

## **PREAMBLE**

Elim Ministries strives to provide a safe environment for all patrons. The animals permitted access to the Elim Lodge property are 'Service Dogs' and Director-approved 'Emotional Support Dogs'. Please contact the Director with any questions or concerns.

## **ELIM MINISTRIES ANIMAL POLICY (2025)**

Elim Christian Retreat and Conference Center is a ministry that welcomes both “service dogs” and qualifying ESA (Emotional Support Animal) dogs. We strive to be a community that welcomes all people including those who require the assistance of their dogs for daily living. The only animal permitted as an ESA is a canine.

### **(A) Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to state Elim’s policy for the regulation/management of dogs and provide direction to their owners.

Elim Lodge strives to be a sanctuary of beauty, peace, joy and safety where anyone can find a time and a place to “Relax, Refresh and Renew.” For over 76 years Elim Lodge has been a place of rest, relaxation and spiritual development for all who walk its’ grounds. In order to achieve this goal it is imperative that those who are a part of Elim, either on vacation or as a part of our trailer park, experience a safe environment. Elim ministers to a diverse population of folks including children, families, youth, the elderly and those with special needs. It is our obligation to provide an environment that is safe for all. Children are our most vulnerable population and it is the responsibility of those in authority to do everything possible to provide for the safety and protection of every child on our grounds.

### **(B) Application**

In order to ensure that Elim is a safe environment for all persons, no pets are permitted anywhere on the grounds. There are only two exceptions to this policy: ‘service dogs’ and ‘emotional support dogs’.

### **(C) Definitions**

a) “service dog” means a dog that is trained as a guide for a person with a disability or that is receiving training to be such a guide, and that has the qualifications prescribed by the regulations made under the Ontario Service Dogs Act, 2016, AODA.

b) “emotional service animal” (ESA) is a dog that has been deemed necessary for the emotional support of an individual. The qualification for establishing an ESA is the provision of a letter from a qualified mental health professional, confirming the emotional need of a support dog. An ESA letter is a legal document that states the owner’s need for a support animal and indicates that the emotional support animal is a part of a clinical treatment plan.

c) “private space” refers to the space inside a trailer/cottage and the accompanying prescribed lot used for seasonal occupancy.

d) “public space” refers to all roadways, paths, open spaces, docks, lands and buildings owned by Elim.

#### (D) Purpose of a ‘service dog’

Service dogs are trained to help people with disabilities to maintain independence. For example, they perform tasks, such as:

- Guiding a blind or visually impaired handler around obstacles
- Alerting a handler with diabetes about low blood sugar levels
- Protecting a handler with epilepsy during seizures
- Calming a handler with autism in an environment with too much sensory stimulation
- Retrieving out-of-reach objects for a handler with a physical disability
- Alerting a handler who is deaf or hard of hearing about sounds

At Elim we welcome service animals and allow total freedom of movement within the premises of Elim, except in places where the law excludes service animals.(ie: food preparation areas)

#### (E) Identification of a Service Dog

A service dog owner shall confirm the authenticity of the designation ‘service dog’ by the following means:

- a) the owner shall provide an identification card indicating that the ‘service dog’ has successfully completed the required training under the regulations prescribed under The Ontario Service Dog’s Act of 2016. We only accept service dogs which are trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability. Service dog must have been individually trained by an organization or person specializing in service dog training.
- b) the owner shall provide a letter from a healthcare practitioner stating the assessed need for the ‘service dog’.
- c) the owner shall provide an authentic vest with identification

#### (F) Purpose of an Emotional Support Dog

‘Emotional support dogs’ provide comfort and security; however, they do not have training for specific tasks. Therefore, ‘emotional support dogs’ do not qualify as service animals under The . Ontario Service Dogs Act, 2016. ‘Emotional support dogs’ do not have the same rights to public access as ‘service dogs’ or ‘service dogs in training’. ‘Emotional support dogs’ are not protected under the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. They are not temperament tested and are untrained. Elim, as a service provider, is not required to allow ‘emotional support dogs’ in ‘public space.’ However, to support those with the demonstrated and approved need of an ‘emotional support dog’, Elim is establishing this policy.

### (G) Identification of Emotional Support Dogs

All 'emotional support dogs' shall conform to the definition as prescribed in this policy.

All 'emotional support dogs' shall wear a vest indicating their identification and ownership as approved of by Elim management.

### (H) Qualifications for Access to Public Space

1. a) 'service dogs' are permitted access to all 'public space', in accordance with provincial legislation and Elim's policy. (Service animal – should have registered and certified training jacket to be worn but also notice from doctor or from training facility trained as a Service Animal. They can go anywhere except food preparation locations. Proof of training by CPPD or CPT handlers. )

b) 'emotional support dogs' are restricted to within private trailers/cottages and on the assigned lot as per lease. Access to 'public space' shall be permitted with the following qualifications:

- i. Lifeline Canada Foundation for Companion Paws for training of Therapy dogs.
- ii. ST. Johns Ambulance Therapy Dog program for training of your dog.

c). approved 'emotional support dog' shall wear a label, on their vests for identification purposes.

Elim has the following questions/concerns regarding unqualified 'emotional support dogs'.

- a) Is the dog appropriate to act as a 'emotional support dog' in a campground environment?
- b) Has the dog been properly socialized with people varying in features such as height, gender, skin colour, facial hair, clothing type, and accessibility items such as wheelchairs and canes?
- c) Has the animal been properly socialized with a variety of animals including prey species?
- d) Is the dog breed prone to aggression, or chasing or predatory behaviour that might be dangerous?
- e) Will the dog interact appropriately with other dogs at the campground if they frequent similar environments?
- f) Is the dog highly food-motivated, and if so are they sufficiently well trained to abstain from food stealing?
- g) Is the animal sufficiently mature and of an appropriate temperament to avoid impulsive behaviours that might be disruptive (e.g., barking, jumping up) or damaging to property (e.g., chewing)?
- h) Has the animal been spayed or neutered? For example, intact female dogs can attract excessive attention from male dogs.
- i) Has the animal been appropriately trained to ensure that they are fully under the control of the owner through the use of voice commands/hand signals? This includes consistent and immediate responses within a busy environment to commands that are important within the campground context including heel, sit/down, stay, come, drop it, and leave it.

#### (I) Behavioural Requirements for All Dogs and Owners

- a) All dogs shall be leashed with a maximum 6-foot-long lead that is held by the handler at all times, both in public and private spaces. Dogs shall not be attached to any structures, stakes, or railings.
- b) 'emotional support dogs' shall be muzzled in public spaces.
- c) Owners shall remove and dispose of all excrement.
- d) Dogs shall not be fed in "public spaces."
- e) Dogs shall be confined to living quarters between 11pm-7am
- f) 'Emotional support dogs' are not permitted in any public buildings/areas. They are not permitted inside any buildings at Elim during or after times of operation. They are not permitted on the beaches, pool area, park, sports fields, or docks.
- g) Since both Service Dogs and Emotional Support Dogs are needed by the handlers for various purposes, it is required for handlers to be with their dog at all times. Service Dogs and Emotional Support Dogs may not be left alone unsupervised.
- h) All owners of Service Dogs and Emotional Support Dogs shall ensure that their dog shall not make an objectionable noise by whining, barking, howling or creating any kind of audio disturbance continually or sporadically or erratically for any period of time in excess of ten minutes.
- i) Since we live in a close community in both the rental facilities and in the trailer park at Elim, kindness and courtesy are necessary attributes for all residents. All owners of Service Dogs or Emotional Support Dogs shall ensure that the behaviour of their dogs shall not impede the rest or relaxation of any Elim resident.

#### (J) Non-compliance with Policy

Elim reserves the right to refuse and/or require the owner to remove any 'service dog' and 'emotional support dog' if its behaviour is not in keeping with this policy, specifically as detailed in section (I)

Owners of "service dogs" and "emotional support dogs" shall be subject to the following procedure when there is non-compliance with this policy:

##### 1) First Offence

A written notice will be sent to the owner from Elim management by way of hand delivery stating the area of non-compliance

##### 2) Second Offence

A written notice will be sent to the owner from Elim management by way of hand delivery advising that the 'service dog' or 'emotional support dog' shall be removed from Elim immediately. Failure to remove the "service dog" or "emotional support dog" shall result in the cancellation of the owner's lease agreement.

3) When a cancellation of the owner's lease agreement occurs due to a Second Offence, the leaseholder is not entitled to any refund of paid fees.