



# Animals on Campus Policy

Rhodes College

This Animals on Campus Policy applies to all animals on campus, including pets, emotional support animals, and service animals, and pertains to students, faculty, staff, and visitors of Rhodes College.

Rhodes College is committed to compliance with state and federal laws regarding individuals with disabilities. Rhodes recognizes the importance of service and emotional support animals to students with disabilities and has established policies and guidelines regarding service and emotional support animals that are described in more detail below. Rhodes reserves the right to amend this policy as circumstances require.

## Definitions

**Pet.** A pet is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a service animal or emotional support animal.

**Service Animal.** A service animal is defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a documented disability. Service animals are working animals, not pets. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for purposes of this policy. The work or task a service animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Reasonable modifications may be allowed for a person with a disability to use a miniature horse if the animal has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the individual.

Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or a telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by assisting with seizures or preventing or obstructing impulsive or destructive behaviors.

**Emotional Support Animal.** An emotional support animal is an animal that provides comfort to a person with a disability upon the recommendation of a healthcare or mental health professional. The comfort of an emotional support animal serves to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's documented disability. Unlike a service animal, emotional support animals do not have to be trained to perform any particular task, do not assist a person with activities of daily living and do not accompany the person at all times.

**Approved Animal.** An approved animal is a service animal or emotional support animal that has been granted access to campus as a reasonable accommodation under this policy.

**Owner.** The owner is the student or other covered person who has requested the accommodation and has received approval to bring the approved animal on campus.

## Pet Policy

Fish (in tanks with maximum capacity of ten gallons) are the only pets which may be kept in campus housing with the permission of roommates. Violators of these policies regarding pets will be fined a minimum of \$100.00 for each infraction. Exceptions will not be made for any temporary keeping of pets or stray animals.

Guests or commuter students are required to keep pets on leashes while on campus and are responsible for cleaning up after the pet. Pets are not allowed inside residence halls, campus buildings or structures or into any areas that serve food and/or beverages.

## Service Animal Policy

A student requesting to bring a service animal on campus or to keep a service animal in campus housing must make a formal request to the Office of Student Accessibility Services (901-843-3815). Requests for service animals in housing do not require documentation of a disability.

Requests must be made in a timely manner. Incoming students requesting to have a service animal in campus housing should submit their request and supporting documentation to Student Accessibility Services by June 1 for review and determination before the beginning of fall semester. Returning students should submit paperwork by March 1. While applications after these dates will be accepted and considered, Rhodes cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet late applicants' accommodation needs.

Student Accessibility Services reviews each request on a case-by-case basis. Students requesting that a service animal be housed in campus housing will meet with Student Accessibility Services to carefully review this policy and to sign a release form giving permission for Residence Life, Campus Safety, and Physical Plant to be informed of the animal's location. If the student is dissatisfied with the determination of their accommodation request and/or has new information or concerns, the student will have the opportunity to request reconsideration. Any denial of an accommodation request may be appealed to the Vice President of Student Life, as outlined in the Student Accessibility Services Procedures.

Rhodes allows service animals to accompany visitors with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go. Service animals for students, faculty and staff are allowed in any area, unless the presence of the service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others on campus, or the service animal's presence would require a fundamental alteration in the facility's practices, policies, or procedures.

If the owner represents that the animal is a service animal, he or she does not have to provide documentation or other proof that the animal has been certified or licensed as a service animal;

conversely, providing such a certificate or placing a vest on an animal that says “Service Animal,” without more, will not qualify an animal as a service animal. Rhodes may ask the owner: (1) if the animal is required because of a disability and (2) what work or task the animal has been trained to perform, unless it is readily apparent that the animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability (e.g., the dog is observed guiding an individual who is blind). Failure to provide satisfactory answers to these questions may result in restrictions on where the animal can go.

A service animal is required to be under the control of its owner at all times, and shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the owner/handler is unable to use such device because of a disability, or the use of such device would interfere with the service animal’s safe, effective performance of work, in which case the service animal must still otherwise be under the owner/handler’s control (e.g. voice control, signals, or other effective means).

## Emotional Support Animal Policy

A student requesting to bring an emotional support animal on campus or keep an emotional support animal in campus housing must make a formal request to the Office of Student Accessibility Services (901-843-3815) and submit an Emotional Support Animal Verification Form.

In order to be considered for approval, there must be a link between the animal and a documented disability. Emotional distress resulting from having to give up an animal because of a “no pets” policy does not qualify a person for an accommodation under federal law.

Requests must be made in a timely manner. Incoming students requesting to have an emotional support animal in campus housing should submit their request and supporting documentation to Student Accessibility Services by June 1 for review and determination before the beginning of fall semester. Returning students should submit paperwork by March 1. While applications after these dates will be accepted and considered, Rhodes cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet late applicants’ accommodation needs.

Student Accessibility Services reviews each request on a case-by-case basis. While animals other than dogs or cats will be considered, Rhodes is under no obligation to permit an animal that is dangerous, disruptive, or requires special environmental conditions to be brought onto campus as an emotional support animal. Students requesting that an emotional support animal be housed in campus housing will meet with Student Accessibility Services to carefully review this policy and to sign a release form giving permission for Residence Life, Campus Safety, and Physical Plant to be informed of the animal’s location. If the student is dissatisfied with the determination of their accommodation request and/or has new information or concerns, the student will have the opportunity to request reconsideration. Any denial of an accommodation request may be appealed to the Vice President of Student Life, as outlined in the Student Accessibility Services Procedures.

An emotional support animal is required to be under the control of the owner at all times, and shall have a harness, leash, or other tether or a pet carrier. Emotional support animals may not be transported on campus in purses, tote bags, briefcases or backpacks.

Emotional support animals are not allowed into campus buildings or structures (other than the residence hall in which its owner resides) or into any areas that serve food and/or beverages.

## Owner Responsibilities

1. The owner is responsible for assuring that the approved animal does not cause difficulties for individuals in the Rhodes community or unduly interfere with the routine activities of the Rhodes community.
2. The owner is financially responsible for the actions of the approved animal, including bodily injury or property damage caused by the animal. The owner's responsibility covers, but is not limited to, replacement of furniture, carpet, window, wall covering, and the like. The owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair and/or move-out.
3. The owner is responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning or for repairs to College premises that are assessed after the student and animal vacate the residence. The College shall have the right to bill the student account of the owner for unmet obligations.
4. The owner must notify Student Accessibility Services and Residence Life in writing if the approved animal is no longer needed as an approved animal or is no longer in residence. To replace an approved animal the owner must file a new request.
5. Care, feeding, watering and supervision of the approved animal are the responsibility of the owner.
6. The owner is responsible for purchasing and using a Twin XL waterproof mattress cover for each mattress in their assigned room. The owner should contact Student Accessibility Services or Residence Life if assistance is needed.
7. The owner is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the animal's waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the animal in areas designated by the College consistent with the reasonable capacity of the owner. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces.
8. In cases of emergency, the College and emergency services personnel will focus on human life and will not return to buildings solely to rescue animals.
9. The owner's residence may be inspected for fleas, ticks or other pests as needed. Residence Life will schedule the inspection. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using approved fumigation methods by a College approved pest control service. The owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls.
10. All roommates or suitemates of the owner must sign an agreement allowing the approved animal to be in residence with them. In the event that one or more roommates or suitemates do not approve, either the owner and animal or the non-approving roommates or suitemates, as determined by Residence Life, may be moved to a different location.

11. Service animals may travel freely with their owner throughout campus housing and other areas of the College. Emotional support animals must be contained within the privately assigned residential area (room, suite, apartment) at all times, except when transported outside the private residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. When outside the residence, the owner of an emotional support animal shall carry proof that the animal is an approved animal.
12. Vaccination/Age: In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the approved animal must be fully immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. For example, dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Animals not living in cages must be at least one year old.
13. Health: Animals to be housed in campus housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the animal's health. The College has authority to direct that the animal receives veterinary attention.
14. Licensing: Local licensing law must be followed. The College reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed.
15. Bathing an approved animal in any College residence sink, shower or tub is prohibited.
16. Approved animals may not be left overnight in campus housing to be cared for by another student. Arrangements must be made to house the animal in a kennel or other approved care facility or taken with the owner.
17. Residence Life has the ability to relocate owner and approved animal as necessary according to the housing contract.
18. Failure to comply with the responsibilities and guidelines outlined in this policy may result in immediate removal of the animal from the College and the owner may be subject to the College's judicial process.

## Service Animals in Training

All provisions of this policy related to service animals are applicable to service animals in training. Rhodes allows service animals in training on campus, provided that the animal is led or accompanied by a trainer, is wearing a harness, and held on a leash by the trainer. Additionally, the trainer shall first present for inspection credentials for training service animals issued by an accredited school. Service animals in training are not allowed in student housing and may not be the subject of a request for reasonable accommodation.

## Service and Emotional Support Animal Exceptions

Rhodes may deny approval of a service animal or emotional support animal as a reasonable accommodation and/or remove a service animal or emotional support animal from campus, including campus housing if, based upon an individualized assessment:

1. The animal in question poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation,
2. The owner substantially fails to comply with this policy, or
3. The animal in question would cause or has caused physical injury or substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

Examples of situations in which an animal may not be approved or may be removed from campus include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The animal is not under the control of the handler, and such individual does not take effective action to control the animal within a reasonable period of time under the circumstances.
2. The owner has repeatedly failed or refused to comply with directives to control the animal, clean up after the animal, or remove the animal from places or situations, or has committed other serious violations of this policy.
3. The animal is not housebroken. For purposes of this policy, “housebroken” means that the animal is trained to relieve its waste in an outdoor area or, if the animal cannot be taken outdoors through reasonable efforts by its handler, then in some designated indoor area that does not pose a sanitation risk to any persons on Rhodes premises.
4. The animal otherwise poses a risk to the health or safety of people or other service or emotional support animals. In determining whether an animal poses a risk to the health or safety of people or other service or emotional support animals, Rhodes will make an individualized assessment based on objective indications to ascertain the severity of the risk. Such indications include but are not limited to:
  - External signs of aggression, such as growling, biting or snapping, baring its teeth, or lunging; or
  - External signs of parasites on the animal (e.g., fleas, ticks), or other external signs of disease or bad health (e.g., diarrhea or vomiting).

An animal removal determination will be made by Student Accessibility Services in consultation with Residence Life, the student resident, and other parties as appropriate. If the owner fails to comply with the specified removal deadline, then Residence Life reserves the right to call Animal Control and report the student to Community Standards. Any removal of an approved animal may be appealed to the Vice President of Student Life, as outlined in the Student Accessibility Services Procedures. If an approved

animal is removed from campus for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill their housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

### **Questions**

All student questions regarding service and emotional support animals on campus should be directed to Student Accessibility Services at 901-843-3815 or [accessibilityservices@rhodes.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@rhodes.edu).

All faculty, staff, or visitor questions regarding service and emotional support animals on campus should be directed to Human Resources at 901-843-3750 or [hr@rhodes.edu](mailto:hr@rhodes.edu).

5.10.2023