

Service and Emotional Support Assistance Animal Policies

In order for a student to have a service or emotional support assistance animal, the student must register through the Dean of Students Office. The student can inquire about their responsibilities for receiving the accommodation of a service or an emotional support animal by reading the policy below or emailing studentservices@sebts.edu. If a student wishes to keep their service or emotional support assistance animal in campus housing, the student must register the animal through the requirements of the Housing Office.

Definitions

Service Animal: According to the ADA, “service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.” A service animal must be a certified service dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of someone with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals. The dog must be trained to take a specific action when needed to assist the person with a disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, alerting persons with hearing impairments to sounds, guiding persons that are blind or have low vision, pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking things up for persons in wheelchairs, and helping people who have mobility impairments with balance. A dog whose sole function is to provide comfort, emotional support, companionship, or improve the well-being of the student do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and thus do not meet the definition of Service Animal under this policy. Service dogs 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.

Emotional Support Assistance Animal: An assistance animal that is not a service animal but provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Unlike service dogs, emotional support assistance animals provide relief through mere presence and need not be individually trained to provide the emotional support needed to alleviate the symptoms of the disability. Emotional support assistance animals are not pets however; the student must have a disability-related need for the animal and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) requires documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional demonstrating that the animal provides emotional support to alleviate symptoms of the disability in considering the request for a reasonable accommodation.

General

SEBTS will permit the use of a service dog by an individual with a disability who satisfies the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. SEBTS will permit the use of an emotional support assistance animal as a reasonable accommodation by an individual with a disability who satisfies the requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The use of a **service animal** is allowed in all areas of SEBTS and campus housing where members of the public, participants in services, programs or activities, or invitees are normally allowed to go, unless it would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, services, programs, or activities provided by SEBTS or is prohibited by health laws.

The use of an **emotional support assistance animal** is only allowed in the student's assigned dormitory building/apartment and areas where animals may be walked, except at times when the emotional support assistance animal is entering or exiting SEBTS property. Emotional support assistance animals are not allowed in any other SEBTS-controlled buildings such as academic buildings and classrooms, the student center, campus offices, or Binkley Chapel, and outside upon other seminary property unless designated by the Dean of Students Office.

SEBTS does not generally allow a student to keep more than one service dog or emotional support assistance animal for a disability (or identified symptom or effect of a disability) for which the animal is needed.

Registration and Inquiries

Accommodation Request and Registration. All requests shall be made by filling out the ***Disability Services Accommodation Request Form***, the ***Southeastern Service and Emotional Support Assistance Animal Accommodation Request Form***, and the ***Healthcare Professional Form*** located on the "Disability Services" webpage.

Service Dogs. SEBTS requires the student to register a service dog with the Dean of Students Office if the student wishes to take the animal into areas of SEBTS property (such as residence halls/apartments, classrooms, academic buildings, campus offices, the student center). If a service dog is to have access to the residence halls/campus housing for purposes other than its student owner visiting a resident, it must be registered.

Emotional Support Assistance Animals. SEBTS requires that students wishing to use an emotional support assistance animal in their residence hall/dormitory must register and request a reasonable accommodation with the Dean of Students Office.

A current bill of health with veterinarian verification of sterilization, documentation confirming vaccinations (including rabies vaccination tags), and pest treatments along with a proper license identifying the animal as a service dog or an emotional support assistance animal must be presented to the Dean of Students Office 60 days prior to starting classes in the fall, spring, or summer semesters at SEBTS or 60 days prior to moving into campus housing (if residing in campus housing).

Following the completion of the forms, the Dean of Students Office will notify the student's professors if the service dog is required to be with the student in the classroom. Students must send the professors' names, their class names, and class sections to the Dean of Students Office each semester so that the Dean of Students Office can properly notify the student's professors.

Staff Inquiries

Service Dogs. In circumstances where it is not readily apparent what service the dog is providing, SEBTS staff and the Dean of Students Office may ask the student all of the following:

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

Emotional Support Assistance Animals. In evaluating a request for an emotional support assistance animal, SEBTS staff and the Dean of Students Office shall consider all of the following criteria:

1. Does the student seeking to use and live with the animal have a disability (i.e., a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities)?
2. Does the student making the request have a disability-related need for an assistance animal? In other words, does the animal provide emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a student's disability?

If the student does not meet both of the above requirements, the request for a reasonable accommodation with an emotional support animal may be denied. If the student meets both requirements and provides sufficient documentation where required, SEBTS will provide reasonable accommodation.

Documentation

Service Dogs. SEBTS requires medical documentation pertaining to the student's disability, a special identification card, and training documentation for the service dog. This will require the student to fill out the Disability Services Accommodation Request Form and the Southeastern Service and Emotional Support Assistance Animal Accommodation Request Form. SEBTS can ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task if the student takes (or desires to take) a service dog into academic buildings, classrooms, the student center, or residence halls/apartments. A current bill of health with veterinarian verification of sterilization, documentation confirming vaccinations (including rabies vaccination tags), and pest treatments along with a proper license identifying the animal as a service dog must be presented to the Dean of Students Office.

Emotional Support Assistance Animals. SEBTS requires individuals with disabilities to submit reliable documentation of a disability and their disability-related need for an assistance animal if the student takes (or desires to take) a support animal into the residence halls/apartments. Persons requesting a reasonable accommodation for an emotional support assistance animal will be required to provide documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, or other mental health professional that the animal provides emotional support that alleviates one or more of the identified symptoms or effects of a disability. This will require the student to fill out the Disability Services Accommodation Request Form and the Southeastern Service and Emotional Support Assistance Animal Accommodation Request Form. A current bill of health with veterinarian verification of sterilization, documentation confirming vaccinations (including rabies vaccination tags), and pest treatments along with a proper license identifying the animal as an emotional support assistance animal must be presented to the Dean of Students Office.

Responsibilities and Procedures

SEBTS is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service dog or emotional support assistance animal. Students with disabilities are responsible for the control of their service dog or emotional support assistance animal at all times and must comply with all applicable laws and regulations,

including vaccination, licensure, animal health and leash laws. A service dog or emotional support assistance animal shall be restrained with a harness, leash, or other tether, unless an individual's disability precludes the use of a restraint or if the restraint would interfere with the service dog or emotional support assistance animal's safety, effective performance of work, or tasks. If the service dog or emotional support assistance animal is not tethered, it must be otherwise under the individual's control, whether by voice control, signals, or other effective means.

Individuals are responsible for ensuring the immediate clean-up and proper disposal of all animal waste. Although SEBTS may not charge an individual with a disability a service animal surcharge, it may impose charges for damages caused by a service dog or emotional support assistance animal in the same manner SEBTS imposes charges for damages caused by pets.

Deadlines. Students requesting a service dog or emotional support assistance animal on SEBTS property must notify the Dean of Students Office by submitting the Disability Services Accommodation Request Form and the Southeastern Service and Emotional Support Assistance Animal Accommodation Request Form at least sixty (60) days prior to starting classes in the fall, spring, or summer semesters at SEBTS or 60 days prior to moving into campus housing (if residing in campus housing). All documentation needs to be submitted with required medical documentation, veterinarian documentation, picture of animal, and the animal's clean bill of health.

Annual Renewal. Approval to have a service dog or an emotional support assistance animal must be updated prior to June 1st of each year with the Dean of Students Office.

Notice of Removal or Replacement Animal. The student must notify the Dean of Students Office via email if the animal is no longer to be kept by the student in the residence. To replace an animal with another animal, the student must file a new accommodation request with the Dean of Students Office.

Access. Animals must stay in the student's room/apartment unless they are accompanied by the student, and may not be allowed to roam freely through common areas. While service dogs may accompany students at all times and in most locations on SEBTS property, emotional support assistance animals are permitted only in the student's residence hall/apartment, outside areas specifically designated by SEBTS for walks, and the pathways for entry and exit to SEBTS property. Animals must be secured by leash or cage during maintenance visits by SEBTS staff.

Care and Supervision. The student shall be responsible for the care and supervision of his or her animal. SEBTS is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service dog or emotional support assistance animal. All animal food not canned must be kept in a sealable plastic container or in the occupant's refrigerator. If the student is not in the physical presence of his or her animal, the animal must be in a closed crate no larger than necessary given the animal's size and manufacturer's specifications. Any and all liability for the actions of the animal is the responsibility of the student, including but not limited to damage involving personal or private property of SEBTS or others.

Control. An animal must be under the control of its handler. Except when in a closed crate, the animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether in use at all times, unless it is a service dog and either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or other tether would interfere with the animal's safety, effective performance

of work or tasks, in which case the animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (i.e., voice control, signals, or other effective means).

Supervised Time. An animal on SEBTS property that includes academic buildings, offices, the student center, classrooms, or SEBTS sponsored events must never be unsupervised and must always be on a harness, leash, or tether under the control of the student. The student must have supervision over their animal at all times. Failure to do so may result in penalties or revocation to keep the animal on premises.

Training. Before coming on SEBTS property, all service dogs and emotional support assistance animals must be housetrained and if the animal is to be allowed on SEBTS property, the animal must consistently control its waste elimination and barking, whining, or whimpering.

Service Dogs. The service dog must be trained to perform a specific job or task in connection with its ability to assist the disabled person and such training is the responsibility of the student.

Emotional Support Animals. The emotional support assistance animal does not have to be trained in connection with its ability to assist the disabled person but its presence must be necessary to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of a student's disability.

Health and Cleanliness. All animals must be in good health and SEBTS has the authority to temporarily or permanently exclude an animal from SEBTS property if the animal is in ill health or habitually unclean. The student must provide a clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian to the Dean of Students Office, and thereafter annually to the Dean of Students Office. If concern is brought to the Dean of Students Office or the Housing Office regarding the animal's health, the student must provide a current clean bill of health from a veterinary professional.

Sterilization. All service dogs and emotional support assistance animals on SEBTS property must be sterilized (spayed, neutered, or other method of sterilization). The student must provide the Dean of Students Office with veterinarian verification that the animal has been sterilized.

Vaccination, Leash Laws, and Other Animal Health Laws. Students with disabilities must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including vaccination, licensure, animal health, and leash laws. The student must ensure that the animal has been immunized against diseases and treated for pests, such as fleas and ticks, common to that type of animal. Animals must have current vaccination against rabies, wear a valid rabies vaccination tag, and be properly licensed. The student must provide the Dean of Students Office with appropriate documentation confirming vaccinations, licenses, and pest treatments.

Waste Disposal. Students are responsible for ensuring the immediate clean-up and proper disposal of all animal waste. Animal waste is not to be disposed of indoors. Students are responsible for ensuring the animal does not urinate or deposit waste on shrubbery, flowers, small trees, railings, etc. Student must pick up and dispose of animal waste in trash receptacles (whether indoors or outdoors). No animal waste (i.e. feces) permitted on the grounds. Fines for violations shall be as follows: first violation will be \$50.00; second violation will be \$150.00. The third violation will result in the immediate revocation of permission to keep the animal on the premises.

Health and Safety. The animal must not pose a threat to the health or safety of students, visitors, or any other persons on SEBTS property.

One-Bite Policy. SEBTS has the authority to temporarily or permanently exclude an animal from SEBTS property if the animal's behavior is unruly or disruptive. SEBTS has adopted a "one-bite" policy that requires an animal to be removed from SEBTS property after a single occurrence of unprovoked biting or other aggressive behavior. The decision to exclude an animal from SEBTS will be made by the Dean of Students Office if the animal is deemed a direct threat to the health and safety of others after hearing information from all parties involved, except where the situation is an emergency and the removal is temporary until such information can be considered.

Equipment. The equipment necessary for the safe-keeping of the animal must not pose a threat to the safety of others and may not block evacuation routes or egress in case of an emergency.

Quiet Use and Enjoyment. Animals must not make excessive noise or display behavior that will disrupt the classroom or other community members' quiet use and enjoyment of SEBTS property including campus housing.

Disruptive Behavior. The student must ensure that the animal does not:

- a. Attack, harass, jump on/at or disrupt others or their personal belongings;
- b. Display any repeated behavior or make noise that is disruptive to others in any SEBTS owned or operated spaces;
- c. Block evacuation routes or egress in case of an emergency; and
- d. Leave the student's room except when accompanied by the student.

Damage to Property. SEBTS shall not charge students with service dogs or emotional support assistance animals a surcharge. However, SEBTS may charge students for damages caused by the service dog or emotional support assistance animal. Students will be responsible and will pay for any and all damages or destruction caused by the animal to the buildings, furnishings, or grounds of SEBTS. Such responsibility and liability of student will also include the repair of damaged items to their former condition and/or replacement where necessary, which will be at the sole discretion of Dean of Students Office and the Housing Office. Animal damage is not considered normal wear and tear, and the student will be responsible for the value of replacement and installation of carpet, flooring, or other fixtures necessitated by the presence of animal urine or other waste found by SEBTS. This value will be prorated based on the respective age of the item(s). The balance will be billed to the student.

Emergencies. SEBTS is not responsible for an animal during a fire alarm, fire drill, natural disaster, or other emergency situation.

Exclusions

SEBTS may exclude an animal from the institution's property if:

- the specific animal is out of control and the student does not take effective action to control it (i.e. barks repeatedly or disrupts the classroom, Chapel, academic settings, or student activities on campus, or campus housing);

- the specific animal would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or would fundamentally alter the nature of SEBTS's services;
- the specific animal poses a direct threat to the health (i.e. allergies) or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by a reasonable modification to other policies, practices, and procedures (i.e. the specific animal is not housebroken or trained so that, absent illness or accident, the animal consistently controls its waste elimination);
- the specific animal in question would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation; or
- the specific animal cannot perform and demonstrate or command all claimed service assistance.

To determine whether there is cause for exclusion, SEBTS will conduct an individualized assessment of the specific animal's actual conduct, giving consideration to the facts and circumstances of each case.

If SEBTS excludes an animal, it shall give the student with the disability the opportunity to request approval of another service dog or emotional support assistance animal.

Resident Housing

Additionally, a student requiring a service dog or emotional support assistance animal who plans to reside in SEBTS housing must abide by the rules and regulations presented by the Housing Office. Please contact the Housing Office at (919) 761-2400 or email housing@sebts.edu for any questions on housing policy.

Appeals and Grievances

Any student dissatisfied by a decision concerning a service dog or emotional support assistance animal may appeal through the Dean of Students Office. He can be reached at 919-761-2306 or studentservices@sebts.edu.