

Messiah University – Office of Academic Accessibility

Residential Animal Agreement

Terms

For the sake of brevity, the term “Assist Animal” will be used in this document to include emotional support animals and service animals.

The term “student partner” is used for the student who benefits from the presence of and relationship with the Assist Animal.

The term “handler” used within this document refers to the student partner of the Assist Animal, as well as any other person who is in control of the Assist Animal, e.g., a guest or personal attendant.

Animal Care, Health, and Behavior

_____ An Assist Animal may reside in a University residence with its handler upon approval by the Office of Academic Accessibility provided that it meets all Conditions for Keeping a Service Animal or Conditions for Keeping an Assistance Animal, as set forth in the University’s Policy on Assist Animals.

_____ Dangerous, poisonous, and/or illegal animals are not permitted to serve as Assist Animals.

_____ The Assist Animal must be under the control of its handler at all times while on University property, including inside the University residence. It is expected that the Assist Animal will be controlled by a leash or harness at all times while on or in University property, unless these devices interfere with the animal’s work or the person’s disability prevents use of these devices. The Assist Animal may be off-leash/harness within the confines of the handler's bedroom. When the Assist Animal is unattended, it must remain in the handler's bedroom.

_____ The University may exclude/remove an animal when it does not meet Conditions for Keeping a Service Animal or Conditions for Keeping an Assistance Animal, as set forth in the University’s Policy on Assist Animals.

_____ Assist Animals must have all veterinarian-recommended vaccinations to maintain the animal’s health and prevent contagious diseases. Handlers are expected to submit documentation of vaccinations before July 1 for the Fall semester and November 1 for the Spring semester as part of the housing assignment process and with each annual review. The University reserves the right to request an updated verification at any time during the animal’s residency.

_____ Dogs are required to be licensed and in compliance with Cumberland County legislation. A Cumberland County dog license must be obtained and kept current.

_____ Assist Animals, if taken outside the residence, must wear identification tags with a campus address and any vaccination information.

_____ If a student handler does not live within 50 miles of the university, he/she is required to find a local vet for care of the Assist Animal.

_____ Handlers are responsible for properly containing and disposing of the animal's solid waste (e.g. feces). The University will identify suitable areas where assist animals can relieve themselves. Handlers should 1) always carry equipment and bags sufficient to clean up the animal's feces, and 2) properly dispose of the feces in an outdoor dumpster in a securely tied plastic bag.

- a. Indoor Assist Animal waste and/or used litter must be placed daily in a plastic bag and securely tied before being disposed of in an outside trash dumpster.
- b. Outdoor Assist Animal solid waste must be immediately retrieved by the handler, placed in a plastic bag and securely tied before being disposed of in an outside trash dumpster.

_____ Handlers are responsible for feeding and watering the Assist Animal within the confines of their bedroom.

_____ Assist Animal food should be kept in a closed container within the handler's bedroom.

_____ If the animal vomits, urinates, leaves solid waste, and/or becomes incontinent, it is the responsibility of the handler to make sure the contaminated area is cleaned up immediately. If the contamination occurs indoors, clean-up must include disinfectant of the area and carpet or floor treatment to minimize damage to the facility. The handler is required to provide his/her own cleaning products for the clean-up.

_____ Regular bathing or cleaning of the animal is expected to avoid significant odors or shedding. A pet wash is available at Mermaid Car Wash – 90 Cumberland Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA.

Student Partner Responsibilities

_____ The student partner is responsible for assuring that the animal does not interfere with the routine activities of the University and residence or cause difficulties for students who reside there. Sensitivity to residents, staff and faculty with allergies, and to those who fear animals, is an important consideration for the handler in order to ensure a community environment that supports the individual needs of all who reside or work at the university. The student partner should refer any known students to the Academic Accessibility Office and/or the Residence Life staff who will determine if additional accommodations need to be made.

_____ The student partner is financially responsible for the actions of the animal including bodily injury or property damage, beyond ordinary wear and tear, including, but not limited to, any replacement of furniture, carpet, drapes, or wall covering. The student partner is expected to reimburse these costs upon repair.

_____ The student partner is aware that there will be inspections in the room/apartment for damage, cleanliness and infestations of pests, specifically fleas or ticks. Handlers are expected to report any suspected flea or tick infestations and are responsible for taking effective precautions to avoid flea and tick infestations. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected within the residence, the University will work with a pest management company to treat the infestation. The student partner will be billed, as are all students, for the expense of any required pest management due to the actions or negligence of the student partner. If the Assist Animal is found to have fleas or ticks, the handler will be responsible for eliminating the infestation, laundering all pet bedding, and treating carpet and upholstery in the partner living space accordingly.

_____ The student partner of an Assist Animal that is unruly or disruptive (e.g., barking, running around unleashed, aggressive toward others, bringing attention to itself, excessive flatulence, etc.) may be asked to remove the animal from University facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the student partner may be asked not to bring the animal into any University facility until the student partner takes significant steps to mitigate the behavior. Mitigation may include muzzling a barking animal or refresher training for both the Assist Animal and the student partner, as appropriate. Should the Assist Animal be disqualified or removed from the premises for any reason, the student partner will remain responsible for the terms and conditions of the housing contract for the remainder of the academic year.

_____ The student partner will contact Facilities at 717-691-6011 to set up an appointment if they are requesting work to be done in the room or apartment and will notify Facilities that an Assist Animal is in the room. A decal may be placed on the room/apartment door to indicate an Assist Animal is inside the room.

_____ The student partner agrees, as all students do, to continue to abide by all other Residential Life policies. Having an animal does not preclude the student partner from following all other guidelines found in the Housing Agreement and the Messiah University's Code of Conduct found in the Student Handbook.

_____ Whenever the student partner is away from their room or apartment for a vacation or break, it is expected that the assist animal is taken with them. This includes going away for weekends. It is NOT permissible for the student partner to find a Messiah resident to watch their animal for them.

_____ Any violation of the above rules and guidelines will be reviewed by the Associate Dean of Students. The student will be afforded appropriate due process within this review.

By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand, and will abide by the guidelines outlined here.

Resident Student Partner Signature

Date

Director of Academic Success Center Signature

Date

Resident Director Signature

Date

Please submit this form to:

Amy Slody
Messiah University
One University Avenue, Suite 3059
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

specialhousing@messiah.edu
Fax: 717-691-2304