

 VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY	Title: Emotional Support Animal Policy	
	University Division/Department: Office for Residence Life	
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I. PURPOSE

This policy governs Emotional Support Animals on Villanova University’s campus and property, including in the Residence Halls.


II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals who request or have been granted approval to bring or keep Emotional Support Animals in the Residence Halls, as well as others who may interact or come into contact with an Emotional Support Animal. For inquiries regarding the use or presence of an Emotional Support Animal elsewhere on University campus and property, please contact the Office of Disability Services (for students) or the Human Resources Department (for employees).

III. DEFINITIONS

Disability: A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Service Animal: A Service Animal is a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In certain circumstances, miniature horses may also qualify as Service Animals. Other animals, whether wild or domestic, do not qualify as Service Animals. Animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, or companionship do not qualify as Service Animals. For additional information, please consult the University’s Service Animal Policy.

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Emotional Support Animal: An Emotional Support Animal (or “ESA”) is not a pet. It is an animal that provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person’s disability. There must be a disability-related need for the ESA. Unlike a Service Animal, an ESA may not accompany a person with a disability at all times, and is typically only permitted in University housing (dwelling unit and common areas).

Owner: An ESA’s Owner is the member of the Villanova University community with a disability who has received approval for use of the Emotional Support Animal.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT


Villanova University is committed to compliance with federal housing laws and recognizes the importance of Emotional Support Animals to individuals with disabilities. Please note that Villanova University prohibits pets and other animals in University housing. This policy provides a mechanism for individuals with disabilities to seek a reasonable accommodation in the form of an exclusion from this general prohibition.

V. PROCEDURE

Emotional Support Animals may not be brought into University housing without the express written approval from the Office for Residence Life. Students should follow the procedure set forth in this policy to request approval of an ESA in University housing.

Documentation and Approval Process (University housing):

- The student must first complete the disability determination process through the Office of Disability Services as a prerequisite to any decisions about accommodations and services.
- Documentation of the need for an Emotional Support Animal should come from a physician, psychiatrist, social worker, mental health professional, or other treating professional, and should be submitted to the Office of Disability Services and the Office for Residence Life.
- The documentation must be on professional letterhead and signed by the treating professional, and include the state in which the professional is licensed, and must be dated within the last 6 months. Information written on a prescription pad is not an appropriate format for documentation.
- The documentation must establish that the student has a disability and that the specific animal will provide disability-related assistance or emotional support.
- Once required documentation has been submitted, as necessary and appropriate, Facilities, Public Safety and other staff, as well as potential or current roommates will be notified by the Office for Residence Life.

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- In the event that one or more roommates do not approve of the presence of the ESA, Residence Life will make every effort to find another location for the individual to reside with the ESA.
- In most circumstances, ESAs are not permitted in University facilities beyond the student’s approved housing (e.g. libraries, academic buildings, classrooms, labs, student center, dining services, etc.). If a student is requesting an ESA be permitted in areas other than the student’s dwelling unit and associated common areas, the student must contact the Office of Disability Services for accommodation (additional documentation may be required).
- The approval of an ESA is animal-specific. If a student intends to replace an ESA, a new request and updated/current supportive documentation must be submitted to the Office of Disability Services and the Office for Residence Life.


Note: Animals that pose a safety or disease threat to humans will not be allowed on campus.

Conflicting Health Conditions:

Individuals with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (e.g., respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) are asked to contact Residence Life if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to an ESA. The University will also provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities who will be impacted when living in proximity to ESAs.

Owner’s Responsibilities in University Housing:

- The Owner must abide by current city, county, and state ordinances, laws, and/or regulations pertaining to licensing, vaccination, and other requirements for animals. It is the Owner’s responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. The University has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate and proof of licensure.
- An Owner will be charged for any damage caused by the ESA beyond reasonable wear and tear. The University may inspect Owner's living area for fleas, ticks or other pests, as necessary and consistent with the room entry policies. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the University will treat the areas as appropriate. The Owner will be billed for any damage and/or expense of any pest treatment necessitated by the presence of the ESA, including by applying such charges to the Owner’s University account.
- The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the ESA does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence area.
- The animal MUST be completely house trained—for dogs: trained to urinate and defecate

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outside. No training pads allowed.

- The Owner is responsible for the actions of the ESA including financial obligations of bodily injury.
- The ESA is allowed in University housing only as long as it is necessary because of the Owner’s disability. The Owner must notify Residence Life in writing if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence.
- ESAs must be contained within the privately assigned residential areas at all times, except when transported outside the private residential areas in an animal carrier or controlled by leash or harness.
- ESAs may not be left overnight in University Housing to be cared for by any individual other than the Owner. If the Owner is to be absent from the Owner’s residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the Owner.
- The Owner must provide contact information for an alternative caregiver/emergency contact who will take responsibility of the ESA and remove it from campus should the Owner be unable to care for it (e.g. hospitalization, accident). The caregiver/emergency contact must reside OFF campus and must be available to remove the ESA in a timely manner appropriate for the animal species and needed care. Dogs must be removed within 6 hours. All other animals must be removed in no more than 12 hours. In instances where it is determined the ESA needs care not being provided to ensure immediate health and well-being, the University reserves the right to have the animal removed from university housing. The University may have an ESA removed from university housing if it is not removed in a timely manner as specified in this policy.
- The Owner is responsible for ensuring that the ESA is contained, as appropriate, when the Owner is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities.
- Residence Life may relocate Owners and ESAs to other housing consistent with University policy.
- Owners must abide by all other residential policies.
- Owners must provide written consent for the Office of Disability Services to disclose information regarding the request for and presence of the ESA to those individuals who may be impacted by the presence of the animal including, but not limited to, Residence Life personnel and potential and/or actual roommate(s)/neighbor(s). Such information shall be limited to information related to the animal and shall not include information related to the Owner’s disability.

Maintaining an Emotional Support Animal at Villanova University:

Care and Supervision

- Care and supervision of the ESA are the responsibility of the Owner, who must maintain

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control of the animal at all times.

- Villanova personnel shall not be required to provide care or food for any ESA including, but not limited to, removing the animal during emergency evacuation for events such as a fire alarm. In the event of an emergency, appropriate personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and may not be held responsible for the care of, injury to, or loss of the animal.
- In the case of an emergency, the Owner must have a back-up plan including a caretaker's name and number to provide Residence Life, if applicable.
- The Owner is required to ensure the animal is well cared for at all times. Any evidence of mistreatment or abuse may result in immediate removal of the ESA and/or discipline for the responsible individual.
- The Owner is also responsible for ensuring the cleanup of the ESA's waste and, when appropriate, must toilet the ESA in outdoor areas designated by the University. All animal waste, including cat litter, must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and securely tied up before being disposed of in the appropriately labeled outside trash containers. Litter boxes must be placed on mats so that waste is not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. All bathing/washing care of ESAs must take place off campus.


Animal Health and Well-Being

- **Vaccination:** The ESA must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Dogs must have current vaccination against rabies and wear a rabies vaccination tag. Cats should have the normal shots required for a healthy animal. Local licensing requirements must be followed.
- **Health:** ESAs must have an annual clean bill of health from a licensed veterinarian. The University reserves the right to request documentation of an Animal Wellness check from a veterinarian regarding the ESAs health. The University has authority to direct that the ESA receive veterinary attention, but has no obligation to do so.
- **Licensing:** The University may require documentation showing that the ESA is properly licensed.
- **Leash:** An ESA may be required to be on a leash (if appropriate).
- **Other Conditions:** Residence Life may place other reasonable conditions or restrictions on an ESA depending on the nature and characteristics of the animal.

Removal of the Emotional Support Animal

The University may remove an ESA if there is substantial objective evidence that the ESA:

- 1) poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes property damage to University property or the property of others;

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- 2) the animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of the University's programming;
- 3) the Owner does not comply with the Owner's Responsibilities set forth in this policy;
or
- 4) the animal or its presence creates an unreasonable disturbance in or interference with the Villanova community.

VI. RELATED INFORMATION/FORMS

Service Animal Policy

VII. HISTORY

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VIII. RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/ DEPARTMENT

Dean of Students and Assistant Vice President for Residence Life
Office of the Dean of Students
800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085
610.519.4200

IX. RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT

Vice President for Student Life
Division of Student Life
202 Dougherty Hall
610.519.4550