

**UUFSD Policy and Procedure Document****Policy ID: 752****Title: Pets**

Date Approved: October 30, 2019 by the Board of Directors

**Purpose**

The intent of this pet policy is to keep UUFSD a safe and welcoming place for everyone. We recognize and affirm our 7<sup>th</sup> principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. We recognize the deep connection many people have with their pets. However, we also recognize that some people are allergic to animals and some are uncomfortable around animals. The presence of pets, even on a leash, can be distracting during a worship service, and animal behavior is not always predictable or controllable.

**Policy**

In response to concerns about hygiene, safety, and desire for reverence in worship, we hereby ask members and guests not to bring pets to the Fellowship on Sundays.

At other times of the week, if pets are brought to the Fellowship, they must be on a leash or in a crate and supervised at all times. Pets are not allowed in the kitchen or other areas where food is being prepared or served at any time. Pets that are visiting the campus must be house-trained. Owners are expected to clean up any mess from their pets. Owners will be held responsible for any costs incurred due to soiling or other damage to Fellowship property by visiting animals.

**Procedure**

If a member or guest is in violation of this policy, the responsible person enforcing the policy shall request the owner of the pet to respect the policy. If necessary the responsible person shall ask the owner of the pet to remove the pet from the Fellowship grounds.

During Sundays, the Greeter or Usher on duty shall be responsible for enforcing this policy. During the week, the Congregational Administrator shall be responsible. At specific events, such as Saturday work parties, the coordinator or chairman of the event shall be responsible.

**Service Animal Policy**

In concert with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Unitarian Universalist of San Dieguito (UUFSD) defines service animals as “dogs that are 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, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, 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."

A service animal will be identified by their uniform and will be allowed in the Founders Hall, amphitheater and/or classrooms with their handler. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, UUFSD staff or leaders may ask two questions of the handler: 1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

UUFSD expects service animals and their handlers to meet the following expectations:

- Service animals remain with their handlers while on campus.
- Service animals do not sit on church furniture.
- Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- Service animals do not whine, bark, grumble, growl or make other noises. An exception may be if the whining is an alert, such as to notify a handler who is experiencing a panic attack or a drop in blood sugar.
- Service animals do not obstruct an area used for emergency evacuation.

The Executive Team may make exceptions to this policy to accommodate unique events and situations.

### **Emotional Support Animals (ESA) Policy**

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito defines emotional support animal (ESA) as an animal (typically a dog or cat) that provides a therapeutic benefit to its owner through companionship and is not specifically trained or certified to perform tasks for a person who suffers from emotional, psychiatric or mental health-related disabilities. Under the law, an ESA does not qualify as a service animal and, thus, is not granted legal access to places of public accommodation by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Therefore, requests made by persons who wish to access UUFSD's campus with their ESA are treated as a unique situation, which may be considered as an exception to the service animal policy.

If you are the owner of an ESA (or the caretaker of an owner) and the ESA alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a mental health-related disability, you may call or e-mail the Administrative Assistant to request an in-person appointment with a member of the ministerial staff to discuss approval for an exception to the service animal policy. Approval is strictly on a case-by-case basis.

*ESA owners should have current documentation from a licensed mental health professional or physician treating their mental health-related disability stating that the person has a mental health-related disability, the animal accompanying the customer is necessary to the customer's mental health or treatment, the number and type(s) of animal(s), the individual providing the assessment of the customer is a licensed mental health professional or physician and the person is under their professional care, the mental health professional's license number (or type, issue date, and state in which the license was issued). UUFSD also*

*requires a copy of the pet owners' homeowner's or rental insurance naming UUFSD as an alternative property to be covered and including the name of the current ESA pet, as well as its owner.*

Unless a minister grants approval, an ESA is not permitted access to the campus for Sunday services or other classes, events and programs. Therefore, requests for appointments should be made well in advance of a plan to attend. Persons with ESAs who are granted reasonable accommodation by a minister will receive a special tag at that time, and must display this tag in order for staff, ushers, and other community members to readily identify their ESA as approved.

Approved ESAs must comply with all the expectations listed under the service animal policy. In addition, ESAs are encouraged to find seating in the back section and away from ADA-approved service animals. Should an ESA not comply with these expectations, the owner will be asked to remove their ESA from the campus immediately, and approval of the ESA may be revoked.

As a faith community, we agree to live by our Covenant of Right Relations which means circumventing this procedure or policy or to passing off an ESA as an ADA Service Animal would not be in line with our Covenant.