

Northwestern Michigan College
Procedure for Service and Comfort Animals

For health and safety reasons, no pets are allowed in campus housing or in NMC campus buildings, including pets that are visiting. Northwestern Michigan College has established the following procedure regarding Service Animals and Comfort Animals, to assist individuals with disabilities. Northwestern Michigan College will reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities, as defined by applicable law, who require the assistance of Service or Comfort Animals. Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Disability Support Services Office and must be supported by documentation upon the request of and satisfactory to Northwestern Michigan College. Service or Comfort Animals that: pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others; would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others or of Northwestern Michigan College; create an undue hardship on the college; or fundamentally alter a service, program, or activity of the college, will not be permitted. The successful implementation of this procedure requires the cooperation of all students, faculty, staff and visitors of Northwestern Michigan College. The procedure for Service and Comfort Animals of Northwestern Michigan College is based on the most recent interpretations of the law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act. Northwestern Michigan College reserves the right to amend this procedure as circumstances require.

Students requesting to have a comfort animal in campus housing will be asked for documentation that they have a disability and will be required to provide, satisfactory to Northwestern Michigan College, verification from a psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, or other licensed mental health professional, substantiating the need for a disability-related animal per applicable laws

and regulations. Campus housing will make a reasonable effort to notify residents of the existence of a service or comfort animal.

Students residing in college housing facilities who intend to request the use of a comfort animal must provide notice of such need in advance; the college has up to 30 days to make a determination on each request. Students must request the use and/or housing of a comfort animal under this policy each academic school year, at a minimum.

Service Animals

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a “service animal” as any dog individually trained and certified to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler’s disability. Service dogs are not considered “pets” and are explicitly permitted in “No Pets Allowed” areas under state and federal civil rights laws. Miniature horses of appropriate type, height, and weight under the circumstances, may fall under this classification if they have been trained to work with people with disabilities according to Title II and III of the ADA. Students residing in campus housing will notify campus housing staff so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

Comfort animals

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 protects the rights of people with disabilities to keep “assistance animals,” including for emotional support (also known as “comfort animals”), even when there is a general “no pets allowed” policy. A support, assistance, or comfort animal may be a *pet* that is owned by an individual with a disability, but is not a service animal and does not need to accompany the individual with the disability at all times. If the need for a comfort

animal is not readily apparent, Northwestern Michigan College may request additional information such as documentation, to the satisfaction of Northwestern Michigan College, from a psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, or other licensed mental health professional to verify this need. Information that may be collected could include: verification of student's disability, statement on how the animal is served as comfort animal, statement on how the need for the comfort animal relates to the ability of the student to use and gain benefit from college, and/or statement to how the animal is integral to a comprehensive ongoing treatment plan that is managed by a licensed professional.

If the request for a comfort animal is accepted, campus housing staff will make a reasonable effort to notify the other residents that an approved animal will be in the living area.

If applicable, all roommates and suitemates of the owner must sign an agreement acknowledging that the comfort animal is in residence with them. In the event that a roommate or suitemate does not approve, either the owner of the comfort animal or the non-approving roommate or suitemate, as determined by campus housing staff, may be moved to another location.

Animal Health and Well-Being

Vaccination: In accordance with local ordinances and regulations, the service or comfort animal must receive all required and/or recommended immunizations against diseases by a licensed veterinarian. Dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag.

Health: Animals that reside in college housing must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. Documentation can be a vaccination certificate for the animal or a veterinarian's statement regarding the health of the animal. The college has the authority to

direct that the animal receive veterinary attention. Dogs must wear an owner identification tag with vaccination information.

Licensing: The College reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed.

Other Conditions: The animal must be under control, and the owner must be in full control of the service or comfort animal at all times. The animal must be on a leash, harness, or other tether unless the owner's disability prevents its use or the use of one would interfere with the service animal's ability to be of service. All service and comfort animals must be housebroken.

Service & Comfort Animal Handler's responsibilities

1. The student is responsible for ensuring that the service/comfort animal does not interfere with the routine activities and daily operations of the college or cause difficulties for students or staff attending and working there.
2. The student is responsible for ensuring that the service/comfort animal is housebroken and fully vaccinated.
3. The student is financially and legally responsible for the actions of the service/comfort animal such as bodily injury or property damage, including but not limited to, any replacement of furniture, carpet, drapes, or wall covering, etc. Northwestern Michigan College reserves the right to bill the student's account for necessary repair and/or replacement costs, including flea/ticks/pest removal.
4. Student must notify campus housing in writing if the service/comfort animal is no longer needed. To replace a service/comfort animal the student must file a new request with campus housing.

5. Approved animals may not be left overnight in housing to be cared for by another student. Animals must be taken with the student if they leave campus overnight or for a more prolonged period of time.
6. Owners must ensure waste management is handled both inside housing/buildings, and outside on the grounds. Animal accidents within the residence hall room or apartment must be promptly cleaned up using appropriate cleaning products. Owners/handlers must promptly clean and dispose of outside animal waste. The college may designate animal waste/toileting areas.
7. Animals will not be allowed to disrupt others (e.g. barking, growling, yowling, howling, etc.). Animals that constitute a threat or nuisance to staff, residents or property, as determined by campus housing staff, may be removed. If it is determined that the animal poses an immediate threat, Animal Control may be called to remove the animal. If the behavior of an animal can be addressed by the owner and the owner can change the behavior of an animal so that the pet does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner. The action plan must outline the action that will take place to alleviate the problems and also must give a deadline as to length of time that the plan will take. Any animal owner found not adhering to the removal directive will be subject to disciplinary action, of which, may be the cancellation of the housing contract.
8. All liability for the actions of the animal (bites, scratches, etc.) is the responsibility of the owner. Reporting of incidents involving property damage or bodily injury by the service animal is required in writing within 24 hours to the Campus Security Office.

9. Violations of the aforementioned guidelines may result in the resident finding alternative off-campus housing for the animal and, as warranted, may result in the resident being in violation of their housing agreement.
10. Service dogs are allowed in any part of NMC's campuses where the general public is allowed; however, comfort animals are not allowed in common areas of NMC's campuses and are expected to be within sight of their residential facility.

Appeal

Any owner/handler that is dissatisfied with a decision concerning s service dog or comfort animal may appeal the decision through the college's established grievance procedure.

Exceptions

Exceptions to any provision of the policy, including restrictions placed by NMC, will be considered on a case by case basis by written request to the residence life office or auxiliary services office (NMC apartments).

Northwestern Michigan College

Service/Comfort animal request form for housing

Date _____ Student I.D. _____

Student Name _____

Animal User/Owners name (if different from student) _____

Student's permanent address _____

Students Phone number _____

Students preferred email address _____

Name of Animal _____

Type of animal:

Dog _____ Cat _____ Other _____

Color _____ Breed _____ Weight _____ Height _____

Do you have a disability as defined by the ADA? Yes No

Is the service dog trained to perform a specific task that is directly related to your disability? Yes No

Confirm that your pet is housebroken if applicable _____

Is your animal registered? Yes No If yes, where? _____

Are vaccinations records up to date? Yes No

Clean bill of health from veterinarian? Yes No

You may be asked for proof of these forms

_____ The above information is true and complete. I understand that any changes to this information will require a new registration.

_____ I have read and agree to abide by the NMC Procedure for Service and Comfort Animals.

Print name and date

Signature and date