

Service/Emotional/Comfort Support Animal Procedures

Any resident student requesting to have an emotional support animal (also known as a comfort animal) in on-campus housing is responsible for knowing and adhering to the policy and procedures described in the St. Mary's College of Maryland Animals on Campus Policy as well as this document.

To begin the process, the student must work with their clinician to complete a St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) Disability Accommodations Request Form, and submit it to the Office of Academic Services Coordinator of Disability Support Services (CDSS). The clinician whether it be a medical doctor, therapist, counselor, psychiatrist or psychologist will provide a diagnosis and indicate that the comfort animal is therapeutic for the student in residence.

No service or comfort animal will be permitted in SMCM housing that:

- Is not approved by the CDSS
- Is not approved by the Director of Residence Life
- Poses a direct threat to the health, safety, or well-being of others
- Would pose an undue financial and/or administrative burden to SMCM
- Would fundamentally alter the nature of SMCM's housing operations.

Once endorsement has reached the Office of Residence Life (ORL) the student must submit the Emotional Support Animal Registration Form, Veterinarian Verification Form, and the Roommate/Housemate/ Suitemate Agreement Form to the Office of Residence Life (ORL) along with any other required documentation for final approval. All approved comfort and service animals must comply with applicable laws regarding animals and their treatment and care.

The following standards must be met for each animal:

Dogs:

- All required immunizations must be up-to-date.
- A copy of the immunizations must be on file with the ORL.
- You must obtain a St. Mary's County dog license from the County Treasurer's Office in Leonardtown.
- Dogs must be spayed or neutered.
- A copy of the veterinarian's report must be on file with the ORL.
- Dogs must be housebroken.
- Collars and tags must be worn and visible at all times.
- The dog must be under control (leashed) at all times when outside the resident's room/suite/apartment/townhouse.
- Dogs must never be allowed to run off-leash.

- Dogs are only permitted at athletic events if they are a service animal.
- Dogs must possess friendly and sociable characteristics.
- A specific dog can be restricted from the premises by the Director of Residence Life based on any confirmed threatening or territorial behavior.
- Dog obedience and training programs are highly recommended.

Domestic Cats:

- All required immunizations must be up-to-date.
- A copy of the immunizations must be on file with the ORL.
- Cats must be spayed or neutered.
- A copy of the veterinarian's report must be on file with the ORL.
- Collars and tags must be worn and visible at all times.
- The cat must be under control at all times when outside the resident's room/suite/apartment/townhouse.
- Cats must never be allowed to run freely.
- Cats must possess friendly and sociable characteristics.
- A specific cat can be restricted from the premises by the Director of Residence Life based on any confirmed threatening and/or harmful behavior.

Any Other Animal:

- A copy of the veterinarian's report must be on file with the ORL.
- All required applicable immunizations must be up-to-date.
- A copy of applicable immunizations must be on file with the ORL.
- The animal must be under control, at all times, when outside the resident's room/suite/apartment/townhouse.
- The animal must never be allowed to roam freely.
- The animal must possess friendly and sociable characteristics.
- A specific animal can be restricted from the premises by the Director of Residence Life based on any confirmed threatening and/or harmful behavior.

Standards of Behavior by Animal and Animal Owner Health, sanitary, safety, and orderly standards must be maintained as follows:

Animal Care

- Animals require daily food and attention, as well as a daily assessment of their general health, behavior, and overall welfare.
- Approved animals cannot be left unattended overnight in college housing to be cared for by another student, except in emergencies.
- If the owner must be away, they must either take the animal with them, or make arrangements for them to be cared for elsewhere.
- Emotional/comfort animals must not be taken into the staff offices in the residences, administrative offices, common spaces, academic buildings, or other student living areas.
- Emotional/comfort animals are permitted in common areas that are controlled by the animal's owner (e.g. the common room in the suites, the bathroom in the apartments).
- Animal feces, defined as cat litter box contents and any solid animal waste, must be disposed of properly in dumpsters (not in residence hall trash receptacles or through the sewer system inside any building).

- It is the owner's responsibility to remove feces from College grounds, dispose of them in a plastic bag, and then place that bag in the dumpster outside.
- Clean-up must occur immediately.
- Residents with cats must properly maintain litter boxes.
- In consideration of the health of the cat and occupants of the room/suite/apartment/townhouse, cat litter box contents must be disposed of properly and regularly (at least daily).
- The litter box must be changed with new cat litter regularly as outlined by the manufacturer.
- Animal-accidents within the room/suite/apartment/townhouse must be promptly cleaned up using appropriate cleaning products.
- Regular and routine cleaning of floors, kennels, cages, and litter boxes must occur.
- The odor of an animal emanating from the room/suite/apartment/townhouse is not acceptable. (See Cleaning section below.)
- Any flea infestation must be attended to promptly by a professional extermination company. The College's Physical Plant will schedule the extermination, which will be at the resident's expense. Animal owners are expected to promptly notify the ORL and Physical Plant (ext. 4287) to arrange for extermination when a flea problem is noted.
- Animal owners are urged to take precautionary measures such as: flea medications prescribed by veterinarians, flea and tick collars, taking your animal to the veterinarian for flea and tick baths. College staff may not use chemical agents and insecticides to exterminate fleas and ticks.

Because not all of the precautions listed here can prevent flea and tick infestations, the owner is responsible for extermination costs after vacating the room/suite/apartment/townhouse.

Animal Behavior and SMCM Response

- Animals must not disrupt others (e.g. barking frequently, growling, yowling, howling, crying, etc.).
- Animals which constitute a threat (perceived or otherwise) or nuisance to staff, residents, or property, as determined by the Director of Residence Life, must be removed from campus within seven (7) days of notification.
- If the College determines that the animal poses an immediate threat, animal control may be summoned to remove the animal.
- If the behavior of an animal can be addressed by the owner and the owner can change the behavior of an animal so that the animal does not have to be removed, then a written action plan must be submitted by the owner.
 - The action plan must outline the action that will take place to alleviate the problems and also must give a deadline as to length of time the plan will take.
 - Any action plan must meet the approval of the Director of Residence Life.
- The day after the deadline for removal from college housing, College staff will do a room inspection to check for damages and infestation and then the mandatory cleaning and extermination will be scheduled.
- Any animal owner found not adhering to the removal directive will be subject to conduct action. Conduct action could include contract cancellation.
- An animal must not be involved in an incident where a person experiences either the threat of or an actual injury as a result of the animal's behavior.
- The animal owner will take all reasonable precautions to protect College staff and

residents, as well as College property and the property of others.

- The owner will notify the ORL if the animal escapes its confines and is unable to be located within 12 hours.
- All liability for the actions of the animal (bites, scratches, damages, etc.) is the responsibility of the owner.
- The owner must notify roommate(s)/suite mates/housemates at least 10 days in advance before bringing the animal into the room/suite/apartment/townhouse.
- Violations concerning any of the aforementioned may result in the resident having to find alternative housing off-campus for the animal and, as warranted, may also result in a resident being in breach of their housing contract.

Cleaning and Damages

- Periodic, announced inspections (by Physical Plant, Residence Life, and/or the Environmental Health and Safety Coordinator) will be done to check for cleanliness, replace air filters, check air handlers, and ensure that pet hair is not accumulating in fan coils, clogging condensation drain pans, etc.
- When the resident moves out of his/her room/suite/apartment/townhouse or no longer owns the animal, the living space will be assessed to determine if damage to College property can be attributed to the animal.
- The College maintains the right to conduct room inspections for the purpose of assessing damage caused by the animal or otherwise determine the resident's compliance with this procedure.
- The animal owner has an obligation to make sure that the living space is as clean as or cleaner than the original standard.
- If the living space has carpet, regular vacuuming and spot cleaning must occur.
- Repairing damages and cleaning all mess caused by the animal are the responsibility of the resident. Replacement or repair of damaged items will be the financial responsibility of the owner.

Laundry

- Due to concerns about possible cross contamination for students with severe allergies to animal fur, dander, feathers, etc., a washer and a dryer will be designated in each laundry room where a comfort animal has been approved.
- Students with approved animals must use the designated washer and dryer in their laundry room.

Housing

- Due to concerns regarding the welfare of the animal and the need for certain animals to have adequate living space, as well as the student's welfare, it is preferred for dogs and cats to be in North Campus housing (recognizing that the animal must remain within the owner's room or unit).
- Students assigned to the traditional halls will need to engage in a conversation with the Director of Residence Life or Assistant Director of Residence Life regarding the room size and caring for an animal in a relatively small space.
- Rodents, reptiles, and other small mammals (e.g. hamsters, gerbils, rabbits, etc.) will be permitted in the traditional halls and North Campus residences.
- Having a comfort animal does not necessitate that a student will be assigned to a single

room nor will the College mandate that a student with a comfort animal be assigned to live in a single room.

Changing Emotional Support Animal

- A student may change their animal if the animal and student are not bonding well or if the animal is noisy, interfering with other students, etc., but the student must first re-submit all of the paperwork (the Emotional Comfort Animal Registration Form, the Vet Verification Form, and the Roommate/Suitemate/Housemate Agreement form).

Multiple Emotional Support Animals

- If a student needs to have more than one emotional support animal, the documentation provided to the College must include the reason(s) for more than one animal.

Alternate/Emergency Caregiver

- In the event of an emergency (i.e. due to an accident, illness, hospitalization), an alternate/emergency caregiver must be identified on the Emotional Support Animal Registration Form.
- The identified caregiver must have quick and easy access to the student's room and ideally, should be a member of the SMC community. Hence, parents, friends from home, etc. are not appropriate emergency caregivers.

Roommates/Suitemates/Housemates

- Before a student with an emotional support animal will be permitted to bring the animal into housing, all roommates, suitemates, or housemates must be amenable to having the animal sharing the space and must agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and on the agreement form.
- If any of the roommates/suitemates/housemates are afraid, allergic, or otherwise do not wish to live with an animal, arrangements will have to be made for either the student that does not want to live with an animal or the owner of the animal to move to a more suitable arrangement.
- The animal's owner is required to keep the animal under control at all times.
- The animal should not be allowed to roam freely into other bedrooms or into common spaces not controlled by the animal's owner.
- The student must update the Roommate/Suitemate/Housemate Agreement form annually or if a room change is approved during the academic year.

Notification

- The College will notify residents in close proximity to the emotional support animal of its' presence as well as Residence Life staff in the building/area, Public Safety, Physical Plant, and the local fire departments.

Housekeeping/Maintenance/Public Safety

- A student living on North Campus is to keep their approved animal in their bedroom behind closed doors when they are out of their townhouse, apartment, or suite.

- This is especially important for the students living in the LQ and WC suites since housekeeping staff members have to go into the suites to clean the bathrooms.
- We have some staff members in housekeeping and maintenance who are fearful and/or allergic to some of the approved animals on campus and we must be respectful of these staff members who are trying to do their assigned work.
- If Physical Plant or Public Safety staff must enter a room, townhouse, apartment, or suite that has an animal within the space, the animal must be contained within a kennel, crate, or cage with the owner present at all times.
- Physical Plant staff will try to schedule routine maintenance work in advance with the animal owner.
- If the owner is unable to be present during the time of a repair, the animal must be vacated from the area prior to the scheduled repair time unless kenneled or crated.
- If an emergency exists, the animal may be restrained in order to protect the employees and the animal.

Conflicting Disabilities

- The Office of Residence Life will make a reasonable effort to notify residents living in relatively close proximity to an approved animal.
- Residents with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (respiratory diseases, asthma, severe allergies) or those with extreme fears of a particular animal should contact either the Coordinator of Disability Support Services in Academic Services or the Office of Residence Life.
- The Coordinator of Disability Support Services and staff in the Office of Residence Life will try to make reasonable accommodations for individuals as needed in a timely manner.
- Staff will consider the conflicting needs and/or accommodations of all residents involved.
- The student with the approved animal and/or the student with the medical condition/fear may be asked to relocate.
- Health Services may be used as a resource for information on health issues.
- In the event that an agreement cannot be reached between residents, the Coordinator of Disability Support Services decision is final and not subject to appeal.