

## Emotional Support Animals on Campus

### How can a student request to have an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in on-campus housing?

To request to have an ESA in on-campus housing, a student must complete the accommodation request process with Student Disability Services (SDS) <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/health/disabilityservices.php> . The student must have a recognized disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and show that the request for an ESA is a reasonable accommodation that is directly related to their disability needs.

1. Documentation from a qualified evaluator to whom a student has an established relationship. (An evaluator that the student has never met or only met with once or twice should not complete forms).
2. Documentation should articulate the need for the ESA based upon the student's medical and/or mental health condition.

\*Documentation must indicate how the ESA alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of an existing disability.

HUD regulations allow individuals with disabilities a broader range of emotional support animals in South Plains College campus housing as compared with the campus as a whole. An individual may keep an emotional support animal as an accommodation in campus housing if all of the following apply:

1. The individual has a disability
2. The animal is necessary to afford the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling
3. There is an identifiable relationship between the disability and the emotional support the animal provides. Emotional Support Animals are NOT allowed in any other campus buildings.

### EXCEPTIONS

South Plains College may exclude an emotional support animal from campus housing if the animal: is not housebroken; would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others or campus facilities; would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others; would fundamentally alter the nature of a program or activity; or is not being cared for by the individual. Students will be liable for damage caused by emotional support animals in

the same manner they are responsible for personal damages to any South Plains College property.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS**

South Plains College is not responsible for the care or supervision of an emotional support animal. Individuals with disabilities are responsible for the care and control of their emotional support animal at all times and for ensuring the immediate clean-up and proper disposal of all animal waste. Individuals must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including vaccination, animal health and leash laws, as well as South Plains College's rules in lease provisions regarding vaccination, leash control, cleanup rules, animal health, and community relationships.

All Emotional Support Animal requests must be submitted to South Plains College Disability Services office (<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/health/disabilityservices.php>). After Disability Services has approved the accommodation of an Emotional Support Animal, the student is responsible for submitting the approval to the South Plains College Student Housing along with any other required documentation.

No animal will be permitted in a residence hall or an apartment that:

- Is not approved by South Plains College Disability Services
- Is not approved by the South Plains College Student Housing
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others
- Would cause substantial physical damage to campus property and other residents
- Would pose an undue financial and administrative burden to South Plains College
- Would fundamentally alter the nature of the campus's housing operations.

## **STANDARDS FOR APPROVED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS**

- Approval will be granted for **one** emotional support animal.
- Animals must be a **dog, cat, small bird, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, other rodent, fish, turtle, or other small domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home as a pet.**
- There are no restrictions on animal breed; however, animal size may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- All approved service or emotional support animals must comply with applicable laws regarding animals, their treatment and care.

## **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR BY ANIMAL AND ANIMAL OWNER**

Health, sanitary, safety, and disruptive standards must be maintained as follows:

- Animals require daily food and attention, as well as a daily assessment of their general health, behavior and overall welfare.
- Animals cannot be left unattended overnight at any time. If the owner must be away, they must either take the animal with them or make arrangements for the animal to be cared for elsewhere, which does not include other South Plains College student housing.
- Emotional support animals must not be taken into a residence hall or apartment office, administrative offices, common space, or student living areas.
- Animal waste must be taken care of, and any animal handler or owner must comply with Section 4.01.002- Animals defecating on public and private property. Animal feces, defined as cat litter box contents and any solid animal waste, must be disposed of properly. It is the owner's responsibility to remove feces from campus grounds, dispose in a plastic bag, and then place that bag in the garbage dumpsters outside. Cleanup must occur **immediately**. Animal feces may not be disposed of in any trash receptacle or through the sewer system inside any building on South Plains College campus. Waste **must** be taken to any student housing dumpster for disposal.
- Residents with cats must properly maintain litter boxes. In consideration of the health of the cat and occupants of the apartment or the residence hall room, cat litter box contents must be disposed of properly and regularly. The litter box must be changed with new cat litter regularly as outlined by the manufacturer.
- Animal-accidents within the residence hall room or apartment must be promptly cleaned up using appropriate cleaning products.
- Regular and routine cleaning of floors, kennels, cages, and litter boxes must occur. The odor of an animal emanating from the residence hall room or apartment is not acceptable (see Cleaning Section below).
- Any flea infestation must be attended to promptly by South Plains College student housing contracted professional extermination company at owner's expense. Owners are expected to promptly notify the hall staff and the South Plains College student housing staff and arrange for extermination when a flea problem is noted. Animal owners may take some precautionary measures such as flea medications prescribed by veterinarians, flea and tick collars, taking animal to the veterinarian for flea and tick baths. However, South Plains College housing staff may not use chemical agents and insecticides to exterminate fleas and ticks. Because not all of the precautions listed above can prevent flea and tick infestations, the owner is responsible for extermination costs after vacating the residence hall room or apartment.
- Animals must not be allowed to disrupt others (e.g., barking continuously, growling, yowling, howling, etc.). Animals which constitute a threat or nuisance to staff, residents or property, as determined by the South Plains College student housing office or designee, must be removed within seven (7) days of notification. If South Plains College Police Department personnel determine an animal poses an immediate threat, animal control may be summoned to remove the animal. If the behavior of the animal can be addressed by the owner, and the owner can change

the behavior of the animal so that it does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner. The action plan must outline the action to take place to alleviate the problems and also must give a deadline as to length of time the plan will take to complete. Any action plan must meet the approval of the South Plains College student housing staff. The day after the deadline for removal from the apartment, South Plains College student housing staff will do a residence hall room or apartment inspection to check damages and infestation and then the mandatory cleaning and extermination will be scheduled. Any animal owner found not adhering to the removal directive will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include contract cancellation.

- An animal must not be involved in an incident where a person experiences either the threat of or an actual injury as a result of the animal's behavior. The animal owner will take all reasonable precautions to protect campus staff and residents, as well as the property of South Plains College and that of the residents.
- The owner will notify the student housing staff if the animal has escaped its confines and is unable to be located within eight (8) hours.
- All liability for the actions of the animal (bites, scratches, etc.) is the responsibility of the owner. Violations concerning any of the aforementioned may result in the resident having to find alternative housing off-campus for the animal and, as warranted, may also result in a resident being in breach of their housing contract.

## **CLEANING AND DAMAGES**

- When the resident moves out of his/her apartment or residence hall room, or no longer owns the animal, the apartment or residence hall room will be assessed to determine if damage to property can be attributed to the animal. South Plains College student housing maintains the right to conduct apartment or residence hall room inspections annually for the purpose of assessing damage caused by the animal or otherwise determine the resident's compliance with this procedure.
- The animal owner has an obligation to make sure that the apartment or residence hall room is as clean as the original standard. If the apartment or room has carpeting, this also includes regular vacuuming and spot cleaning. Damages and extraordinary cleaning caused by the animal are the responsibility of the resident. Replacement or repair of damaged items will be the financial responsibility of the owner and assessed by members of South Plains College student housing staff.

**\*\*\*Failure to follow the requirements could result in removal of the animal from campus\*\*\***