

FGCU Student Foster Volunteer – Expectations & Responsibilities

Gulf Coast Humane Society (GCHS)

As an FGCU student participating in the GCHS foster program, you agree to the following expectations and responsibilities. These guidelines help ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the foster animals, as well as support the overall mission of GCHS.

1. Commitment to Medical & Veterinary Care

- **All required medical appointments and treatments must be attended.** GCHS provides medical care for foster animals; as the foster volunteer, you must follow through with all scheduled veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, treatments, surgeries, and follow-up appointments. Missed or skipped appointments jeopardize the health of the animal.
- **Medical care must be coordinated through GCHS.** Foster animals must receive all veterinary care through the channels provided by GCHS — do not take foster pets to outside clinics without prior authorization.
- **Communicate immediately about any health issues or concerns.** If you notice signs of illness, injury, or behavioral stress in your foster animal, you must contact the foster coordinator right away so the animal can receive proper care.

2. Service-Learning Hours

- GCHS **no** longer offers service-learning hours for foster participation.

3. Foster Animal Return & Notification Policy

- **Advance notice required for returns.** If you need to return a foster animal before its approved foster period ends, you must notify and coordinate with GCHS staff well in advance. Unexpected same-day returns or returns without sufficient notice are not acceptable.
- **Failure to provide adequate notice may result in termination of foster privileges.** Repeated unannounced returns or abrupt drop-offs can compromise shelter capacity and animal welfare; therefore, such behavior may lead to removal from the foster program.

4. Representation of GCHS & Conduct Expectations

- **You are an ambassador for GCHS.** As a foster volunteer, you represent the organization. You must act professionally, respectfully, and in accordance with all GCHS policies, local/state animal ordinances, and applicable laws. This includes providing accurate and honest information on any applications or paperwork.
- **Compliance with animal care guidelines.** You agree to follow all guidelines for animal care, including separation/quarantine protocols (if required), sanitation, feeding schedules, socialization, and any special handling instructions (especially for medical or behavior-challenged animals). This ensures safety and minimizes risk of illness or stress.

5. Communication and Availability

- **Regular communication.** Maintain open and timely communication with the GCHS foster coordinator regarding the status of your foster animal (health updates, behavior, any concerns or changes in your availability). Prompt responses to coordinator messages and requests are expected.
- **Reliability and accountability.** Only commit to fostering if you can reasonably anticipate your availability and follow through. Unreliable availability undermines the foster system and can harm the well-being of the animal.

- **Willingness to adjust schedule if needed.** Fostering sometimes involves unexpected needs (urgent vet visits, extended recovery periods, etc.). You may need to adjust your personal schedule to meet those needs when committed to a foster pet.

6. Termination of Foster Agreement

Your foster status with GCHS may be terminated if any of the following occur:

- Repeated failure to attend required medical or vet appointments for foster animals.
- Returns of foster animals without proper advanced notice, or uncoordinated drop-offs that strain shelter capacity.
- Failure to communicate major changes in availability, living situation, or ability to care for the animal.
- Any violation of GCHS conduct policies, misrepresentation on applications or paperwork, or disregard for animal care guidelines.
- Any behavior that endangers the health or welfare of foster animals, resident pets, or violates local/state animal ordinance or shelter policy.

8. Acknowledgement and Agreement

By agreeing to foster for GCHS as an FGCU student, you acknowledge that:

- You have read, understand, and will comply with all of the expectations and responsibilities listed above.
- You will make the care, health, and safety of your foster pet a top priority during the entire foster period.
- You understand that fostering is a commitment and a privilege — not just a temporary “job.”
- Violations of these policies may result in immediate termination of your foster privileges with GCHS.