

Rules and Responsibilities of Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Owner

The University of the South is committed to providing access to its programs and services, and, as such, permits qualified students with disabilities to have an Emotional Support Animal (hereafter referred to as an ESA) as a reasonable accommodation in University housing. An ESA will be permitted to live in a student's personal residence provided it is in compliance with the University's policies regarding such animals. The University reserves the right to revoke the permission granted for the campus presence of any ESA whose owner fails to follow the requirements set forth in this policy.

State and federal laws have no specific provisions for people to be accompanied by ESAs in places of public accommodation that have a no-pet policy. Requests that do not clearly articulate the diagnosed disability and the nexus between that disability and the need for the assistance animal will be denied.

The scope of this policy is limited to Emotional Support Animals, though Service Animals, therapy animals, and the respective University policies for both are referenced in this document.

Definitions

Emotional Support Animal. *Emotional Support Animals* (ESAs) are animals that provide emotional support and alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual's existing disability. To be considered an accommodation, an ESA must be required by an individual with a disability, in their residence, in order for the individual to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy their residence/dwelling. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support are Emotional Support Animals, not Service Animals.

Neither dangerous, poisonous, nor illegal animals, nor any animal that poses a direct threat to the health and/or safety of the campus community, will be permitted as ESAs. ESAs are required to be house trained and should have a basic level of obedience training. Additionally, animals that prove to be destructive to University or student property will not be permitted. Size and age restrictions may also apply.

Service Animal. A *Service Animal* is a dog or miniature horse which has been individually trained to provide a specific service to an individual with a disability. Service Animals include, but are not limited to: guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the deaf/hard of hearing, and Service Animals for individuals with physical disabilities and seizure disorders. Service Animals/service dogs are not considered "pets" and are explicitly permitted under state and federal civil rights laws. The University will require documentation for a service animal consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Therapy Animal. A *therapy animal* is an animal owned by a therapist and selected to play an integral part of a person's treatment process. A therapy animal is prescribed to an individual with a disability by a healthcare or mental health professional. A therapy animal is not a Service Animal; a therapy animal does not assist a person with a disability with activities of daily living, nor does it accompany a person with a disability at all times. Therapy animals are not allowed in University housing.

Pet. A *pet* is an animal kept for pleasure and companionship. A pet is not considered an Emotional Support Animal or Service Animal. Individuals are not permitted to keep pets on University property or bring pets into University buildings without authorization.

Owner. The *owner* is the resident student who has an approved ESA in University housing under this policy.

University Housing. Any facility owned or operated by the University for the purposes of housing residential students, whether leased or owned.

Emotional Support Animal Approval Process

A student seeking to keep an ESA in University housing must make a formal request through Student Accessibility Services (SAS). **To make a formal request, the student must submit a completed *Emotional Support Animal Documentation Form* from a qualified professional (treating psychiatrist, psychologist, or other mental health professional) which must include a statement identifying a diagnosed medical or psychological disability and the reason (for what functional limitation) the ESA is required.** There must be an identifiable and clearly established relationship between the individual's disability and the support the animal provides. **While students may submit additional documentation, the additional documentation is not a substitute for the *Emotional Support Animal Documentation Form*.**

****Please note that documentation from ESA registries and "meet with our therapist once to get your ESA letter" will not be accepted.** Students should have an ongoing and established relationship with the provider who is making the request for an ESA. Students should be careful when using services such as these, as personal information may not be secure. **Breed, size, weight, and risk associated with the animal will be taken into consideration while reviewing an ESA request. Please be mindful of the environment of a residential hall and the best fit of an ESA for that specific space.**

Once all documentation has been received, the student requesting will be invited into a meeting with the Director of SAS to review their request. The Director of SAS will gather all required information and present it to the ESA Review Committee during their next gathering. All relevant city, state, and local ordinances will be considered when approving or denying an ESA request. Students will be notified of the decision by email. Once notified, the student must meet with SAS to review and sign this policy and to submit any outstanding documentation of the animal's vaccinations and health. Copies of the animal's documents will be kept on file in SAS. The SAS office will notify Residential Life when a student is granted approval to bring an ESA into University housing. The approval process is not complete until SAS notifies Residential Life; animals brought to campus prior to this point are subject to the University's pet policy and penalties under that policy.

Any approval under this policy is valid for one academic year and valid for one specific animal. Students must notify SAS of their desire to continue utilizing this accommodation for each subsequent year when the housing and placement process begins for the upcoming academic year; a new policy agreement must be signed, and updated documentation in regards to treatment and therapeutic use of an ESA must be provided. Students may not substitute an unapproved animal without written approval from SAS.

***** When an unapproved pet/ESA is found on the Domain, the student may be charged with a violation of the EQB Guide for Living in Community. The ESA will not be approved until all ESA-related sanctions and/or fines have been resolved.***

Residential Life Notifications and Student's Appeal Rights

If the request for an ESA is approved, the University will notify the Owner, who will be required to sign this policy. Failure or refusal to sign this policy will be presumed as an indication that the student does not intend to abide by the policy and will result in revocation of the approval.

During the housing application process, Residential Life will inform students that they may encounter approved ESAs in the residence halls. Resident students with medical condition(s) who may be affected by an approved ESA (e.g. respiratory diseases, asthma, allergies) are asked to inform Residential Life during the application process, or at any other time, if they have a health or safety-related concern about exposure to an approved ESA.

All roommates or suitemates of the Owner must complete the Roommate Acknowledgement form to confirm that they agree to live in a residence with an approved ESA. In the event that one or more roommates/suitemates do not approve, or have a health or safety-related concern regarding exposure to the approved ESA, general University policies regarding

roommate or suitemate disagreements will be followed to enable either the Owner and the approved ESA or the non-approving roommate(s) or suitemate(s) to be moved to a different location. Written acknowledgment from a parent is required for roommates or suitemates under age 18.

In light of potential health or safety concerns of other residents, the Residential Life staff will make a reasonable effort to notify the other residents on the floor or in the residence hall where the approved ESA will be located. Residential Life will collaborate, as necessary, to resolve conflicts related to an approved ESA. Staff members will consider the needs and/or accommodations of all resident students involved.

Facilities Management, who may need to complete cleaning or other work orders, will be notified in which residence hall rooms ESAs are housed during the course of the academic year.

The requesting student may appeal a denial of a request for an ESA within five business days to the Dean of Students (or their designee). The student must appeal the denial in writing (which includes email). The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

Removal of an ESA

Failure to follow the Rules and Regulations for an Emotional Support Animal may result in the removal of a student's approved ESA. Low-level ESA violations will be reviewed through a three-strike process. Strike one will result in the student receiving a written warning. Strike two will consist of a notice to the student that they must meet with a SAS staff member to make a plan for moving forward. Strike three will result in the temporary removal of the ESA from campus. The ESA and violations will then be reviewed by SAS and a committee of staff from the Offices of SAS, Residential Life, Facilities Management, and Dean of Students to determine if the animal should be allowed to return to campus. Should the animal not be allowed to return the student may request an alternative animal to be approved to serve the role of their ESA. Students who obtain a violation can have one violation forgiven for each following semester where no violations occur.

High-level violations, such as an ESA injuring another person or animal or behaving in a threatening manner will result in the immediate removal of the ESA. Students will not be able to bring the removed animal back to campus but may request an alternative animal to be approved to serve the role of their ESA if the student satisfactorily establishes that the new animal does not pose a risk of harm to others.

On occasion when the health and safety of students or the animal itself is of concern, SAS may review the accommodation of a student who has been approved for an ESA. If it is determined that the student with the ESA accommodations has been neglectful of their animal and/or the Rules and Regulations of an ESA, then SAS may rescind the accommodation for an ESA.

COVID-19 Temporary Addendum:

In addition to the University of the South ESA Guidelines that have been signed and are on file with the Office of Student Accessibility Services, in the event that a student with an ESA is quarantined or isolated due to COVID-19, the ESA must be removed from campus until such time as the owner is able to care for it independently again. The listed emergency contact will be notified to come to campus and retrieve the ESA. In the event the emergency contact is unable to unwilling to care for the ESA, the University of the South will arrange for boarding until such time as the owner is able to independently care for the ESA. All expenses accrued during this time will be the responsibility of the ESA Owner and will be billed to the ESA Owner's student account.



Rules and Responsibilities of Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Owner

Once Student Accessibility Services (SAS) has approved the Emotional Support Animal (ESA), the ESA Owner must abide by the following rules and responsibilities. Failure to abide by the ESA rules and responsibilities may lead to sanctions, including removal of the ESA from University housing.

1. The ESA Owner must complete and submit the Request for Emotional Support Animal Documentation Form, the required ESA Health Documentation, and be approved by SAS before bringing the requested ESA to campus.
2. When an unapproved ESA is found in a University building or student residential building, the owner will be found in violation of the Residential Life pet policy. The student may also be charged with a violation of the EQB Guide for Living in Community. The ESA request will not be reviewed/approved until all ESA-related/pet policy sanctions and/or fines have been resolved.
3. The ESA Owner agrees to abide by all other University policies. An exception to the animal policy made under this ESA Policy does not constitute an exception to any other University policy.
4. ESAs do not automatically grant or make the owner eligible for any other Housing Accommodations. This includes single rooms, rooms with air conditioning, or rooms located on central campus.
5. The ESA will remain in the ESA Owner's University assigned room and is not permitted in other students' rooms, the common areas of the residential facilities (shared bathrooms, living rooms, hallways, kitchens), or other areas of the University such as classrooms, academic buildings, administrative buildings, library, dining hall, fitness center, pool, etc.
6. The ESA Owner must be in full control of the animal at all times (i.e., via a leash, harness, crate, etc). ESAs are not allowed to be walked or removed from a resident's room without the ESA owner in accompaniment.
7. It is the responsibility of the ESA Owner to ensure that their approved ESA does not interfere with the quality of life of other residents on campus. This includes noise violations (e.g. barking or other disruptive noise).
8. The ESA owner is solely responsible for their animal's well-being, care, and cleaning, including but not limited to: regular feeding, bathing, grooming, daily care, and veterinary services.
9. The ESA may not be left unattended overnight in the residential facilities to be cared for by another student. ESAs must be taken with the owner or moved off campus if the owner leaves campus overnight or for a prolonged period.
10. When ESAs are left unattended in a student's room, they are required to be contained in a crate, carrier, or kennel. This containment will allow Sewanee officials to routinely access the residential facilities for maintenance or other routine tasks without posing risk to the animal or employees. Proper containment of an ESA additionally ensures quick action from emergency responders when evacuation is required.
11. Dogs as ESAs must be "housebroken" and cats as ESAs must be litter box trained. Other smaller animals (i.e. gerbils, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc.) must be caged and may not be left to roam freely in the student's room.

12. ESAs must be taken out of the building by way of the shortest and most direct path and must be maintained under standard restraints such as a carrier and/or collar/leash when outdoors, in public areas, or in transit. ESAs must be confined to the residence when not in transit.
13. Fecal matter deposited on University grounds or within the facilities needs to be removed immediately and disposed of properly. Any other animal waste inside the residential building must immediately be removed and the area cleaned by the Owner. The Owner is to arrange for immediate removal of fecal matter or other animal waste if unable to perform the task personally.
14. All ESAs will be provided with a University identification tag that the ESA owner must pick up from the Office of Student Accessibility Services after receiving approval for the ESA. The ESA should wear the tag at all times unless receiving exception status from SAS for practicality issues.
15. ESA owners will be provided with an ESA door sign that is to be adhered to the inside of their residential hall room door via wall safe adhesive. The door sign will contain the owner and animal's emergency contact information. Owners must pick up and display the sign within 1 week of SAS contacting them for pick up.
16. ID tags must be returned to SAS before the student leaves campus each semester or if for any reason the ESA will no longer be on campus. A new ID tag will be issued each semester that the ESA is approved to return. Door signs may be discarded or returned to SAS.
17. The Owner must comply with all applicable laws regarding the keeping of an animal and is responsible for making sure the ESA does not disrupt the residential community. ESAs must be current at all times on Tennessee state-required vaccinations. All applicable ESAs must be spayed or neutered.
18. The ESA Owner's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks, pests, and/or damage to the residential facilities once per semester or as needed. The Office of Residential Life will schedule the inspection and notify the resident in advance of the scheduled inspection. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence hall will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a University-approved pest control service. The ESA Owner will be billed for the expense of any necessary pest control treatment.
19. The University may remove or require the removal of any ESA that poses a threat to the health or safety of others on campus, disrupts the educational environment of the University and/or residential community, or if the Owner does not comply with the ESA Owner's Rules and Responsibilities for Emotional Support Animals.
20. The Owner will be financially responsible for expenses incurred above a standard cleaning or for repairs to the residential premises, including losses, liability, claims, and harm to others caused by the ESA.
21. The Owner will hold the University blameless in the event the ESA goes missing. University staff is not responsible for the retrieval of the ESA in the event that the animal escapes or becomes lost.
22. The Owner must notify Student Accessibility Services in writing if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in the residential facilities. To replace a previously approved ESA, the owner must submit new, completed registration and other related forms to Student Accessibility Services.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL AGREEMENT

By my signature below, I verify that I have read and understand the above and I agree to abide by the requirements applicable to Emotional Support Animals (ESA). I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements set forth in the Agreement, the University of the South has the right to remove the ESA and I will nonetheless be required to fulfill my housing, academic, and all other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract. Any violations of this agreement will be addressed through the conduct process.

I furthermore give permission to Student Accessibility Services to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my assistance animal, including Residential Life staff, potential and/or actual roommate(s), and neighbor(s), that I will be living with an ESA as an accommodation. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the ESA and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the assistance animal. I will hold the University of the South harmless from any liability for disclosing such information.

I further recognize that the presence of the assistance animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in University housing and agree that Residential Life staff may acknowledge the presence of the ESA, and explain that under certain circumstances assistance animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.

Student Signature

Date

Emotional Support Animal Policy Animal Request Form

Student Name: _____ Sewanee ID: _____

Student Housing Assignment: _____

Name of ESA: _____ Type of ESA: _____

Age of ESA: _____ Weight of ESA _____ Breed of ESA (if applicable) _____

Please provide a detailed description of Animal:

Records Provided (Please attach verification from veterinarian)

Rabies Vaccination Next Date Due: _____

Proof of Veterinary Exam Date: _____

Other Vaccinations: _____

Completed By and Date: _____

Attach a photo of the animal below:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____



Roommate Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, acknowledge that I will share the common areas of my assigned residential space with another student, as well as an Emotional Support Animal approved by the University. Should I have any concerns regarding the care and control of the approved Emotional Support Animal, I will discuss my concerns with the animal’s owner. If the owner and I cannot come to a satisfactory resolution between us, then we will meet with Residential Life staff.

I am aware that the Emotional Support Animal is working with its student partner and I will observe the following etiquette:

- I will avoid touching the animal or its owner without permission.
- I will not make noises at the animal as it may distract the animal.
- I will not feed the animal as it may disrupt its schedule.
- I will not attempt to startle or distract the animal.
- I will not attempt to separate the animal from its owner.
- I will take the animal out of its assigned room.
- I will refrain from asking my roommate about any disability or the assistance the animal provides.
- I recognize students with an Emotional Support Animal may not want to talk about very personal matters, including diagnoses or treatment.
- I will refrain from gossip or discussion with others related to my roommate’s disability or accommodations. If the owner shares medical or disability-related information, I will treat the information as I would any personal information shared in confidence and will only share it on a need-to-know basis (e.g., an emergency situation, or if professional attention or intervention is necessary).

ESA Owner’s Signature

Sewanee ID

Date

Roommate’s Signature

Sewanee ID

Date



Alternate Caregiver's Information

In the event that you become ill, or unable to care for the animal, please identify two people who can be contacted to care for your animal in your absence. The Alternative Caregiver(s) that you list must reside off-campus and should be able to remove the animal from campus in a timely manner - within 8 hours - should you become unable to care for it in an unforeseen circumstance. Please notify any alternate caregivers before listing their information below.

Alternate Caregiver's Name: _____ Phone _____

Alternate Caregiver's Address: _____

City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Alternate Caregiver's Name: _____ Phone _____

Alternate Caregiver's Address: _____

City/State _____ Zip Code _____