Ohio Wesleyan University Service Animal Guidelines (draft 11/6/15)

Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. OWU follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the most up to date guidance from the Department of Justice (DOJ) with regard to service animals on campus. In accordance with ADA and DOJ, OWU notes the following responsibilities for persons with disabilities who bring service animals to campus.

Definitions

“Service animals,” as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), are dogs individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, responding to and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA guidelines.

A “Handler” is a person/student with a disability who is directly served by a service animal or a personal care attendant who handles the animal for a person/student with a disability.

Handler Responsibilities and Guidelines for Animal Care

1. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents use of these devices. In this case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

2. The handler is responsible for the actions of the service animal, including bodily injury and/or property damage caused by the service animal, and must take appropriate precautions to prevent damage to property or personal injury. In the event of property damage (excluding normal maintenance) to a student room or common area, the handler will be financially responsible for repairs or replacement of damaged items. Damages may include the cost of cleaning carpets and furniture and removing animal odors, dander, hair, etc. Charges will appear on the handler’s OWU student account.

3. The cost of care (health and safety) for the service animal is the sole responsibility of the handler. The service animal is required to be in compliance with all local ordinances regarding vaccinations and proper licensure. Up to date vaccination records for services animals will be provided to Ohio Wesleyan University by the handler.
4. The handler is to ensure that the service animal is not disruptive or a nuisance to members of the OWU community. Disruptive behavior includes loud barking or other distracting actions by the service animal not part of the necessary service to the handler unless said noises or behaviors are part of the needed service to the handler. A nuisance is defined as, but not limited to, excessive noise, physical harm to humans or other animals, and destruction of property. To the extent possible, the handler should ensure the service dog does not approach or sniff people, dining tables, or the personal belongings of others.

5. The handler must take precautions to assure the service dog does not block any emergency exits.

6. Service animals must be housebroken. Waste cleanup is the responsibility of the handler. If the handler is not physically able to clean up after the service dog then the handler must hire and pay someone who is physically able to perform this service. Animal waste should be immediately retrieved by the handler, placed in a plastic bag and securely tied before being disposed of in outside trash dumpsters. The handler should keep the animal from urinating in gardens or cultivated areas of the campus.

7. If the service dog resides in university housing, the handler should provide the Disability Services Center with emergency contact information of another adult who can care for the service animal if the handler is unable to care for the service animal. A current OWU student or OWU personnel are not appropriate choices for an emergency contact. If a service animal resides in University housing, the Disability Services Center will share a copy of the emergency contact information with the Residential Life Office.

8. A student who requires the use of a service animal and resides on campus should choose roommate(s) and/or suitemate(s) who are comfortable residing with the animal. If irreconcilable differences exist between the student who requires the use of a service animal and roommate(s) and/or suitemate(s), the Residential Life Office will work directly with all parties to find suitable alternative housing arrangements.

9. The service animal cannot pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others. If the service animal is deemed to pose a physical threat to others, actions will be taken to remove it from university property.

10. If any animal neglect is suspected, the university will contact the resident and local authorities. The service animal should not be left alone for unreasonably long periods of time.

11. Routine care for the service animal is expected for health and safety reasons, and includes flea and tick prevention, de-worming, routine vaccinations, bathing, and annual examinations.
Service Animals on Campus

Service Animals may accompany the handler throughout the university property. OWU may implement certain restrictions in some areas based on health and safety. Examples may include, but are not limited to, science/research laboratories with sterile conditions, classrooms with research or demonstration animals, areas where protective clothing is necessary, custodial closets, boiler rooms, facility equipment rooms, and areas identified by state law as being inaccessible to animals.

The Residential Life staff will inspect residential facilities on a regular basis as a part of routine health and safety checks of all residential space. If fleas, ticks, or other pests are detected during inspection, the unit will be treated using fumigation methods by the university approved pest control service. Those costs will be billed to the student/handler’s account.

Removal of a Service Animal

Service animals may be removed from Ohio Wesleyan University premises under the following circumstances:

1. The service animal is not housebroken (see #6).

2. The service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it. If improper animal behavior occurs repeatedly, the handler may be prohibited from bringing the service animal into any university facility until the handler can demonstrate that he/she has taken significant steps to mitigate the behavior.

3. The service animal demonstrates a direct threat. A handler may be directed to remove a service animal that Ohio Wesleyan University determines to be a substantial and direct threat to the health and safety of individuals. Any service animal that displays vicious behaviors toward other students, staff, or guests, may be barred from campus.

When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, the Disability Services Center will work with the student with the disability to obtain goods or services without the use of the animal.
Students using a service animal at Ohio Wesleyan will be asked the following questions:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Emergency Contact Information:

Name: _________________________________

Relationship to Handler: __________________

Phone number: __________________________

By my signature below, I certify that I have read, understand, and promise to abide by the Service Animal Guidelines outlined here.

Handler Signature: ________________________, Date: ______________

DS Coordinator Signature: ________________________, Date: ______________