



**ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY**

**STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY
SERVICES**

Service and Emotional Support Animal (ESA) Policy

I. Purpose of the Service and Emotional Support Animal Policy

This document sets forth St. John's University's policy on Service and Emotional Support Animals, and explains the accommodation process. The University reserves the right to amend this policy as circumstances require.

II. Definitions

Service Animal – A “Service Animal” is a animal (typically a dog) that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Emotional Support Animal – An “Emotional Support Animal” provides emotional support, well-being, or comfort. Unlike a Service Animal, an Emotional Support Animal does not accompany an individual outside a residence hall (*i.e.*, Emotional Support Animals do not attend class, enter the library, or visit other residence halls or dining halls).

Individual with a Disability – An “individual with a disability” is an incoming or continuing student with a physical, medical, mental or psychological impairment, or a history or record of such impairment.

III. The Service and Emotional Support Animal Accommodation Process

An individual with a disability seeking a Service or Emotional Support Animal accommodation shall follow the process described below and contact Student Accessibility Services by these deadlines:

Incoming Students (First-time freshmen, transfer, graduate, and law students to SJU) Fall housing deadlines: June 1st
Spring housing deadlines: November 1st

Continuing Students (Returning freshmen, transfer, graduate, and law students to SJU) Fall housing deadlines: June 1st
Spring housing deadlines November 1st

A. Request a Service Animal Accommodation:

- Sign and date this form and submit it to Student Accessibility Services via Accommodate, on SignOn.
- Complete the Veterinarian Verification Form (Appendix I) and submit it to Student Accessibility Services.

B. Request an Emotional Support Animal Accommodation:

- Sign and date this form and submit it to Student Accessibility Services via Accommodate, on SignOn.
- Complete the Veterinarian Verification Form (Appendix I) and submit it to Student Accessibility Services.
- Complete the Authorization for Release of Health Information and Health Care Provider Verification Form (Appendix II).

The Service and Emotional Support Animal Committee will evaluate your request and respond with a decision in writing. Any questions should be directed to Student Accessibility Services: Marillac, Room 134 Tel: 718-990-6867 sas@stjohns.edu

IV. Responsibilities of the Owner of a Service or Emotional Support Animal

- Service Animals may travel freely with their owner throughout the University, but must remain under the control of the owner at all times.
- Emotional Support Animals must remain in the student's bedroom/suite/apartment, except during transport and in emergency situations (*e.g.*, fire alarm, evacuation), in which case Emotional Support Animals must be secured in an animal carrier or controlled by a leash or harness.
- Service and Emotional Support Animals must be properly housed and restrained or otherwise under the dominion and control of the owner at all times. No owner shall permit the animal to go loose or run at large. If an animal is found running at large, the animal is subject to capture and confinement and immediate removal from 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. The University reserves the right to request documentation showing that the animal has been licensed. Additionally, the owner must abide by all equally applicable residential policies, 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 owner is required to ensure the animal is well cared for at all times. Any evidence of mistreatment, abuse, neglect, or leaving the Emotional Support Animal unattended for unreasonably long periods of time may result in immediate removal of the animal and/or discipline for the responsible individual pursuant to the University Student Code of Conduct and/or any housing-related sanctions. University personnel shall **not** be required to provide care or food for any animal 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 may not be held responsible for the care, damage to, or loss of the animal. Additionally, Emotional Support Animals 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 his/her residence hall overnight or longer, the animal must accompany the owner. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the Emotional Support Animal is contained, as appropriate, when the owner is not present during the day while attending classes or other activities.
- The owner is required to clean up after and properly dispose of the animal's waste in a safe and sanitary manner and, when provided, must use animal relief areas designated by the University. An individual with a disability may be charged for any damage caused by his or her Emotional Support Animal 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 if necessary as part of the University's standard or routine inspections. If fleas, ticks or other pests are detected through inspection, the owner will be billed for the expense of any pest treatment above and beyond standard pest management in the residence halls. The University shall have the right to bill the owner's account for unmet obligations under this provision.

- The animal is allowed in University housing only as long as it is necessary because of the owner's disability. The owner must notify the Student Accessibility Services and the Office of Residence Life in writing if the Service or Emotional Support Animal is no longer needed or is no longer in residence. To replace an Emotional Support Animal, the new animal must be necessary because of the owner's disability and the owner must follow the procedures in this policy when requesting a different animal.

V. Removal of the Service or Emotional Support Animal

The University may require the owner to remove the Service or Emotional Support Animal from University housing if:

- The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others or causes substantial property damage to the property of others, including University property;
- The animal's presence results in a fundamental alteration of a University program;
- The owner does not comply with the owner's responsibilities set forth above; or
- The animal or its presence creates an unmanageable disturbance or interference with the University community.

Removal determinations will be based on the behavior of the particular animal and/or the resident, in consultation with the Office of Residence Life, the resident, and other parties as appropriate. Should the animal be removed from the premises for any reason, the owner is expected to fulfill his/her housing obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

VI. Conflicting Health Conditions

Students with medical condition(s) that are affected by animals (*e.g.*, respiratory diseases, asthma) should contact the Student Accessibility Services if they have a health or safety related concern about exposure to a Service or Emotional Support Animal.

VII. Requirements for Members of the University Community

Members of the University community (*e.g.*, Faculty, Administrators, Staff) are required to abide by the following practices:

- Permit a Service Animal to accompany its owner at all times and in all places on campus, except where animals are specifically prohibited.
- Not to touch or pet a Service or Emotional Support Animal unless invited to do so.
- Not to feed a Service or Emotional Support Animal.
- Not to harass a Service or Emotional Support Animal.
- Not to separate or attempt to separate an owner from his or her Service or Emotional Support Animal.
- Not to ask questions about the owner's disabilities. The nature of a person's disability is a private matter.

Acknowledgment and Release of Information Consent Form

By my signature below, I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by the requirements outlined in the Service and Emotional Support Animal Policy. I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements, St. John's University has the right to remove the animal and I will be nonetheless required to fulfill my housing, academic, and all other obligations for the remainder of the housing contract.

I furthermore give permission to St. John's University to disclose to others impacted by the presence of my animal (*e.g.*, Residence Life staff, potential and/or actual roommate(s)/neighbor(s)) that I will be living with an animal as an accommodation. I understand that this information will be shared with the intent of preparing for the presence of the animal and/or resolving any potential issues associated with the presence of the animal. I will hold St. John's University harmless from any liability for disclosing such information.

I further recognize the presence of the animal may be noticed by others visiting or residing in University Housing and agree that staff may acknowledge the presence of the animal, and explain that under certain circumstances animals are permitted for persons with disabilities.

I understand that any modifications to these requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Service and Emotional Support Animal Committee, the Office of Residence Life, and/or the appropriate University official.

Owner's Name (Please Print)

Owner's Permanent Address

SJU Email (if applicable)

Alt. Email Address

Owner's Signature

Date