

Animals on Campus, Fall 2021

Please review these guidelines and policies and reply by email to Dr. Marcie Pospichal disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu that you understand and will comply with these policies and guidelines. Dr. Pospichal welcomes any questions and clarification before your final electronic agreement.

As a matter of community safety, Service Animals and Service Animals in Training may only reside in campus housing if the animal has successfully completed vaccinations required by Polk County, FL. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) must have completed the full Animal Approval process to reside in campus residences.

Please note: as requirements for social distancing and other COVID-related policies, the college will notify its Animal Handlers of these changes.

An animal may not reside on campus until the Animal Handler receives an email verifying approval from the Office for Accessibility Resources and Accommodation through Dr. Marcie Pospichal, Coordinator.

QUICK COVID GUIDANCE

1. Develop a plan right now for what to do if you have an Approved Animal, before you are quarantined
2. If you are going to quarantine at FSC's Leesburg Facility, arrange to immediately notify your Emergency Contact to gather and care for the animal. It is the Animal Handler's responsibility to make these arrangements. Or plan to board the animal. The animal must be placed within 12 hours.
3. If you are going to arrange for a non-FSC quarantine space and seek to keep your animal with you, be sure you will be able to transport food, water, crate, litter box, etc.
4. Service Animals will have broad access to quarantine and hospital experiences. However, a student must still be prepared to have food, water, crate, etc for the animal.
5. More COVID and ANIMAL guidance is below.

Animals on Campus: Service Animals

The college policy on the presence of Service Animals on campus and in the residence halls is aligned with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Service Animals may travel freely with their owner throughout most areas of campus and community living spaces although there may be individual exceptions in places where the presence of the animal may compromise a safe or sterile environment. The Service Animal must be controlled by leash or harness when in public, unless doing so would interfere with the Animal's service to its Handler. In addition, due to COVID safety protocol, animals and their Handlers **must maintain social distancing** (see below).

Service Animals in the classroom: Students who require the assistance of a Service Animal

in the classroom are invited to voluntarily notify SDS. Documentation is not required to have a Service Animal in the classroom. However, by registering a Service Animal in advance for classroom experiences, we will be able to alert professors to plan for Service Animal presence.

Animals on Campus: ESAs

Documentation requirements for ESAs: Relevant documentation of the need for an ESA in residential housing is as follows:

Student Eligibility:

- On letterhead, a document from a reliable, third-party, licensed evaluator that clearly identifies the symptoms of a mental health or psychiatric condition with a substantial impact on specific major life activities that rise to the level of a disability.
- Description of why an ESA is being requested as an accommodation for the disability and exactly how this accommodation will address/alleviate one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of the disability. There must be a point-to-point relationship or nexus between the disability impacts and the ESA.

Emotional Support Animal Eligibility:

Because ESAs will reside in a common living environment, before an animal can be approved to reside on campus, the SDS must evaluate the following up-to-date documentation:

- Animal Approval Required Documentation (as it applies to respective species)**
 - Current examination records from a licensed veterinarian
 - Record of rabies vaccine (applies to dogs & cats only)
 - Proof of flea or other relevant pest control
 - License certificate and tags (usually through the Polk County Sheriff's Office) (applies to dogs & cats only). If an animal is too young for all immunizations, the animal is not eligible to be an ESA.
 - Photo of the animal (full body)
 - Proof of ownership by student or family/guardian
 - EMERGENCY CONTACT: The name, address, phone number 1, and alternate phone number 2 for an Emergency Contact- a party who does not reside on campus but who is close enough to take over the care of the animal within 12 hours, in case of emergency (e.g., hospitalization, quarantine) or a student's departure from campus.

The college reserves the right to limit approval of proposed ESAs for additional reasons, including:

1. The space needed for the animal is too large for available assigned housing space
2. Similarly, due to residence hall room sizing and concerns about the health and safety of having multiple animals in a small space, generally, only one (1) animal is allowed in a single housing unit. If more than one student in a single housing unit has a disability-related need for an animal, one of those students may be asked to relocate to a different housing unit in order to avoid this problem.
3. The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment;

4. The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner;
5. The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date or is not otherwise meeting the city, county, and state ordinances pertaining to licensing and other requirements for animals;
6. The animal cannot be vaccinated or otherwise treated to prevent the potential transmission of zoonotic diseases

If particular accommodations are deemed unreasonable for an otherwise qualified student with a disability, SDS will continue the interactive process to explore alternative accommodations or adjustments that could provide an equivalent/reasonable outcome to student access.

❑ Additional Required Documentation and Steps Prior to ESA Approval

❑ Consent Waiver signed by Animal Handler so that roommates/space mates may be contacted about the possible presence of the animal

❑ Policy Review- all Animal Handlers must review, ask any questions about, and agree to abide by college "Animals on Campus" policies

❑ Roommate Agreements: The SDS will contact each roommate/space mate to determine if each individual agrees to- or declines to- reside with a prospective animal. 100% of fellow residents must agree to cohabitate with the animal before the animal can be cleared to reside in a specific location on campus.

❑ Final Housing Arrangements: If a student's existing roommates/space mates decline to reside with the animal, **the animal may not reside on campus until** (a) another residential community has agreed to reside with the animal; (b) failing locating such a welcoming residential community, the college is able to place the student in a single room; (c) the student is approved to become a Commuter student and reside off FSC property.

ESAs require prior written approval from the SDS or its designee, and may not be in college housing until such approval has been issued in writing, and a student may not move from one room to another before receiving college authorization to do so.

ESAs on campus: ESAs must be contained within the Animal Handler's assigned residential area (room, suite, or apartment), except when transported outside the residential area in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness for natural relief purposes. Upon approval of an ESA, over a Consent Waiver signed by the Animal Handler, Community Living, Campus Safety and other employees who will need to know to expect the presence of the animal (e.g., Facilities Maintenance) will be notified.

ESAs in Community Living spaces: A student requesting keeping an ESA as a disability accommodation in college housing must make a formal request to SDS. Unless being exercised/toileted outside, an ESA may only be in the Handler's room. It may not visit other residences or residential community spaces. Due to COVID safety protocol, animals and their Handlers **must maintain social distancing** (see below).

Upon approval of an ESA and the signing of a Consent Waiver, the student's roommate(s) or suitemate(s) will be notified (if applicable) to inform them that the ESA has been approved to reside in shared assigned living space and the college will seek agreement to cohabitate with the animal from the roommates. A student may decline to reside with an animal on any basis, and need not explain their decision. The college will work with the Animal Handler to find a welcoming residence but, if that proves impossible, the Animal Handler may be asked to keep the ESA off campus until residential placement can occur.

Animals on Campus: Service Animals in Training

In the State of Florida (statute 413), a Service Animal - while it is engaged in training- and a Service Animal in Training Handler of such an animal- while the Handler is engaged in training- have the same rights as a fully trained Service Animal, and a Service Animal Trainer has all the rights and responsibilities of a disabled student with a Service Animal. A Service Animal in Training is not a pet. Due to COVID safety protocol, animals and their Handlers **must maintain social distancing** (see below).

ANIMAL HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES (applies to Handlers of Service Animals, ESAs, and Service Animals in Training)

In Community Living spaces:

- The Handler is responsible for assuring that the Approved Animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there.
- It is expected that a Service Animal will generally be with its owner at all times and locations. Other approved animals must be properly crated in the residence hall room if the Handler is not with the animal. This will facilitate timely responses of Facilities Maintenance to work orders and will ensure quick access to the room by emergency personnel, if necessary, in the absence of the Handler.
- The Handler is financially responsible for any cleaning needed or damage caused by their Approved Animal beyond standard cleaning and reasonable wear and tear, to the same extent that it charges other individuals for such cleaning and damages. As is true for all residential students, the college practices ongoing oversight of residential maintenance and safety throughout the school year and such charges could arise during the school year or after the student and animal vacate the residence. The college shall have the right to bill the student account of the Approved Animal owner for unmet obligations.
- The Animal Handler's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks, and other pests. 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 Animal Handler will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment beyond standard pest management in the residence halls. The college

shall have the right to bill the student account of the Approved Animal owner for unmet obligations under this provision.

- The Handler's residence may also be inspected for other reasons, including concern about the Approved Animal's well-being.
- Approved Animals may not be left unattended for a prolonged period (generally no more than 8 hours) and may not be left overnight in housing to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the student if they leave campus overnight or for a more prolonged period of time, or the Handler must make other arrangements for the Approved Animal's care (e.g., boarding; contacting the Emergency Contact to gather and care for the Approved Animal). During college holidays and breaks, animals are expected to be housed off-campus. For more information, see "Holidays" and "Hospitalization", below.
- FSC personnel are not required to provide care or food for any Approved Animal, including but not limited to removing the animal during an emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm.
- **The Animal Handler is solely responsible for the care of the Approved Animal.** Other students may not be requested to assist their fellow student's Assistance Animal.
- Community living has the ability to relocate the Handler and Approved Animal as necessary according to current contractual agreements.
- The Handler must notify Student Disability Services in writing within 48 hours if the Approved Animal is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an Approved Animal, the owner must file a new Animal Approval request.

Animal maintenance and control requirements:

- Care and supervision of the animal are the responsibility of the individual who benefits from the Approved Animal's use. The Handler is required to maintain control of the animal at all times.
- When the Approved Animal is outside the owner's residential space, the Approved Animal must be kept on a leash or in a carrier unless doing so prevents the Approved Animal from rendering accommodation assistance. Due to COVID safety protocol, animals and their Handlers **must maintain social distancing** (see below).
- The Handler 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. Waste must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. It is not to be disposed of into inside trash receptacles or into the college's plumbing/rest room systems.
- The Handler must ensure that the Approved Animal does not disrupt classroom learning, residential living, social events, or other activities that are the right of all Florida Southern College students.

Animals on Campus: Emergency-On-Campus Situations

In the event of a campus emergency, emergency responders will be aware that Service

Animals, ESAs, and Service Animals in Training may try to communicate the need for help. The animal may become disoriented from the smell of smoke in a fire or laboratory emergency, from sirens or wind noise, or from shaking and moving ground. The Animal Handler or animal may be confused due to the stressful situation. The emergency responders will be made aware that the animal is trying to be protective and, in its confusion, is not to automatically be considered harmful. The responders will make every effort to keep the animal with its Handler. This is particularly true for Animal Handlers of Service Animals where the animal's proximity to the Handler may be necessary for the Handler's safety and well-being. However, the responders' first efforts likely will be toward the Handler. This may necessitate leaving the animal behind in certain emergency evacuation situations.

Animals on Campus: Student Illness and Hospitalization

Generally, Service Animals are allowed to accompany their owner to a hospital facility. However, in case hospital access was to be altered due to COVID issues, every student with an Approved Animal should develop an Emergency Response Plan to ensure the care of their animal's care in case illness, including COVID infection or exposure quarantining, or injury should prevent you from meeting your animal care responsibilities. This includes arranging for an Emergency Contact to provide the animal's care- this could be a nearby relative or an off-campus friend- or transporting the animal to a veterinarian or other animal boarding facility. The college will keep this contact on record but it is generally the student's responsibility to arrange for emergency contact and animal care. If the emergency contact cannot be reached or declines to assist, the college may release the animal to an animal shelter. Roommates or FSC employees cannot be made responsible for the care of another student's Approved Animal. If an animal is abandoned at college, the college may have to release the animal to an animal shelter.

COVID and Animals on Campus

We are writing to you because you have a Service Animal or an approved Emotional Support Animal (ESA) or Service-Animal-in-Training in the residence halls and we want to inform you how the college's rules on safe distancing during the public health emergency apply to you and your animal companion. Our goal is to keep you, your animal companion and the community safe by providing reliable information and clear expectations. The primary sources of the information are:

- [Guidance for Handlers of Service and Therapy Animals](#) Center For Disease Control
- [Recommendations for intake of companion animals from households where humans with COVID-19 are present](#) American Veterinary Medical Association

- Residential Accommodation Policies Including Animals Florida Southern College
<https://www.flsouthern.edu/FSC/media/other/student-support/FSC-Service-and-Assistance-Animals.pdf>

Guidance for Service Animals, ESAs, and Service Animals in Training in Residence at Florida Southern College

While dogs and cats are known to contract a variant of Coronavirus, the risk of transmission from animals to humans is not fully established. The college's Residential Accommodations Policies Including Animals remain in place for all animals in residence.

You must update the emergency contact information you provided for your animal with the Office of Student Disability Services through Dr. Marcie Pospichal disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu. The contact must be able to pick up your animal within **12 hours** if you are unable to care for it.

We recommend that you maintain 2 weeks of food in your room since the animal food supply chain may be disrupted due to COVID 19. **Have your own copies of the animal's veterinary records, including rabies vaccine, license, and tags in case your animal must be temporarily boarded.**

Service Animals, ESAs, or Service-Animals-in-Training need to be included in social distancing. When you are in the presence of others with your animal, even if it is off-duty, do not allow petting or other close interactions with others. You must maintain 6 feet of distance whenever possible.

***If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will be able to choose to go to FSC's Leesburg Facility or may select your own location to quarantine.

***Because shuttle space to/from, and living space at, FSC's Leesburg Facility will be limited, **ESAs (along with their food, water, crate, litter box, etc.) will not be transported to the Leesburg Facility.** Exceptions must and will be made for Service Animals.

Recall, a fellow FSC community member cannot be expected or permitted to expose themselves to potential infection by entering the quarantining space to handle the animal. **You will need to either make appropriate arrangements for your Emergency Contact person to gather and care for your animal, you will need to quarantine in your own selected non-FSC location, or you will need to send your animal elsewhere for the duration of your isolation (please see below).** Advanced planning is necessary as the college's staff and fellow students cannot care for your animal.

- Any individual or service agency you arrange to care for your animal must agree to abide by the public safety measures implemented by the college for both the campus in general and the specific requirements of the building where you are residing during the required isolation. These include:
 - Participating in health screening and contact tracing;
 - Minimizing contact between yourself and the animal care provider;
 - Properly wearing the required personal protective equipment (PPE) which may include:
 - Gloves

- Mask
- The use of protective clothing, such as gowns or coveralls that can be laundered and dedicated footwear is an alternative that may be preferable to preserve disposable PPE.
- Animals should be kept on a lead no more than six feet in length for elimination and exercise;
- Direct contact with other animals or persons should be avoided;
- Feces should be collected using gloved hands or a bag and disposed of immediately in the building's main, outdoor trash receptacles.

If you have any questions please contact Dr. Marcie Pospichal, Coordinator for Student Disability Services, disabilityservices@flsouthern.edu 863-680-4197 or Romel Boiser, residencelife@flsouthern.edu 863-680-4206.

The local Lakeland, FL animal **boarding facilities** and **pet-friendly hotels** identified below are not specifically recommended or warranted by the college, but could be opportunities for animal care should your Emergency Contact person be unable to collect and care for your animal or if you decide to opt out of quarantining at FSC's Leesburg Facility. Distances are from the FSC campus.

Boarding Facilities

Southern Paw & Pet Resort, 760 Creative Dr., 863-940-2883. 6 miles south on S. FL Ave.

<http://southernpawsresort.com/services/boarding>

Parkway Pet Resort, 2826 Franklin St., 863-665-9165. 4 miles south on 98 S.

<http://www.parkwaypetresort.com/>

Four Paws Only, 2215 E. Edgewood Dr., 863-667-3113. 3 miles south on 98 S.

<https://www.fourpawsonlyfl.com/>

All Creatures Great and Small, 1019 W. Pipkin Rd., 863-646-5683, 6 miles south on So. Florida Ave.-turn right on Pipkin Ave.

[Lakeland Veterinarian | All Creatures Animal Clinic Florida \(allcreaturesfl.com\)](http://www.allcreaturesfl.com)

Some Pet-Friendly Lakeland Hotels

LaQuinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham, East, 4315 Lakeland Park Dr., (863) 815-0606, 5.7 miles north of campus

[La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham Lakeland East Rooms & Rates \(wyndhamhotels.com\)](http://www.wyndhamhotels.com)

Extended Stay America Premier Suites, 4360 Lakeland Park Dr., (863) 904-2050, 4.7 miles north of campus

Lakeland, FL - Premier Suites Lakeland-I-4 Hotel | Extended Stay America

Animals on Campus: College Holidays and Breaks

During a college holiday or break in which the Animal Handler will be away from campus (Fall Break, Winter/Christmas Break, Spring Break, Summer Break), it is expected the Animal Handler will remove the animal from campus. There is no exception to this rule and Animal Handlers found in non-compliance will be subject to disciplinary action through the Office of Accountability. If animal is abandoned at college, the college may release the animal to an animal shelter.

Animals on Campus: Animal Behavior Situations

Animal Handlers are responsible for the healthy upkeep and safety of their animals. One way to promote animal safety is by keeping them under the Handler's control at all times. Animal injuries that result from a Handler's failure to maintain control of the animal will be the responsibility of the Animal Handler.

Similarly, in cases where the Animal Handler's animal is seen to be an immediate threat to other persons or animals, the college may deem it necessary to contact Polk County Animal Control and have the animal removed from campus.

Animals repeatedly out of the Handler's control may be permanently removed from campus.

All liability for the actions of animals (bites, scratches, property damage, etc.) is the responsibility of the Animal Handler. Consequently, all Animal Handlers are encouraged to have proof of liability insurance that covers themselves as college residents and the actions of their animals.

Section VII: REMOVAL OF APPROVED ANIMAL

Florida Southern College may exclude/remove an Approved Animal when:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others, including college property;
- The animal is not housebroken;
- The Animal Handler is incapable of, or fails to exercise, complete control and care of the animal;
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a college program;
- The Animal Handler does not comply with the Animal Handler's Responsibilities set forth above; or
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the college community.

We are happy to welcome Service Animals, ESAs, and Service Animals in Training- and their Handlers- to the FSC community. Thank you for helping make this relationship thrive!