

We know that cats are creatures of habit, and even small changes in their environment can feel like a big deal. Boarding can be a new experience for many cats, and while a little hesitation is completely normal, our goal is to make the transition as gentle and stress-free as possible. At Take Five Dogcare, we've created a calm, predictable space where cats can settle in, feel safe, and be well cared for by a team that truly understands feline behavior. This guide will walk you through what we look for in cats who board with us, the types of behaviors we aim to support, and when boarding might not be the best fit, so you can feel confident in choosing the right care for your cat(s).

### What are the basic requirements for my cat to board at Take Five?

To keep every guest safe and our team safe, healthy, and comfortable, we ask that your cat meets the following requirements before boarding:

- **Spay/Neuter:** Male cats must be neutered by six months of age and we cannot accept female cats who are actively in heat.
- **Age:** We welcome cats 15 weeks and older, as long as they've completed their first full round of core vaccinations.
- **Vaccines:** Rabies and Feline Distemper (FVRCP) are required. Feline Leukemia (FeLV) is strongly recommended for cats that go outdoors and for kittens. If your cat is exempt from a vaccine, we just ask for a note from your veterinarian.
- **Parasite Prevention:** All cats must be on flea and tick prevention and free of parasites and contagious skin conditions.
- **Health Status:** Cats must be in good overall health. We're happy to administer oral or topical medications if needed, but we're not able to board diabetic cats who require insulin injections or cats who require complex medical treatment.
- **Time in Home:** Your cat should have been in your home for at least three weeks before boarding. We recommend three months when possible to give them time to build confidence and routine. We follow the 3-3-3 rule: three days to decompress, three weeks to settle in, and three months to build trust.
- **Temperament and Handling:** We evaluate each cat based on behavior and comfort, not by breed. Your cat should allow basic care like feeding, cleaning, and gentle observation from staff.

### How do you approach cat care?

Our goal is always to care for your cat in the way that works best for them. That means calm, private suites, predictable routines, and a low-pressure approach to handling. We don't force interaction - if your cat wants space, we give it; if they're open to affection, we're right there. We want every cat in our care to feel safe, respected, and understood. We communicate openly with pet parents so you're never left guessing.

### What types of cats do well boarding at Take Five?

We want your cat to feel as comfortable as possible during their stay. Cats who tend to do well in our environment often:

- Tolerate or enjoy gentle interactions from humans
- Adjust to new surroundings with some time and patience
- Maintain normal eating, drinking, and litter box habits
- Settle into their suite calmly without constant pacing or distress
- Have manageable medical needs
- Stay relaxed or neutral when aware of other cats nearby (no direct interaction happens, but some scent and sound exposure is natural)

## What behaviors might suggest my cat isn't a great fit for boarding?

If you're unsure how your cat will do in a boarding environment, we're always happy to try a day boarding or overnight evaluation to see how they settle in. As long as your cat is safe for our team to handle, we're more than willing to see how it goes and keep an open line of communication with you along the way.

Some initial nervousness is expected, but cats who ongoingly exhibit several of the following behaviors may be better suited to alternate care options:

- **Fear/Anxiety.** These behaviors suggest your cat is feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable in the environment, even with support and time to settle in:
  - Extreme hiding or refusal to come out
  - Trembling, panting, or physical signs of stress
  - Excessive grooming leading to hair loss or irritation
  - Not eating, drinking, or using the litter box for more than 48 hours
  - Pacing, loud vocalizing, or frequent distress signals
  - Body language such as pinned ears, dilated pupils, tucked posture, or tail flicking
- **Aggression or Unsafe Behaviors.** These behaviors suggest your cat may show signs of discomfort in ways that create safety concerns for themselves or our staff:
  - Growling, biting, swatting, or lunging
  - Guarding food, space, or toys
  - Cornering staff
  - Unprovoked attacks or persistent defensive posturing
  - Frequent urine spraying or territorial marking

If we notice consistent or escalating patterns, we will always reach out to talk through options and help find the best care plan going forward.

## What happens if my cat shows stress during their stay?

We monitor all cats throughout the day and pay close attention to how they're adjusting. If we notice concerning behavior, we'll reach out to talk about what we're seeing and explore next steps. In some cases, this may mean picking up a little early or adjusting future care plans.

We'll never make decisions about your cat without talking to you first, and we'll always approach every situation with empathy and honesty.

## A Note From the Team

At Take Five, we see boarding as a partnership between us and your family. Our promise is honesty and transparency—we'll celebrate your cat's wins, share updates along the way, and be upfront if challenges arise. Open communication means you're never left guessing, and together we can make sure your cat's experience is safe, comfortable, and the right fit. With your trust and our care, every cat can feel confident, secure, and truly at home.