



# NORTHWEST<sup>®</sup>

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## MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### Emotional Support Animals Policy and Procedure

#### Policy:

Emotional Support Animals (ESA) may be allowed in campus housing if certain conditions are met. The animals must be a necessity for the student with a disability to afford the student an equal opportunity. There must be an identifiable relationship between the student's disability and the assistance the animal provides. An accommodation is unreasonable if it presents an undue financial or administrative burden on the College, poses a threat to the life, health, safety or welfare of the college community. Unlike a Service Animal, an Emotional Support Animal might not be trained and it **does not** accompany a person with a disability at all times.

Although Emotional Support Animals may be considered for limited access to college housing, they are not permitted in other areas of the college (e.g. libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, etc.).

#### Procedure:

- An ESA is one that is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity. It may provide physical assistance, emotional support, calming, stability and other kinds of assistance. Animals do not perform work or tasks that would qualify them as "service animals" under the ADA. Assistance animals that are not service animals under the ADA may still be permitted, in certain circumstances, in campus housing pursuant to the Fair Housing Act.
- Only **ONE** ESA per student is permitted.
- Requests for support animals should be made by submitting medical/reasonable documentation from a licensed mental health provider, the Animal Verification Form, ESA Contract and Consent to Share Residence Form provided on the College website under Disability Services. All requests will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- It is the handler's responsibility to submit a clean health certificate and vaccination record, to attend to the well-being and cleanliness of the animal, keep the animal under control at all times, be responsible for removing animal waste and maintain clean conditions. In the event that the handler is not physically able to clean up after the animal, it is then the responsibility of the handler to hire someone capable of cleaning up after the animal.
- The handler is responsible for treating the animal for fleas, ticks and other pests. If they are detected in the residence hall where the animal lived, the handler will be financially responsible for the fumigation treatment.
- The handler is responsible for any preventable damage to persons or College property caused by the animal.

- The handler will be responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning in the residence hall where the animal lived.
- Emotional Support Animals may be ordered to be removed from the College for the following reasons: an animal that is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control the animal, an animal that is not housebroken, if the College determines the animal to be a direct threat to the life, health, safety or welfare of the College community.
- The owner must notify Disability Services in writing if the approved animal is no longer needed. To replace an approved animal, a new request must be filed with Disability Services.
- Should an emergency arise, the handler is responsible for the well-being and/or alternate shelter of the animal.
- If a situation arises where an individual has an allergic reaction to animals that is substantial enough to qualify as a disability, the College will consider the needs of both persons in meeting its obligations to reasonable accommodate all disabilities and to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. Students, faculty or staff requesting allergy accommodations should contact Disabilities Services.
- The handler is responsible for meeting all room check requirements in regard to keeping the assigned room clean at all times. If the room does not meet expectations in regard to cleanliness of the animal or has any damages resulting from the animal living in the room, the handler can be ordered to remove that animal. If the animal creates a disruptive or unsafe environment in the residence hall (barking, attempting to bite another student, found in any other part of the dorm other than room, etc.) the animal can be removed.
- Emotional Support Animals must be contained within the assigned residential area (room, suite, or apartment) at all times, except when transported outside in an animal carrier **OR** controlled by a leash or harness.
- Emotional Support Animals may not be left overnight without the handler present.
- **NO** emotional support animals are allowed in the residence halls unless all required documentation has been completed and approved by the Dean of Student Services, the Director of Housing and the Disability Coordinator.

**Individuals may submit a grievance regarding emotional support animals to Dr. Tonyalle Rush, Vice President for Student Services by submitting a written appeal letter that specifically addresses the reason for the appeal. The appeal will be reviewed and the individual will be notified in writing on the status of the case.**

#### Affirmative Action

Northwest Mississippi Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or status as a veteran or disabled veteran in all its programs and activities. Northwest Mississippi Community College prohibits sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The following have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Disability Support Services Coordinator, Tate Hall, PO Box 7046, 4975 Highway 51 North, Senatobia, MS 38668, telephone number 662-562-3309, email [mkelsay@northwestms.edu](mailto:mkelsay@northwestms.edu); Title II of the Age Discrimination Act: Vice President of Finance, James P. McCormick Administration Building, PO Box 7017, 4975 Highway 51 North, Senatobia, MS 38668, telephone number 662-562-3216, email [jhorton@northwestms.edu](mailto:jhorton@northwestms.edu); Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972/Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Associate Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management, Tate Hall, PO Box 7010, 4975 Highway 51 North, Senatobia, MS 38668, telephone number 662-562-3997, email [trush@northwestms.edu](mailto:trush@northwestms.edu).

