designee with the involvement of the SAS coordinator. The investigation shall afford all interested persons and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relative to the appeal.
- After the investigation is completed, the Vice President for Student Success or designee shall conduct an informal, internal meeting at which the results of the investigation will be shared with the student and PCA, and the student and PCA may be heard to present their evidence and arguments.
- A written determination by the Vice President of Student Success or designee shall be issued and forwarded to the student within ten (10) business days after the date of the meeting. This determination shall be final.
- The SAS coordinator and Vice-President of Student Success or designee shall maintain files and records relating to appeals under this Personal Care Attendant Procedure for a period of three (3) years after the date of the determination.

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PCA Background Check:

While not mandatory, the Alamo District Colleges encourage students to conduct a criminal background check on a PCA prior to hiring or using the services of an individual to provide personal care attendant services. Generally, if a student obtains a PCA through an agency, the agency may provide a criminal background check on the individual being considered as a PCA, subject to the PCA's consent to the criminal background check. Alternatively, a student may contact the Texas Department of Public Safety and request criminal background information on a particular individual being considered as a PCA. Information on how to obtain a criminal background check on an individual is available at www.txdps.state.tx.us.

The Personal Care Attendant Agreement and Guidelines form is incorporated in this procedure by reference and is posted as exhibit F.6.2.1A.