

Student Life

Service Animal Policy

2026-2027 Academic Year

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Policy Overview

This policy speaks to the presence of service animals on campus, as defined by the Department of Justice, under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those wishing to have other animals on campus should contact the Office of Student Disability Services for information about restrictions, or for referral to other offices on campus.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines services animals as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.” Examples of such work tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with a mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or tasks a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. A service dog can be any breed or size. It might wear specialized equipment such as a backpack, harness, or special collar or leash, but this is not a legal requirement. If a dog meets this definition, it is considered a service animal regardless of whether it has been licensed or certified by a state or local government or a training program.

The ADA further states that “dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.”

The ADA allows service animals accompanying persons with disabilities to be anywhere that is open to the public on College premises. College premises shall mean any land and/or facility owned, leased, rented and/or occupied by Florida Southern College. There may be individual exceptions in places where the presence of the service animal may compromise safety or a sterile environment and/or interfere with the fundamental nature of the activities being conducted in which the service animal would not be permitted.

Voluntary Registration of Service Animals While on Campus

For those individuals who are enrolled in courses who would like to voluntarily register their service animal with FSC, please contact Student Disability Services at 863-680-4900 (Carlisle

Rogers Building). As stated, this is voluntary but may aid one in accessing the College premises. Registration is not available for visitors to campus.

Inquiries

The individual's disability may not be visible. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides and the owner has chosen not to voluntarily register their service animal with Student Disability Services, only limited inquiries are allowed. College personnel may inquire about two questions in determining the validity of the presence of the animal: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of your disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? College personnel cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

General Responsibilities and Requirements of the Service Animal and Owner

- The animal cannot pose a direct threat to the health and safety of persons while on the College's premises.
- Local ordinances regarding animals apply to service animals, including requirements for immunization, licensing, noise, restraint, and at-large animals
- The owner must always be in full control of the animal. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed or tether, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- The owner is responsible for cleaning up after the animal's waste and fluids and disposing of such in outside trash containers only. Waste disposal via College plumbing is prohibited. The owner should always carry equipment sufficient to clean up and properly dispose of the animal's waste and fluids. Owners who are not physically able to pick up and dispose of the animal's waste and fluids are responsible for making all

necessary arrangements for assistance. The College is not responsible for these services. Additionally, the animal is not to be bathed or its cage/crate, or bedding cleaning using College-owned housing or College facilities.

- The owner is liable for any damage caused by the animal.
- The owner is responsible for instructing others on appropriate interactions with the animal and setting clear expectations.
- The owner may not ask anyone else to care for the service animal.
- The owner may not be apart from the service animal greater than 8 hours.

Exclusions

A service animal may be excluded from any authorized area and its owner may be subject to disciplinary action if, including, but not limited to:

- The service animal displays aggressive or disruptive behavior or noises, and effective action is not taken to control it; unless said noise/behavior(s) are part of the needed disability service to the owner;
- The service animal is not housebroken;
- The service animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
- The service animal is not in good health, well-groomed, or cared for;
- The service animal infringes inappropriately into other's personal space;
- The owner intentionally uses the service animal to block identified fire/emergency exits.

Removal of a Service Animal

The College will base such determinations upon the consideration of the behavior of the particular animal at issue, and not on speculation or fear about the harm or damages an animal may cause. Any removal of the animal will be done in consultation with Student Disability Services. The owner will be afforded all rights of due process and appeal as outline in that process.

In the event that restriction or removal of a service animal is determined to be necessary, every effort will be made to assure that the individual still has access to the programs, services, or activities of the College without the animal.

Major Violations

Major violations may result in immediate removal of the animal. These could include: animal lunging, growling, or biting; failing to maintain dominion and control over the animal; excessive barking, not being housebroken, or evidence of mistreatment or abuse of the animal. This includes abandoning the animal to the care of another for 8 or more hours.

School Breaks and Holidays – The owner is expected to keep the animal with them during college breaks and holidays, including Spring, Summer, and Winter breaks.

Minor Violations

The first verified occurrence of a minor violation, such as whining or flea and pest infestation, will result in a meeting with the Office of Student Conduct. If the event is verified, this will result in a “Failure to Comply” charge against the owner. The owner must supply a written agreement to remain in compliance with the College’s Service Animal Policy & Agreement including a plan for preventing this, or any other, violation. The student will be placed on probation with the condition that the second verified incident may result in the animal’s removal from campus.

Student Conduct Timetable

A student notified by the Office of Student Conduct of a Service Animal violation will receive email notification to set up a Conduct meeting, generally within 48 hours or at the College’s discretion.

The College reserves the right, in its discretion, to modify Service Animal sanctions, including fines or other reasonable determinations.

Reassessment of Animal Standing as a Service Animal

By definition, Service Animals are medically necessary to provide trained work or tasks to mitigate the owner’s disability symptoms. If the owner leaves the service animal on campus for

8 hours or longer, the College may reassess the animal's medical necessity and standing as a bona fide Service Animal.

If the animal is dismissed from the College, or is determined to have lost standing as a Service Animal, the animal becomes a "pet". Pets are not permitted at the College and consequences associated with a pet violation may be implemented.

Should the Service Animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill their housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

Student Complaint Procedure

Complaints arising under this policy shall be handled under the provisions of the Student Disability Services Grievance Procedure.

The College reserves the right to modify this policy as needed. For additional information concerning the use of a service animal or other accommodations and services, please contact Student Disability Services at 863-680-4900 or visit the Student Disability Services website at <https://www.flsouthern.edu/campus-offices/student-disability-services/home.aspx>

Service Animal Checklist: Required Documentation for Animal Approval

Before an animal will be approved to reside on campus, Student Disability Services must evaluate the following up-to-date documentation:

- ☐ Current examination records from a licensed veterinarian
- ☐ Record of rabies vaccine
- ☐ Proof of flea or other relevant pest control
- ☐ License certificate and tags
- ☐ Full body photo of the animal
- ☐ Photo of crate/kennel
- ☐ Proof of ownership by student or family/guardian
- ☐ Emergency Contact
 - The Owner must identify and provide contact information for an Emergency Contact who does not reside in College-owned housing and who will be responsible for taking charge of the ESA should the Owner be unable to care for the animal in College-owned housing. This Emergency Contact must be prepared to remove the animal from College-owned housing within 12 hours of notification. If the Emergency Contact cannot/will not pick up the ESA, the ESA will be removed to a local boarding facility and boarded at the Owner's expense.
- ☐ Signed Service Animal Policy
 - The Policy must be reviewed with the student by a member of the Office of Student Disability Services, either in person or Zoom, with a preference for in-person review prior to signing. A link will be provided to set up an appointment.
- ☐ Signed Consent Waiver
 - The Consent Waiver must be reviewed with the student by a member of the Office of Student Disability Services, either in person or through Zoom, with a preference for in-person review, prior to signing. A link will be provided to set up an appointment.