

# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL POLICY

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## Policy 3.85

### I. Purpose

Glen Oaks Community College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to persons with mental or psychiatric disabilities and fulfilling obligations under State and Federal law and the Fair Housing Act. This policy governs the use of emotional support animals on campus and in student housing.

### II. Policy Statement

Persons with verifiable mental or psychiatric disabilities may seek an emotional support animal consistent with the provisions of this policy.

### III. Definitions

Emotional support animal: a companion animal that provides therapeutic benefit to an individual with a disability. Unlike service animals, emotional support animals are not individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

### IV. Emotional Support Animals on Campus

Unlike a service animal, an emotional support animal is not granted access to places of public accommodation. Under the federal Fair Housing Act (FHA), however, an emotional support animal is viewed as a reasonable accommodation in a housing unit that has a "no pets" rule for its residents.

Students who wish to request the use of an emotional support animal to help alleviate the symptoms of a disability must make the request in writing to the Support Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSSD), located in Student Services. Students must complete a DSS Student Application at least 30 days in advance of the desired occupancy of the animal. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Students must explain how the reasonable accommodation helps or mitigates symptoms of the disability. While the student is not required to disclose the disability, he or she is required to provide acceptable documentation from a doctor or other health professional. This documentation, the Disability Verification form for Emotional Support Animals, must state that the animal indeed provides emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of an existing disability. Documentation must be provided for each support animal requested. A new DSS Student Application and a Disability Verification Form for Emotional Support Animals must be submitted to the SSSD Office each academic year.

### V. General Requirements

Emotional support animals on campus must comply with all state and local licensure and vaccination requirements. Animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered. Emotional support animals cannot be juveniles and will need to be altered before they are able to live in housing. Animals are not to be on college property until the application is approved.

Due to the size of the campus suites, the weight limit for the animal will be 50 lbs. to ensure space for the animal and the other students living in the suite.

The care and supervision of an emotional support animal is the responsibility of the individual who uses the animal's service. The individual must maintain control of the animal at all times. Emotional support animals are the full responsibility of the owner. The student is responsible for the cleanup of all animal waste and for any damage caused by the animal. College officials and staff may designate animal toileting areas. If a student is neglecting an emotional support animal, and it rises to a level where the animal is endangered, it may become a criminal matter. Emotional support animals are not exempt from state animal neglect laws. If any animal is being neglected, local law enforcement or animal control may intervene.

The College may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on the animals depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.

### VI. Dispute Resolution Procedure

Disputes or disagreements about a disability determination, appropriateness of an accommodation, or an animal restriction should first be raised with the SSSD office. If the matter cannot be resolved, a dispute resolution should be submitted to the Vice President of Student Services.

### VII. Policy Implementation

The SSSD Office is responsible for implementing this policy. Success requires the cooperation of all students, staff, and faculty.

Adopted by Board of Trustees 6/15/17, revised 8/11/22, reviewed 3/9/23