



# NORTHWEST<sup>®</sup>

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## MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### Service Animal Policy and Procedure

#### Policy:

Northwest Mississippi Community College is committed to assuring equal access for students, staff and faculty, as well as guests and visitors who have a disability to the campus. It is the College's policy to permit Service Animals, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. This policy supports the College's commitment to comply with state and federal laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended and related laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Adherence to these policies and procedures is essential to support a foundation of understanding, comfort and security that makes Northwest a welcoming and accessible place for all.

Students, staff, faculty and guests with Service Animals **DO NOT** need to self-identify **unless** the Service Animal will be residing in campus housing.

Service Animals are permitted in all public areas of campus, except where specific restrictions apply. The College may prohibit the use of service animals in certain locations due to health or safety hazards where service animals may be in danger or where their use may compromise the integrity of research or fundamentally alter the nature of a program or activity. Restricted locations may include, but are not limited to: research laboratories, classrooms with demonstration/research animals present, medical areas, research areas using radioactive materials or lasers, mechanical rooms or custodial closets, workshops with operating machinery and food preparation areas. The safety of locations will be individually considered by the Disability Coordinator, the laboratory director/instructor, the Dean of Students and any other college personnel deemed appropriate. If a location is determined to be unsafe for the use of a service animal, alternative reasonable accommodations will be explored and provided as appropriate to ensure the individual equal access to the activity. Exceptions to restricted areas may be granted on a case-by-case basis by contacting Disability Services.

#### Procedure:

- Service animals are defined under the ADA as dogs that are trained to perform one or more specific tasks for a person with disabilities. The work or tasks performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples would be: navigation for the seeing impaired, pulling a wheelchair, assisting the handler during a seizure or diabetic crisis, retrieving items for individuals with mobility disabilities, prevent or interrupt impulsive or destructive behaviors in individuals with psychological and neurological disabilities, and alerting hearing impaired persons. **The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition.** (ADA, March 15, 2011)

- Service Animals should be reasonably identified to the community by harness or service animal vest when not in a student residence. If there is no identification, college staff may ask the two questions below to determine if a dog is a service animal: **Is the animal required because of a disability and What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?** Faculty/Staff may **NOT** ask about the individual's disability, medical documentation, identification card/training document, or for a demonstration of the work or task.
- Service Animals must be harnessed, leashed or tethered unless these devices interfere with their work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal or other effective controls.
- Students living in Campus Housing must complete the Animal Verification form, Animal Contract and Consent to Share Residence Form provided on the College website under Disability Services.
- 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 reasonably accommodate all disabilities and to resolve the problem as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. Students, faculty or staff requesting allergy accommodations should contact Student Counseling and Disabilities Services.
- It is the handler's responsibility to attend to the well-being and cleanliness of their animal, keep animal under control at all times and not allow disruptive behavior, to remove animal waste and maintaining clean conditions, have a plan in place for animal care in the event of an emergency, and arrange alternative shelter if the animal has to be removed from campus.
- If the Service Animal resides in Campus Housing, 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.
- If the Service Animal resides in Campus Housing, 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.
- Service 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 if the approved animal is no longer needed in Campus Housing. To replace an approved animal, a new request must be made with Disability Services.
- **NO** Service Animal is 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 service animals to Dr. Tonyalle Rush, Vice President for Student Services by submitting a written appeal that specifically addresses the reason for the appeal. The appeal will be reviewed and the individual will be notified 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).