

## **SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE ANIMAL POLICY**

### **I. Purpose of the Policy**

Animals, including pets, are not permitted in Spartanburg Methodist College's buildings or residences with the exception of approved Service or Assistance Animals for individuals with disabilities. Spartanburg Methodist College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require the use of Service or Assistance Animals as a reasonable accommodation may be permitted to bring such animals on campus provided that they comply with Spartanburg Methodist College's policies regarding such animals. Students who seek to bring a Service or Assistance Animal to campus should first contact Accessibility Resources (AR). AR will determine, on a case-by-case basis and in collaboration with other offices on campus, whether to approve the student's request for a Service or Assistance Animal. In making this determination, AR will consider the needs of the student as well as the impact of the animal on the campus community. Students seeking to have a Service or Assistance Animal in housing should submit a request for review each academic year. A request for a Service or Assistance Animal should be submitted along with the student's application for housing. The animal should not be in residence prior to approval by AR. The approval of a request is animal-specific and is not transferable to another animal.

### **II. Definitions**

#### **A. Service Animal**

A "Service Animal" is any dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Other animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, do not qualify as Service Animals. (In some limited cases which generally are not applicable to Spartanburg Methodist College's campus, a miniature horse may be permitted as a Service Animal.) Examples of work or tasks provided by a Service Animal includes but are not limited to guiding a person with impaired vision, alerting a person with a hearing impairment, pulling a wheelchair, and alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure. Service Animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a Service Animal has been trained to provide must directly relate to the functional limitations of the person's disability. Animals whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as Service Animals.

## B. Assistance Animal

“Assistance Animals” (sometimes referred to as “emotional support animals”, “social or therapy animals”, “companion animals”, and/or “comfort animals”) are animals that are not Service Animals and that perform tasks and/or provide service, assistance, or emotional support which alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of an individual’s disability. Assistance Animals may not assist with daily living tasks and are not required to have received special training. Assistance Animals stay on in residence; they do not accompany an individual with a disability at all times (i.e., Assistance Animals do not attend class, enter the library, or visit other residence halls or dining halls).

## C. Pet

“Pet” is an animal kept for ordinary use and companionship. A pet is not considered a Service or an Assistance Animal. Pets are not covered by this policy. Individuals are not permitted to keep or bring Pets on Spartanburg Methodist College property or in Spartanburg Methodist College housing.

## D. Individual with a Disability

An Individual with a Disability is a person who, (1) has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more of a person’s major life activities or, (2) has a record of having or being perceived as having a physical or mental impairment.

## E. Approved Animal

An “Approved Animal” is a Service Animal or an Assistance Animal that has been approved to live in Spartanburg Methodist College’s housing as a reasonable accommodation under this policy.

## F. Owner

The “Owner” is the student who has requested the accommodation and has received approval to bring the “Approved Animal” on campus.

# III. Procedures

## A. Service Animals

Requests to keep a Service Animal in housing should be directed to AR. Requests should be submitted as soon as possible before the semester the animal is requested and by the deadlines specified by Spartanburg Methodist College. Requests submitted after the deadline or after the student is already placed in housing may take 30 days or more;

accordingly, students should submit their requests to AR at least 30 days prior to the date the student would like to bring the animal to housing.

When the need for a Service Animal is not readily apparent, Spartanburg Methodist College may request additional documentation in support of the request for the purpose of determining whether an animal qualifies as a Service Animal, namely: (1) that the Service Animal is required due to the functional limitations of the requesting individual's disability; and (2) what work or tasks the Service Animal has been trained to perform for the benefit of the owner. [Any necessary documentation must be dated within the last 12 months.]

If the request for a Service Animal is approved, the requesting student will be asked to acknowledge in writing the receipt of and their agreement to comply with this policy. If approved, Residence Life staff will also make a reasonable effort to notify other residents that a Service Animal will be in the living area. This notice will be limited to information about the animal's presence; there will be no disclosure of the student's disability. Other resident students with medical conditions who are affected by the animals (e.g., severe allergies, respiratory diseases) are asked to contact AR if they have a health or safety-related concern about exposure to a Service Animal. Such affected students may be eligible for a disability accommodation when living in proximity to a Service Animal. AR and Residence Life staff will collaborate as necessary to resolve conflicts related to a Service Animal. Staff members will consider the needs and/or accommodations of all resident students involved. Residence Life may relocate the Owner and the Approved Animal if necessary to accommodate other students with medical condition(s) who are affected by animals or in other circumstances as deemed appropriate at the sole discretion of Spartanburg Methodist College.

Service Animals may travel freely with their Owner throughout Spartanburg Methodist College housing and other areas of Spartanburg Methodist College. A Service Animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the Service Animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the Service Animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

#### B. Assistance Animals

Requests to keep an Assistance Animal in housing must be directed to AR. Requests should be submitted as soon as possible before the semester the animal is requested and by the deadlines specified by Spartanburg Methodist College Residence Life. Deadlines for housing requests will be

published by the Spartanburg Methodist College Residence Life department on their webpage and through other electronic forms of communication. Requests submitted after the deadline or after the student is already placed in housing may take 20 days or more; accordingly, students should submit their requests to AR at least 30 days prior to the date the student would like to bring the animal to housing.

When the need for an Assistance Animal is not readily apparent, Spartanburg Methodist College may request additional official written documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional, including, (1) verification of the student's disability, (2) a statement on how the animal serves as an accommodation for the documented disability, and (3) a statement on how the need for the Assistance Animal relates to the ability of the student to use and gain benefit from Spartanburg Methodist College housing. [Any necessary documentation must be dated within the last 12 months.]

If the request for an Assistance Animal is approved, the requesting student will be asked to acknowledge in writing that he/she has received and agrees to comply with this policy. If approved, Residence Life staff will also make a reasonable effort to notify the other residents that an Assistance Animal will be in the living area. This notice will be limited to information about the animal's presence; there will be no disclosure of the student's disability. Other resident students with medical condition(s) who are affected by animals (e.g., severe allergies, respiratory diseases) are asked to contact AR if they have a health or safety-related concern about exposure to an Assistance Animal. Such affected students may be eligible for a disability accommodation when living in proximity to an Assistance Animal. AR and Residence Life staff will collaborate as necessary to resolve conflicts related to an Assistance Animal. Staff members may relocate the Owner and Approved Animal if necessary to accommodate other students with medical conditions(s) who are affected by animals or in other circumstances as deemed appropriate in the sole discretion of Spartanburg Methodist College.

Assistance Animals must be contained within the privately-assigned residential area (room or suite) at all times except as otherwise expressly provided. When transported outside the private residential area, Assistance Animals must be in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness. When outside the residence, the Owner of an Assistance Animal shall carry the letter provided by AR identifying the animal as an Approved Animal.

#### IV. Responsibilities of the Owner of Service or Assistance Animal

- A. The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the Approved Animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause

difficulties for students who reside there. In addition, the Approved Animal must not pose a threat to the health, safety, or property of anyone in the Spartanburg Methodist College community. If Spartanburg Methodist College determines that the Approved Animal threatens the health, safety, or property of anyone in the Spartanburg Methodist College community, or that the Approved Animal is adversely affecting Spartanburg Methodist College's programs and activities, Spartanburg Methodist College will take appropriate measures, up to and including a determination that the Approved Animal may no longer be permitted on campus.

- B. The Owner must always be in control of the animal. The care and supervision of the Approved Animal is solely the responsibility of the Owner. The Owner is responsible for ensuring the safety of the Approved Animal and Spartanburg Methodist College community. The Owner must not have any past or current student conduct issues that may impact the Owner's ability to care for and effectively control an animal. If Spartanburg Methodist College determines that such conduct issues are negatively impacting the safety of the Approved Animal or the Spartanburg Methodist College community, Spartanburg Methodist College will take appropriate measures, up to and including a determination that the Approved Animal may no longer be permitted on campus.
- C. The Owner is financially responsible for the actions of the Approved Animal, including bodily injury or property damage. The Owner's responsibility covers but is not limited to replacement of furniture, carpet, windows, wall coverings, and the like. The Owner is expected to cover these costs at the time of repair.
- D. The Owner is responsible for any expenses incurred for cleaning above and beyond a standard cleaning or for repairs to Spartanburg Methodist College premises that are assessed after the student and animal vacate the residence. Spartanburg Methodist College shall have the right to bill the Owner's account for unmet obligations.
- E. The Owner is responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the Approved Animal's waste and when appropriate, must toilet the Approved Animal in areas designated by Spartanburg Methodist College consistent with the reasonable capacity of the Owner. Designated areas include any grassy areas of campus, with the exception of athletic practice and playing fields. Animal waste must be scooped and placed in leak-proof plastic bags and disposed of in proper waste receptacles. Indoor animal waste such as cat litter must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outdoor trash dumpsters. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces.

- F. The Owner is financially responsible for any expense of pest treatment that is beyond routine pest control. The Owner's residence may be inspected for pests as needed and the Residence Life staff will schedule any such inspection. If pests are detected upon inspection, the residence or residence hall will be treated using Spartanburg Methodist College-approved pest control methods and the Owner is expected to cover these costs at the time they are incurred.
- G. The Owner understands the Spartanburg Methodist College may use pesticides, pest-control devices, de-icing material, cleaning supplies, and other material for the maintenance and operation of housing and the Owner acknowledges and agrees that Spartanburg Methodist College is not responsible for any harm to Approved Animals caused by such materials.
- H. The Owner is responsible for the overall health and well-being of the Approved Animal. This includes but is not limited to:
1. Vaccinations: In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the Approved Animal must be immunized against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing requirements must be followed.
  2. Approved Animals to be housed in Spartanburg Methodist College 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 Approved Animal's health. Spartanburg Methodist College has the authority to direct that the Approved Animal receive timely veterinary attention (e.g., if fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected through inspection (as per Section IV-F above) and to require documentation demonstrating that the Approved Animal has been treated.
  3. Owners are responsible for the routine care of the Approved Animal with appropriate food, clean water, exercise, and mental stimulation, and grooming where necessary. Physical abuse of an Approved Animal is a violation of this policy and may be a violation of local and state law. Spartanburg Methodist College reserves the right to intervene on behalf of an Approved Animal in situations of perceived abuse, neglect, a visible need for veterinary intervention, or for other concerns about the animal's well-being.
- I. Approved Animals must be taken with the student if he/she leaves campus for a prolonged period of time. Approved Animals may not be left unattended overnight in Spartanburg Methodist College housing.

