



Student Wellness Centre Protocol for Emotional Support Animals

Objective: To accommodate students requiring ESAs (Emotional Support Animals) while minimizing allergen exposure and ensuring safety for all students, staff, and visitors.

1. Pre-Visit Requirements

- **Advance Notification:** Students must inform the Student Wellness Centre (SWC) at least 48 hours before their appointment if they plan to bring an ESA. If students present for first visit without knowing SWC ESA protocol, students can be offered a virtual appointment from the quiet room or alternate suitable space in the SWC. ESA can be permitted with information provided to the students on the protocol for their next visit.
- **Documentation:** No documentation required.
- **Animal Profile:** Staff should maintain a record of the ESA's species and breed in EMR.

2. ESA Eligibility

- **Permitted Animals:** Dogs and cats are most common, but other species may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **Health Standards:** ESAs must be:
 - Clean and groomed within 24 hours of the visit.
 - Free of fleas, ticks, and parasites.
 - Up-to-date on vaccinations.
- **Behavior Standards:** ESAs must be non-aggressive, house-trained, and under control at all times.
 - Report to supervisor if any concerns arise.
 - Directors Health/Counselling will send letter notification to student that ESA is no longer permitted in SWC.



3. Allergen Reduction Measures

- **Designated Areas:**

- Students with ESAs should be scheduled in designated exam rooms with hard flooring (no carpets, curtains, or fabric furniture).
 - Eg. Quiet room & psychiatry room (for counselling, mental health nurse and behavioral health provider appointments; ILI (influenza-like-illness exam rooms (for health appointments).

- **Air Filtration:**

- HEPA filters are installed throughout the building.

- **Scheduling:**

- ESA appointments should be scheduled at the end of the day if possible.

- **Protective Measures:**

- Staff with known allergies should not be assigned to ESA appointments.
 - As per supervisors instructions to SWT.
 - If student presents with ESA not knowing the policy, appointment can be switched to virtual, offering quiet room for student.

4. Patient & ESA Conduct

- **Leash/Carrier Policy:** ESAs must remain leashed or in a carrier at all times, except during examination if necessary to provide support to a student.
- **Restricted Areas:** ESAs are not permitted in:
 - Treatment rooms
 - Food preparation areas
- **Supervision:** The student is responsible for the ESA's behavior and must always remain with the animal.



5. Cleaning & Sanitation

- **Post-Visit Cleaning:**
 - Wipe down all surfaces with allergen-reducing disinfectants.
- **Laundry Protocol:** Any linens used should be placed in soiled linen bin.
- **Waste Disposal:** Animal waste must be disposed of in sealed bags by the student in bins outside the building.

6. Emergency & Exceptions

- **Aggressive Behavior:** If an ESA shows aggression or disrupts SWC operations, staff may request removal.
 - If needed, escalate to supervisor.
- **Allergic Reactions:** Staff should be trained to respond to patients or employees experiencing severe allergic reactions.
- **Alternative Accommodations:** If ESA presence is not feasible, telehealth should be offered.
- **Incident:** in the event of an incident occurring involving a staff member and ESA (eg. Injury or severe allergic reaction), the Director of Clinical Health will work with the staff member(s) impacted and their supervisor to provide support.

7. Staff Training

- **Awareness:** Student Wellness leadership will provide necessary training for all SWC regarding ESA policies, allergen reduction techniques, and student communication.
- **Embracing Diversity:** it is the expectation that staff should exercise compassion for students with ESAs and consideration for those with allergies.