

## **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL POLICY IN RESIDENTIAL HOUSING FOR STUDENTS**

### **I. Policy**

Culver-Stockton College (C-SC) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and an accessible environment for qualified students with disabilities. C-SC complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Fair Housing Act (FHA). With the exception of service dogs, C-SC housing policies prohibit having animals of any type; however, C-SC will consider a request for reasonable accommodation to this policy by an individual with a qualifying disability. The Office of Accessibility & Accommodations staff is responsible for implementing this policy and for assisting students with disabilities to document their specific need for an accommodation.

**No Emotional Support Animal (ESA) may be kept in College housing at any time prior to the individual receiving approval as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to this policy.** A request must be initiated by the student registering for disability accommodations with the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations. Accommodation requests are due by March 1 to be considered for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester; exceptions can be made if a student has received a new diagnosis during the academic year. Accommodation requests must be reapproved each academic year. All required documentation must be submitted prior to the ESA moving into College housing. If a student is found on-campus with an unapproved animal, the student must remove the animal immediately and will be referred to the Student Conduct Panel.

### **II. Definition of Emotional Support Animal**

An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is an animal that is prescribed by a mental health professional to an individual with a mental health disability as part of necessary treatment. An ESA differs from a service animal in that the animal does not assist the person with activities of daily living nor does it accompany the individual at all times.

### III. Process for Requesting Emotional Support Animals in College Housing

The process for requesting an accommodation of an ESA starts with the individual submitting documentation from their mental health care provider. Documentation should be authored by a licensed mental health care provider who is trained and qualified to evaluate the disability and familiar with the student's history. Documentation may not be provided by a student's relative, friend, family member, or member of the clergy.

The documentation should include the following:

- The nature of the individual's mental health disability and how the individual is substantially limited;
- An established relationship of at least six months between the individual and this specific animal;
- Evidence that this specific animal is necessary to afford an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the residence hall;
- The relationship between the disability and the assistance or relief that this specific animal provides;
- Recommendation that this specific animal is part of an on-going treatment plan; and
- Statement of impact on student success if the request is not granted.

We strongly recommend that an individual's mental health provider use our Emotional Support Animal Request for Information form, which can be obtained by emailing [accommodations@culver.edu](mailto:accommodations@culver.edu).

If the student's request is granted, they will be required to meet with Accessibility & Accommodations staff to complete the Student's Responsibilities contract prior to moving their ESA into campus housing.

The Office of Accessibility & Accommodations may consult with Residence Life in making a determination on whether an ESA is a reasonable accommodation. A request for an ESA may be denied as unreasonable if the presence of the animal 1) imposes an undue financial or administrative burden on the College; 2) fundamentally alters the College housing policy; and/or 3) poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to College property. C-SC may consider the following factors, among others, in determining whether the presence of an animal is reasonable or when making housing assignments for individuals with ESAs:

- The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space;
- The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (i.e. serious allergies);
- The animal's presence would otherwise violate individuals' rights to peace and quiet enjoyment;
- The animal is not housebroken or unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
- The animal's vaccinations are not up to date;
- The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the safety or health of others, such as aggressive behavior or potential transmission of zoonotic diseases;
- The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear;
- The animal is less than one year of age.

Two residence halls on campus have been identified for the placement of students with an ESA: Sperry Hall for first-year students and Weldon Hall for upper-division students.

The approval of an ESA does not guarantee the student a single room. If the accommodation of an ESA is approved, Residence Life will be notified and they may in turn notify other residents of the floor or suite where the individual resides. Such information will be limited to the animal and will not include disability-related information. Other residents with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (i.e. respiratory diseases, asthma, allergies) or who are unable to reside with the ESA and need an accommodation will be asked to provide medical documentation identifying their condition. The College will resolve any conflict in a timely manner. Any conflicts could result in a change in room assignment.

#### **IV. Student Responsibilities for Emotional Support Animal**

1.) An ESA must be properly housed and restrained or otherwise under the dominion and control of the owner at all times. ESAs are only allowed in the respective assigned residence hall room. ESAs are not allowed in lounges, hallways, stairwells, kitchens, other student rooms, or College-owned buildings. The ESA can only be in common areas when entering or leaving the residence hall and when leaving the room, the ESA shall be restrained with a leash or in a cage, carrier, or appropriate container. When student is out of their residence hall room with their ESA, they must carry their animal's school issued ID. ESAs cannot be let outside unattended and dogs must be on a leash; if an animal is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture and confinement, and immediate removal from College housing. The student is responsible for how his/her ESA interacts and affects the community. Sensitivity to campus community members that

have allergies and to those who fear animals is important to ensure a positive community (especially in the residence halls).

2.) The student is financially responsible for the actions of the approved ESA. These actions include bodily injury and/or property damage. As with anyone living in College housing, the College may bill students for damage beyond normal wear and tear or for necessary cleaning above and beyond the standard cleaning of the room. This includes, but is not limited to, damage to furniture, flooring, and/or windows. Residence life will inspect the residential unit on normal Health and Safety checks. If the student's room must be treated for fleas, ticks, and/or other pests, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a College-approved pest control service. The student will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.

3.) The student is solely responsible for the animal's care and is required to ensure the animal is well cared for at all times, including up-to-date vaccinations, documentation of which must be submitted as part of their request for accommodation. Any evidence of mistreatment or abuse may result in immediate removal of the ESA and discipline for the student.

4.) ESAs must be housebroken. Waste cleanup is the sole responsibility of the student. The waste should be disposed of in an outside dumpster/trash can. All waste, whether indoor or outdoor, must be immediately retrieved, placed in a plastic bag, and securely tied before being disposed of in an outside dumpster/trash can. ESA waste must not be disposed of in C-SC plumbing. The student will be billed for the expense of any inappropriately disposed of waste materials, including but not limited to damage to flooring or plumbing. Damages that occur in common spaces of a residential area may be charged to all residents of that community, if the person(s) responsible are not identified.

5.) All ESAs must be placed in a cage or kennel when the student is not present in the residence hall room. The ESA must be in a cage when maintenance is being performed in the residence hall room. The College reserves the right to inspect the enclosure to be used in containing the animal. The student owner must also be present when maintenance staff are completing work orders.

6.) The student is responsible for ensuring that the ESA does not create persistent noise, odor, or disturbance that would unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for individuals who reside there.

7.) The student must provide C-SC with the names and contact information for two people who do not reside in College housing, but live within four hours of campus and who can take responsibility for the animal within 12 hours should the owner be unable or unavailable to care for it.

8.) ESAs may not be left overnight in College housing to be cared for by any individual other than the student. The animal cannot be relocated to another student's on-campus residence. If the student will be absent from their residence hall overnight or longer, the ESA must accompany the student. If a student is off campus for an extended period for College-related travel (i.e. fine arts tour, athletic competition, field trip), the student may designate someone to care for the ESA. The ESA must remain in the ESA-approved student's residence hall room and the student must notify their Resident Assistant (RA) and Resident Director (RD) of this arrangement so that the RA or RD can let the designated caregiver into the residence as needed. The student cannot ask an RA or RD to care for their ESA during their absence.

9.) The animal is allowed in College housing only as long as it is necessary because of the owner's disability. The student must notify the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence.

Allegations of policy violations related to an approved ESA will be investigated as part of the Student Conduct process.

## **VI. Removal of Emotional Support Animal**

The College may require the individual to remove the animal from college housing if:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others;
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a College program;
- The student owner does not comply with the Student Responsibilities set forth above; or
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the College community.

**CHECKLIST:**

The following materials must be submitted to the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations **before** the ESA is moved into campus housing:

- Application for Emotional Support Animal
- Medical Professional Form
  - **Please note: form letters or letters purchased from the internet for a set price do not provide the information necessary to support an ESA request and applications with such letters will be denied.**
- Animal Information Form
- Photo of Animal
- Copy of Current (less than one year) Vaccinations
- Current Rabies Tag Information (if applicable)
- Flea & Tick Prevention Agreement
- Waste Management Agreement
- ESA Code of Conduct
- ESA Short Term Care Acknowledgment