



## Ashland University Emotional Support Animal Policy and Procedures

Ashland University provides reasonable accommodations to students living on campus who have a disability documented with the Student Accessibility Center. Through the process of an approved Housing Accommodation, the Office of Residence Life permits Emotional Support Animals (ESA) to live with students who have a mental health disability in their on-campus residence. This may require students to live in specified residence halls on campus. **Students will review this Policy, sign and agree to the terms contained therein before bringing the animal to campus.**

ESA's are typically assigned given a specific mental health treatment plan - plans or intervention can and/or will change periodically given the clinical review and treatment progress. Therefore, we can never assume the treatment intervention/process is static - it is a dynamic process, thus requiring updated treatment plans and recommendations. For this reason, **students are asked to renew their ESA requests every year**, just like they would renew their housing accommodation requests.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protects people with disabilities from discrimination in obtaining housing. Under the FHA, landlords must provide reasonable accommodation to people with disabilities, so that they have equal opportunity to reside in and enjoy a dwelling. Emotional Support Animals that do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), may nevertheless qualify as reasonable accommodations under the FHA.

The Office of Residence Life may restrict an Emotional Support Animal based on size and/or species, or exclude an ESA from housing if it: 1) poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, 2) would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others, 3) or would pose an undue financial and administrative burden to the institution.

### **Definitions:**

**Emotional Support Animal (ESA)**- a category of animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, and benefits for a person with a mental health diagnosis. ESA's are not considered Service Animals and when provided as an accommodation, are considered exceptions to the current university pet policy. The Housing Accommodation Committee will review all ESA accommodation requests based on appropriate documentation from a qualified mental health professional that determines the necessity of the accommodation.

**Service Animals**: dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. (ADA Title II and Title III: DOJ)

**Pets**: animals kept for ordinary use and companionship. Pets are not considered Service Animals or Emotional Support Animals.

**Owner**: a student who has requested the ESA accommodation, and has received approval to bring an ESA to campus.

## Responsibilities of ESA Owners in University Housing\*

The owner is responsible for assuring that the approved animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there. The owner is financially responsible for the actions of the approved animal including bodily injury or property damage. The approved animal must abide by the same rules of conduct as the owner, outlined in the Student Handbook. The student is encouraged to have insurance on the animal for any injury that may occur.

*The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been asked to investigate websites that purport to provide documentation from a health care provider in support of requests for an ESA. The websites in question offer for sale documentation that is not reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and health care professionals who consult with them lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations.*

**Vaccinations:** in accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the ESA must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Proof of vaccinations must be submitted and approved prior to the ESA's arrival.

### **Dogs**

Rabies Vaccination

DA2PL-Parvo

Bordetella

Canine Influenza (2 strains)

Flea and Tick Prevention

### **Cats**

Rabies Vaccination

FELV

FVRCP

Flea and Tick Prevention

\*If your ESA is not a dog or cat, please work out the details with the Residence Life Office.

\*Vaccinations must be in place a minimum of 14 days before the ESA's arrival on campus

\*Dogs will need to be licensed by the State of Ohio

**Health:** The ESA must be in good health. ESA's to be housed in University Housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian, and verifying documentation must be submitted to the SAC along with the annual Housing Accommodation Request document. **ESA's (where appropriate) must be spayed or neutered prior to being brought to campus, and the owner must submit documentation of the applicable procedure.** The Residence Life Office and/or SAC will also have the right to contact the ESA's veterinarian to request additional medical documentation as needed. A release form must be on file with your veterinarian, to provide access to medical information. During Health and Safety Inspections, a Residence Life staff member will conduct an inspection of the animal. A check list will be completed and submitted for review.

**Leash:** If appropriate the ESA must be on a leash. If the animal is being escorted out of the building it must be leashed or crated.

**Other Conditions:** The Office of Residence Life may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the Emotional Support Animal depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal. The University is not responsible for loss, damage to, or death of the animal.

**Requirements for Cause of Removal of the ESA:** Any violation of the listed policies and procedures or the Student Handbook, may result in immediate removal of the ESA from University Housing. The owner may also be subject to Student Conduct charges.

If a request to remove the ESA is made, the owner must remove the animal within 48 hours of notification unless the animal poses a direct and immediate threat to the health or safety of another, then it must be removed immediately.

**Conflicting Needs/Health Concerns**

If an Emotional Support Animal request is granted, Residence Life will make a reasonable effort to notify certain members of the campus community living or working in close proximity to the animal. The notice will be limited only to information regarding the animal's presence in the building as an accommodation to a university student. There will be no disclosure of the student's disability or the specific reason the animal is required. The number of people provided notice will depend on the type of animal and on the type of housing the students is living in each academic year. Individuals notified include but are not limited to, Residence Life Staff, Facilities Staff, Safety Services Staff, Student's Roommate(s), Residents of the building and floor.

**Agreement:**

*I have read and understand my responsibilities as an Emotional Support Animal owner as outlined above. By signing below, I agree to uphold all the expectations required of an owner, and permit the Student Accessibility Center and the Office of Residence Life to discuss the implementation of this accommodation with faculty and staff as necessary. Should I fail in my responsibilities, I understand my approved accommodation may be suspended and/or I may be charged with a violation of student policies.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Name (PRINT)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Accessibility Center**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Emotional Support Animal Information:**

Name of the ESA: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Breed: \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Veterinarian Information:**

Veterinarian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Alternate Caretaker Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please submit a current photo of the animal to the SAC at: [jdonatin@ashland.edu](mailto:jdonatin@ashland.edu). If your ESA is a dog, please submit a photo of the dog's license as well.*