
SUBJECT:	Emotional Support Animal Policy
REVIEWED/REVISED:	3/2015; 12/2021
PURPOSE:	Outline the rights and responsibilities of campus housing residents requiring the assistance of a therapy/emotional support animal.
POLICY OWNER:	Chief Student Officer (Dean of Students)

POLICY:

Nebraska Methodist College (NMC) is committed to reasonably accommodating persons with disabilities who require the assistance of therapy/emotional support animals; however, NMC is also mindful of the health and safety concern of the campus community. Thus, NMC must take into account both the needs of the individual with the disability and also the potential impact of such animals on others within the College community.

Definition of Therapy/Emotional Support Animal

For the purpose of this policy, comfort and therapeutic companion animals will be referred to as emotional support animals. This policy does not address service animals. The emotional support animal's primary purpose is to provide therapeutic benefit such as to mitigate or alleviate one or more identified effects of a person's mental or psychiatric disability.

Guidelines and Requirements

NMC's campus housing, as stated in the Pet policy, the Campus Housing Agreement, and Campus Housing Handbook, is pet-free. A pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a service animal or emotional support animal, and therefore, it is not covered by this policy. Residents are not permitted to keep pets on NMC property or in campus housing.

In compliance with Fair Housing Act, exceptions to NMC's pet policy are permissible. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Fair Housing regulations provide that emotional support animals be considered a reasonable accommodation in campus housing. HUD/Fair Housing regulations only apply to housing facilities, thus animals are only allowed in the resident's room and are not allowed in any other area of campus housing or elsewhere on campus. The animal's behavior may not create unreasonable disruptions to the residential community at any time and the animal's behavior must be congruent to reasonable standards of well-behaved animals relating to behavior, noise, odor, and waste. Excessive disruption, as determined by residential staff and/or Housing Coordinator, is grounds for contractual termination and immediate animal removal.

For an emotional support animal to be considered a reasonable accommodation the resident must first contact NMC's Housing Coordinator and provide the following documentation:

1. The existence of a disability.
2. A relationship between the disability and the relief the animal provides.
3. The animal is necessary in order for the resident to use and enjoy an on-campus residence.

Documenting this need requires documentation from a treating medical or mental health provider (not related to the student) certifying that the emotional support animal is part of a prescribed treatment plan for the disabling condition and alleviates symptoms or effects of a disability. After providing the necessary documentation to the Housing Coordinator and Chief Student Officer will determine whether or not the request will be granted. Documentation must be submitted and approved prior to bring the animal to campus. Animals living on-campus in violation of the pet policy may not remain on-campus pending review and determination of an emotional support animal request.

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Contractual Agreement for Emotional Support Animals

Upon NMC approval to obtain an emotional support animal, the resident is expected to meet the following additional requirements. The resident will:

1. Register the animal with Campus Housing after receiving permission by providing necessary documentation.
2. Provide documentation of completed vaccinations recommended by veterinarians. Proof of vaccination is required prior to moving into campus housing. NMC reserves the right to request updated vaccination records at any time during the animal's residency. Dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag.
3. The city of Omaha requires all dogs and cats to be licensed. The dog or cat shall bear an identification tag provided upon payment of the required licensing fees.
4. Assure the animal does not interfere with traditional activities of the residence or negatively impact the community of students who reside there. Sensitivity to residents fearful of animals or with allergies is necessary to maintain a welcoming and peaceful residential community.
5. Be responsible for containing and disposing of all animal waste in appropriate outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes should be placed on mats.
6. If appropriate the animal (dog) must be on a leash, unless the leash would inhibit the animal's ability to be of service.
7. Be financially responsible for the actions of the animal, including any property damage or bodily injury. Examples include carpet and furniture replacement, wall repairs or cleaning costs directly associated with having an animal in the room.
8. Provide documentation of liability insurance covering the emotional support animal.
9. Submit written notification if the emotional support animal is no longer residing in the student's residence or is no longer needed.
10. Go through the entire request process again, beginning with contacting Housing Coordinator, if the student is planning to exchange one emotional support animal for another. The agreement is for one specific animal only.
11. Abide by all other College policies within Campus Housing and the Student Code of Conduct. This exception to NMC pet policy does not allow for other exceptions to college policy.
12. Fulfill the campus housing agreement for the duration of the agreement between the resident and NMC even if the emotional support animal is removed from campus housing.

Upon NMC approval to obtain an emotional support animal, NMC has the right to:

1. Inspect the residence for fleas, ticks, or other pests as needed. Inspections will be scheduled in advance. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected, the residence will be fumigated through approved methods by an NMC or an outsourced, certified pest control service. If pest treatment is needed, the resident is financially

responsible for it. If the problem is ongoing or reoccurring, the resident's housing agreement may be terminated or the emotional support animal removed.

2. Assign the resident to a specific building and/or room.
3. Relocated the resident as necessary based on the contractual agreements of residing on campus.
4. Not allow specific animals to reside in campus housing as emotional support animals. Any animal must be approved and a thorough review of traits and tendencies of any proposed animal will be conducted and a final decision will be made by the college prior to allowing move-in of the animal.

Non-compliance with the aforementioned rules may result in the immediate removal of the emotional support animal from the residence at NMC. If this occurs, there is an appeal process that can be initiated by contacting the Chief Student Officer.

Resident Signature

Date

Housing Coordinator Signature

Date

The above resident has provided all the necessary documentation that supports a request for an emotional support animal and such request has been granted.

Chief Student Officer Signature

Date