



Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy

Randolph College is committed to supporting students with mental health disabilities by allowing Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) when an ESA affords an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing. This policy explains the specific requirements applicable to an individual's use of an ESA in College housing. Randolph College reserves the right to amend this policy, as circumstances require.

An ESA is an animal selected to play an integral part of an individual's treatment process, providing emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a mental health disability. Pets are prohibited in all College residences, with the sole exception of fish. Randolph College will consider requests for reasonable accommodation from this prohibition to allow an ESA that is necessary because of a disability. However, no ESA may be kept in College housing at any time prior to the individual receiving approval of the reasonable accommodation.

Criteria for Determining if the Presence of the ESA is Reasonable

Access Services consults with Residence Life, the Counseling Center, and the Health Center (collectively referred to as the Special Accommodations Committee) in making a determination on a case-by-case basis of whether the presence of an ESA is reasonable. A request for an ESA may be denied as **unreasonable** if the presence of the animal:

- imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden
- fundamentally alters College housing policies
- poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others (e.g., aggressive behavior, potential transmission of zoonotic diseases)
- would cause substantial damage to the property of others, including College property.

The College may consider the following factors, among others, as evidence in determining whether the presence of the animal is reasonable or in the making of housing assignments for individuals with ESAs:

- The size of the animal is too large for available assigned housing space. The Owner's (the individual who has requested the accommodation and has received approval to bring the ESA into College housing) assigned housing space changes each year; they may not always have the flexibility to choose their space during the room draw and selection process.
- The animal's presence would force another individual from individual housing (e.g. serious allergies).
- The animal's presence otherwise violates individuals' right to peace and quiet enjoyment.
- The animal is not housebroken or is unable to live with others in a reasonable manner.

- The animal's vaccinations are not up-to-date.
- The animal poses or has posed in the past a direct threat to the individual or others such as aggressive behavior towards or injuring the individual or others.
- The animal causes or has caused excessive damage to housing beyond reasonable wear and tear.

The College will not limit room assignments for individuals with an ESA to any particular building or buildings on the basis that the individual needs an ESA or because of disability.

Generally, only one ESA will be allowed per student, in order to fulfill the intent of the FHAA requirements in providing support to the student with a mental health disability; only one ESA is approved for any given residence hall room/residential unit.

All roommates of the Owner must sign an agreement allowing the ESA to be in the room/residence unit with them. In the event that a roommate(s) does not approve, either the Owner and animal or the non-approving roommate(s) may be moved to a more suitable location as determined by Residence Life.

A college residential setting, in most cases, is not an appropriate environment in which to raise a young animal. Generally, dogs and cats must be at least twelve (12) months of age, must be spayed or neutered, and must have received their first rabies vaccination before they can live in College housing.

Approved ESAs must be in the Owner's possession for at least three months prior to being allowed into College housing unless the Owner has special permission from the Special Accommodations Committee or the Coordinator of Access Services.

Required Documentation

Before the ESA is allowed in College housing, the following documentation must be provided to the Coordinator of Access Services:

- **Certificate of Health:** Generally, the ESA must be examined by a licensed veterinarian and a certificate of health issued no sooner than 60 days prior to move-in date.
- **Proof of Vaccination:** As appropriate to species, the ESA must be up-to-date on all required vaccinations.
- **License:** Dogs must be licensed in the city of Lynchburg or the city of the Owner's permanent residence.

Supervision

- It is the Owner's responsibility to supervise and control the ESA at all times.
- The ESA is restricted to the student's residence hall room, and in the case of Grovesnor Apartments, the student's residential unit. The ESA must be in a pet carrier or crate when the Owner is not present.

- Dogs are allowed outside for toileting and exercise only. They are to be on leash at all times, and are restricted to College pathways; dogs are not allowed in outdoor venues (e.g., sports fields, Main Hall deck). All other animals are only allowed outside to be transported, and must be crated or caged.
- No Owner shall permit an ESA to go loose or run at large. If an ESA is found running at large, Security personnel will contact Animal Control for immediate removal of the animal from College property; the Owner will assume all costs associated with the removal.
- Contact information must be provided for a designated person who will assume responsibility for the ESA in case of emergency, accident, or hospitalization of the Owner. An intentional conversation must take place between the Owner and the designated emergency contact in order to arrange access to the Owner's approved residential space and to determine an appropriate care schedule that is agreed upon by the Owner and roommate, if applicable. The ESA must remain in the Owner's residential space while being cared for by the designee.
- The ESA may not be left unattended and must accompany the Owner if the Owner leaves campus for overnight or longer.
- In the event that the Owner must leave campus overnight or longer for a College sponsored activity, a proxy may be named to assume responsibility for the care, supervision, and control of the ESA for the duration of the Owner's absence. An intentional conversation must take place between the Owner and the designated proxy in order to arrange access to the Owner's approved residential space and to determine an appropriate care schedule that is agreed upon by the Owner and roommate, if applicable.

For each expected absence, the Owner must contact the Coordinator of Access Services **at least three business days in advance** in order to complete the necessary paperwork and for Residence Life and Campus Safety to be notified of the arrangement. The Coordinator of Access Services must approve the use of a proxy **each time** the Owner leaves campus overnight or longer for a College sponsored activity.

Owner Responsibility for the ESA

The Owner is solely responsible for the custody and care of the ESA and must meet the following requirements:

- 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 individual's responsibility to know and understand these ordinances, laws, and regulations. The College has the right to require documentation of compliance with such ordinances, laws, and/or regulations, which may include a vaccination certificate. The

College reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed.

- 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.
- The Owner is responsible for feeding and watering the ESA within the confines of their personal room. Bowls of food and water should be placed on mats so that water and food do not get on the floor. Food for the animal should be kept in a closed container within the confines of the Owner's room. Open bags of food are not permissible, as they attract pests.
- The Owner is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner. Indoor animal waste, such as cat litter, cedar chips, etc., must be placed in a sturdy plastic bag and tied securely before being disposed of in an outside trash receptacle. Animal waste may not be disposed of in sinks, toilets, or indoor trash receptacles. Litter boxes should be placed on mats so that feces and urine are not tracked onto carpeted surfaces. Litter boxes, cages, crates, or habitats may not be cleaned in College housing showers and sinks. Outdoor animal waste, such as dog feces, must be immediately retrieved by the Owner, placed in a plastic bag, and securely tied before being disposed of in an outside trash receptacle.
- The Owner must ensure that the ESA is kept clean and free from odor; however, the Owner may not use College housing showers, sinks, or bathtubs to clean the animal.
- The Owner must fully cooperate with College personnel with regard to meeting the terms of this Policy and developing procedures for care of the animal (e.g., cleaning the animal, feeding/watering the animal, designating an outdoor relief area, disposing of feces, etc.)
- The Owner agrees to abide by all equally applicable residential policies that are unrelated to the individual's disability such as assuring that the animal does not unduly interfere with the routine activities of the residence or cause difficulties for individuals who reside there.
- The animal is allowed in College housing only as long as it is necessary because of the Owner's disability. The Owner must notify the Access Services Office in writing if the ESA is no longer needed or is no longer in residence.
- Should the ESA need to be replaced, the Owner must follow established procedures for applying for a new ESA. A new ESA may not be brought into College housing until the Special Accommodations Committee approves it.
- Randolph College personnel are not 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. Emergency personnel will determine whether to remove the animal and will not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal.

- In case of an emergency that requires evacuation of College property, the ESA must be on leash or in a pet carrier/crate.

Financial Responsibility of the Owner:

Randolph College will not require the Owner to pay a fee or surcharge for an approved ESA.

The Owner may be charged for any damage caused by the ESA beyond reasonable wear and tear to the same extent that it charges other individuals for damages beyond reasonable wear and tear.

The Owner's living accommodations may also be inspected for fleas, ticks, or other pests as necessary. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the residence will be treated using fumigation methods by a College-approved pest control service. The Owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in College housing.

Any cost for the actions of the ESA, including bodily injury, property damage, and/or non-standard cleaning, must be met by the Owner.

Removal of an ESA

An ESA may be removed from College property at any time under the following circumstances:

- The ESA poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial damage to the property of others.
- It is determined that the animal is in poor health/ill, unclean, or abused/neglected.
- The ESA or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the College community.
- The Owner fails to comply with the rules outlined in this Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy.

Procedure for removal:

When it is determined that an ESA must be removed from College property, the Coordinator of Access Services will notify the Owner immediately.

The ESA must be removed from campus within 24 hours of the notification.

Should the ESA not be removed as instructed, the College will remove the ESA to the nearest appropriate animal shelter; the owner will assume any costs associated with the removal.

Should the ESA be removed from the premises for any reason, the Owner is expected to fulfill their housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

The Owner acknowledges that information may be shared with those individuals who may be impacted by the presence of the ESA including, but not limited to, Residence Life personnel, Security personnel, Building and Grounds 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 individual's disability.

My signature indicates that I have read and understand the Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy and agree to abide by the rules outlined in the Policy.

Owner's Name (Print)

Owner's Signature

Date