

## **Guidelines and Student Request Form for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) in College Housing For the 2024-2025 Academic Year**

Warren Willson College Housing recognizes that there are some circumstances where a student with a documented disability that substantially limits a major life function may seek permission for an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) according to the Fair Housing Act. An Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is not limited to a specific type of animal and is not required to have had special training but is part of a mental health treatment plan to provide emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a person's existing disability. ESAs authorized as a housing accommodation are only permitted to be in the student's individual residence hall room and are not approved to be taken into classrooms, campus buildings, other students' residences, residence common areas, on school related trips, or campus venues such as dining and athletic facilities. Students who wish to have an ESA in their residence must contact the Office of Disability Access and follow the procedures set forth to request housing accommodations.

### REQUEST PROCEDURES

Any Warren Willson College student who seeks to have an ESA in college housing must complete the following process **before** bringing any animal into campus housing. Individuals with a disability who reside or intend to reside in College Housing and who wish to request the accommodation of having an Emotional Support Animal in their residence must contact the Office of Disability Access and follow the procedures set forth in these Guidelines for Requesting an Emotional Support Animal in College Housing:

1. Read and review the Guidelines for Emotional Support Animals in College Housing.
2. Complete the student portion of Request for Emotional Support Animal in College Housing form and return it to the Office of Disability Access.
3. Important Dates: Requests for an ESA as a housing accommodation along with supporting health care provider documentation must be submitted by these dates:

March 15, 2024 for academic year 2024/2025 - Continuing Students

June 15, 2024 for academic year 2024/2025- New Students

4. The college requires information from a qualified licensed professional healthcare provider who is familiar with the student's clinical history and is responsible for the treatment of the student's disability, including the intentional use of an ESA to address or alleviate the effects of specific functional limitations. It is required that the documentation be current from a student's qualified healthcare provider (*who is not a relative of the student*) practicing in the State of North Carolina or from the student's home state. The qualified healthcare provider must complete the Professional Documentation for Student Request for Emotional Support Animal. Access the link to this form here:

5. Letters and certificates purchased via commercial internet sites are not viewed as an acceptable source of information.

“The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been asked to investigate websites that purport to provide documentation from a health care provider in support of requests for an ESA. The websites in question offer documentation that is not reliable for purposes of determining whether an individual has a disability or disability-related need for an ESA because the website operators and health care professionals who consult with them lack the personal knowledge that is necessary to make such determinations.”

6. Review: The Disability Access Review Committee will review the completed request along with supporting professional documentation to determine eligibility for a requested emotional support animal. Students should expect to be informed of a decision status regarding their request via email.
7. If the third party returns the Verification Form or other documentation without sufficient information for the Disability Access Review Committee to determine whether an accommodation is necessary, we will inform the individual in writing of the insufficiency of the verification and may request additional information, including speaking directly with the individual supplying the third-party verification. The individual making the request for accommodation must cooperate with the Office of Disability Access in a timely manner in providing all required information to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary.
8. Choice of ESA: Emotional Support Animals are not limited to dogs, but the College reserves the right to limit approval of proposed ESAs to domestic animals that pose only mitigable health or safety concerns and do not significantly disrupt the residence hall living environment for others. Other factors that may be considered in determining whether the presence of an animal is reasonable include the following:
  - a. Dogs must be a minimum of 6 months in age, housebroken, spayed or neutered, and have received their first rabies vaccination before they can be approved. The College has determined that the residence hall setting is not an appropriate environment in which to raise a young puppy.
  - b. Animals known to carry zoonotic diseases that cannot be reasonably controlled are not permitted.
  - c. Heating devices are not permitted.
  - d. The size of the animal and its crate must be reasonable for the space allowed. Aggressive behavior or creating excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear will result in an animal needing to be removed.
9. A student who is found to be eligible for an ESA accommodation must complete and submit registration requirements before being permitted to bring any animal on campus.
10. Student athletes or any student who participates in a program requiring overnight and extended travel must have established off-campus care. Off-campus care for the ESA must be secured when a student is away from campus overnight or when away from campus for extended hours.

### POLICY SUMMARY & CARE GUIDELINES

Before completing a request for an ESA, please review the following expectations that are part of the Housing Contract. Sign the bottom of this page to verify understanding of these summary guidelines:

- Animals are not allowed to be taken into campus housing until the owner has been approved through the Office of Disability Access and the Disability Access Review Committee and the ESA Registration requirements are complete for approval of the animal.
- A request for an ESA cannot be processed until any unauthorized animal is removed.
- Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are only approved for the student's specific residence and are not allowed in other campus venues (ie classrooms, library, dining services, athletic facilities, friend's campus residence, etc.)
- Owners must ensure prompt cleanup and hygienic disposal of the ESA's waste.
- ESAs may not be left in the residence overnight or left in the care of other students on campus during the owner's absence.
- ESAs are not authorized to travel with athletic teams or with groups attending other school sponsored activities. The student who participates on an athletic team or other school-related travel functions must make arrangements in advance for a reliable off-campus caregiver for an ESA for any overnight and/or extended hours care.
- Dogs and cats must be at least 6 months of age and be previously spayed/neutered.
- Dogs must be completely housebroken. Use of training pads is not an acceptable substitute for waste management.
- Dogs must be crate trained. ESAs must be crated or contained while the owner is away from the room. Owners should not be away from their room for extended periods of time that will not allow for proper care and treatment of the animal.
- The ESA must have documentation of current state and county required immunizations.
- Owners of dogs need to follow a routine tick/flea treatment plan.
- Students bringing ESAs to campus are fully responsible for the animal's behavior, and for any damage done. If the ESA is disruptive to the living environment for others (for example, barking or other loud noises, or significant odor from litter boxes or cages), or if there is damage done to college facilities, the ESA will need to be removed from the premises within 48 hours of notice being given. The student will be responsible for paying for property damage.
- Any display of aggression can result in a requirement for the animal to be removed from campus.
- Violations of these expectations and others listed in the Emotional Support Animal in College Housing Guidelines will result in the owner having to remove the animal from campus.

My signature indicates that I am aware of these procedures and requirements for requesting an ESA in College Housing.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name:

WWC STUDENT ID#

Date of Birth:

Phone number:

WWC email address:

Residence Hall Address:

Student (Full) Name:

Per the federal Fair Housing Act, students may qualify for an ESA in housing accommodation if they are substantially limited by a psychological or emotional disability. What is the mental health disability for which you have been treated? (Please be specific):

Please explain your need for an ESA, based on your disability. How would having an ESA address your specific functional limitations?

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Please describe the animal you intend to bring to campus as an ESA, if approved: type of animal/breed, size, & age

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- Do you participate in athletics or any other college sponsored activity that involves travel?  
Circle one: No / Yes      If yes, what is the activity? \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, have you been made aware of the extent and frequency of off-campus travel involved and would you be able, if approved, to arrange for required off-campus care for an ESA when away from campus?  
Circle one: No / Yes

By signing below, I certify that the information provided on this form is correct. I understand that eligibility for specific accommodations/services is determined on an individual basis and only with supportive documentation. I authorize the Office of Disability Access to disclose information regarding any approved accommodations with WWC faculty and staff directly involved on a need to know basis.\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please submit this documentation to:

- Preferred method: Scan as attachment and email to [disabilityaccess@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:disabilityaccess@warren-wilson.edu)
- Via mail to: Warren Wilson College  
Office of Disability Access  
WWC-6322 , PO Box 9000  
Asheville, NC 28815

All documentation and records provided will be maintained in a confidential manner as outlined in the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Disability information is shared only on a limited basis within the college and then only when there is compelling reason for the individual seeking the information to have knowledge of a specific aspect of this confidential information. Disability-related records are maintained separately from academic files and are excluded from free access under FERPA.