

Title/Subject: **THERAPY/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL POLICY**

Applies to: faculty staff students student employees visitors contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: December 15, 2014

Contact for More Information: Student Disability Services; Office of Residence Life

Board Policy Administrative Policy Procedure Guideline

BACKGROUND:

Central Michigan University is committed to fulfilling its obligations under state and federal laws, including providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities. This Policy governs the use of therapy/emotional support animals as accommodations in University housing by persons with disabilities.

Requests for accommodation regarding a therapy/emotional support animal shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by sufficient documentation, as more fully described below.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline under what conditions, where, and when a therapy/emotional support animal is permitted in University housing.

DEFINITIONS:

A therapy/emotional support animal is an animal that is necessary to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling when there is a disability-related need for the assistance provided by the animal and assistance from an animal is an integral part of a person's treatment process.

POLICY:

Therapy/emotional support animals are only allowed in the person's University housing residence, except to the extent that a service animal also qualifies as a therapy/emotional support animal, in which case the Service Animal Policy applies. See Administrative Policy 13-3, https://www.cmich.edu/office_president/general_counsel/Documents/p13003.pdf

The use of a therapy or emotional support animal as an accommodation is determined by the Director of Student Disability Services (SDS). A resident desiring to use a therapy/emotional support animal in University housing must be registered with SDS in advance; the animal should not be brought into University housing until a meeting with SDS has occurred and written approval for the animal granted. This policy applies to all forms of University housing. Therapy/emotional support animals are not pets and the University continues to enforce a no-pets policy in University housing.

PROCEDURE:

Authority: George Ross, President
History: None
Indexed as: Animal Policy; Emotional Support Animal, Support Animal

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1. A resident wishing to use a therapy animal in University housing must identify and register with Student Disability Services (SDS) before housing for the animal is needed. Documentation of disability must be provided. SDS reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification. See Documentation Guidelines at <https://www.cmich.edu/ess/studentaffairs/SDS/Pages/Documentation-Guidelines.aspx>
2. Each request will be reviewed individually. The resident will be notified in writing of the decision by the Director of SDS and, if the accommodation is approved, SDS will work with the resident and campus staff to facilitate a supportive network.
3. Documented effectiveness of animal therapy for a minimum of 6 months is necessary. In addition, the student should be in ongoing or continuing treatment in addition to using the therapy animal.
4. As required by applicable local, state and federal law, the therapy/emotional support animal must be immunized against diseases common to the type of animal. Dogs must have current rabies vaccination and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing and animal control requirements shall be followed. Records of all required immunizations must be provided to SDS before approval can be granted.
5. Therapy/emotional support animals other than dogs and cats must have an annual clean bill of health from a Michigan licensed veterinarian, documented by a vaccination certificate or written statement from the veterinarian.
6. The University reserves the right to request documentation that the therapy/emotional support animal is licensed and vaccinated and to have the animal examined by a licensed Michigan veterinarian of its choosing.
7. The University will prohibit a specific animal that poses a threat to the health or safety of others if that threat cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; a resident requesting a therapy/emotional support animal shall provide background to SDS regarding any history the animal has of biting or injuring others. The University will prohibit a specific animal that would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others or the University if said damage cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation. Also, if approval of a therapy/emotional support animal poses an undue financial or administrative burden on the University, or would fundamentally alter the nature of University housing operations, approval shall not be granted.
8. The resident is responsible for the animal's behavior and care, including, but not limited to: costs of said care, maintaining control of the animal at all times and sanitary disposal of animal waste. Removal of the animal and any necessary cleaning, repairs and pest control required will be done at the expense of the resident responsible. The animal is to be crated when the resident is not present.
9. Therapy/emotional support animals are limited to University housing. Therapy/emotional support animals are not allowed in food service or food preparation areas on campus, nor are they permitted in classrooms.
10. The resident receiving approval for a therapy/emotional support animal will be expected to adhere to the same housing and student code policies as all other students.
11. SDS may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the animals depending on the characteristics and nature of the animal.
12. A resident wanting to dispute a decision of SDS regarding the use of a therapy/support animal, including denial of such use, or other terms of this policy should contact SDS at 989-773-3018.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.