

# **Calvin University Emotional Support Animal Protocol**

## **I. Purpose**

Calvin University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities in compliance with applicable State and Federal laws. This policy governs the use of emotional support animals on campus by persons with documented disabilities.

This protocol does not apply to Service Animals. For information on service animals, see "Calvin University Service Animal Protocol."

## **II. Protocol Statement**

Emotional support animals may reside with a person within the housing of Calvin University as a reasonable accommodation if:

- A. The person has a disability;
- B. The animal is necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; and
- C. There is an identifiable relationship or nexus between the disability and the emotional support the animal provides.

## **III. Definitions**

### **The definition of a disability under ADA is:**

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

### **The definition of an emotional support animal is:**

An emotional support animal is an animal that provides emotional or other support that ameliorates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Unlike service animals, emotional support animals are not required to be trained to perform work or tasks, and they may include species other than dogs and miniature horses.

## **IV. Procedures for Requesting use of an Emotional Support Animal as a Reasonable Accommodation**

A person wishing to have an emotional support animal reside in Calvin Housing must register with the office of Services to Students with Disabilities located in the Center for Student Success (616-526-6155) and must make a written request for an emotional support animal at least 30 days prior to when the student wishes to move the emotional support animal on campus.

In addition, the person requesting the emotional support animal must provide

1. a signed letter, on professional letterhead, from the individual's health care provider stating:
  - The diagnosis and nature of the disability and its functional limitations
  - The provider's professional opinion substantiating an identifiable relationship between the disability and the support that will be performed by the animal and demonstrating that the animal provides emotional support that alleviates one or more of the symptoms or effects of the disability.

The university will review individual requests on a case-by-case basis and reserves the right to request additional clarification or documentation.

The office of Services to Students with Disabilities will validate the need for the approved accommodations and collaborate with the resident and the Dean of Housing and Residence Life to facilitate a supportive network. Following approval of an emotional support animal, the person using the emotional support animal will meet with a Disability Coordinator to review the standards of care for emotional support animals on campus and provide the animal identification and documentation.

**Note:** Persons who seek approval to have emotional support animals in on campus housing are not automatically assigned to a private room. Persons with emotional support animals will be matched with potential roommates to prevent possible incompatibilities such as allergies, fears, or other concerns.

You must notify a Disability Coordinator in the Center for Student Success if the emotional support animal is no longer needed.

## **V. Requirements for Emotional Support Animals**

The person using the emotional support animal must maintain control of the animal at all times and must comply with all applicable licensing and vaccination laws. The person is responsible for the cost, care, cleanliness, vaccination and supervision of the animal and must ensure that the animal is well cared for at all times. The animal may not be left, whether alone or in the charge of another person, in Calvin Housing overnight if the person who requested the emotional support animal is not in the housing unit. The person using the emotional support animal is financially responsible for property damage caused by his or her emotional support animal, including any necessary cleaning fees.

Emotional support animals may not be fed using food from the dining hall. Emotional support animals must be spayed/neutered.

The person using the emotional support animal is responsible for ensuring the immediate cleanup and proper disposal of animal waste. Calvin's Physical Plant and Housing staff may designate animal toileting areas.

Prior to allowing an approved emotional support animal in housing, the requesting person must sign the Calvin College Emotional support Animal Protocol Agreement (which is available for review at <https://calvin.edu/offices-services/center-for-student-success/disability-services/>) as

well as meet with a disability coordinator to review the standards of care and provide the required animal identification and documentation.

## **VI. Restricted Areas**

Emotional support animals are only allowed in the campus housing unit in which the individual resides. This includes accompanying such person in all public or common use areas of campus housing when it may be necessary to afford the person with a disability an equal opportunity to use and enjoy campus housing. When the emotional support animal is outside the resident's private living quarters, the animal must be in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness. The emotional support animal is not permitted in other areas (e.g., other residence halls or apartment buildings, dining facilities, academic buildings, athletic buildings and facilities, classrooms, labs, libraries, etc.)

## **VII. Removal of an Emotional support Animal**

An emotional support animal must be kept under control by the person with a disability. An emotional support animal may be removed from the campus if the animal:

- is disruptive or out of control and an effective action to control the animal it is not taken, or
- Is not "housebroken" or deposits waste in a designated cage or litter box and the owner fails to clean such cage or box, such that the cleanliness of the room is not maintained, or
- poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services, or
- causes substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation, or
- the person provided an emotional support animal does not comply with the terms of the Calvin College Emotional Support Animal Protocol and the standards of care for emotional support animals.

In considering whether an emotional support animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, Calvin University will make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, current medical knowledge, or the best available objective evidence to determine:

- 1) the nature, duration and severity of the risk
- 2) the probability that the potential injury will actually occur
- 3) whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services will mitigate the risk.

Additionally, Calvin University may deny/revoke permission to have an emotional support animal if the animal:

- poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others
- poses an undue financial or administrative burden, or
- would fundamentally alter the nature of the provider's operations (e.g. disrupts roommates, neighbors).

**VIII. Dispute Resolution Procedure**

Disagreements about a disability determination, appropriateness of an accommodation, service quality, or a restriction should be raised first with the Disability Coordinator involved. Individuals may also file a complaint with the College's ADA Compliance Officer, who is the Director of Human Resources. In the event of perceived discrimination or harassment on the basis of having a disability, please reference the Safer Spaces Policy found at: <http://www.calvin.edu/about/safer-spaces/>.

I have reviewed all parts of this protocol and agree to abide by all requirements therein as well as the living expectations outlined in the Student Handbook at Calvin University.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Created 1.15.15

Updated 2.9.17

Updated 3.21.17

Updated 5.1.17

