

ANIMALS ON CAMPUS**Policy Statement**

This policy is guided by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) and [Virginia Code § 51.5-44](#).

Scope

The policy applies to all students, staff, faculty, administration, community members, and visitors on Laurel Ridge Community College property, controlled or leased areas.

Laurel Ridge Community College is committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming campus environment. In order to promote public safety and to protect the College from liability in animal control incidents, no person shall bring an animal onto campus, other than service dogs and approved emotional support animals (ESAs) or animals approved for academic or student services programming, as provided for in this policy.

General Provisions:

- A. Animals are prohibited:
 - a. In any College owned or controlled facility.
 - b. At any public gathering held on College owned or controlled property including, but not limited to, demonstrations, exhibits, or fairs.
- B. Animals may not be tethered or left unattended.
- C. Animals should not be left in closed vehicles on campus.
- D. Horses shall not be ridden on any College owned or controlled property that is developed or landscaped.
- E. No pets are permitted indoors on any College owned properties or controlled facilities.
- F. Pets are permitted outdoors on college owned properties and controlled facilities under the condition that they are leashed and/or under physical control as well as in compliance with all items under section 4 of this policy.

Exceptions to this policy:

- A. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Virginia Code § 51.5-44. Rights of persons with disabilities in public places and places of public accommodation, this policy does not apply to service animals as defined by federal and state statutes and regulations.

a. Service Animals:

Service animals are not pets. In addition, under the ADA, service animals are not required to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

If there is a reason to question whether a dog is a service animal, college personnel may ask only the following two specific questions:

- i. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
- ii. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

An individual's failure to answer the above questions may result in removal of the animal from campus. College personnel may not ask questions about the nature of the individual's disability; require proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal; or require that the service animal demonstrate the task it performs.

Service Animal Access:

Generally, individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of the college where members of the public, participants in services, programs, or activities, or invitees are permitted to go.

Handler Responsibilities for Service Animals:

The handler is responsible for the care, supervision, and behavior of a service animal including toileting, feeding, grooming, and veterinary care. College officials are not required to supervise or otherwise care for a service animal. The handler also is responsible for keeping the service animal under control. The service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices cannot be used because they would interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

Removal of Service Animals: College officials may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from public areas under two circumstances:

- iii. The animal is not housebroken; or
- iv. the animal is out of control, and the handler does not take effective action to control it

1. Examples of behavior that would qualify as “out of control” include behavior by a service animal that poses a threat to the health or safety of others or disrupts or interferes with college programs or activities (e.g., aggressive behavior such as lunging or biting toward other community members). This determination, however, may not be made based on assumptions about the breed of animal or based on past experience with other animals. Further, a service animal may be removed if allowing it to remain would fundamentally alter the nature of the program or service. College personnel will make an individualized assessment when determining whether it is appropriate to remove a service animal from public areas. If an individual with a disability is asked to remove a service animal, the individual must be given the opportunity to continue to remain on college property or to enjoy the college programs and activities without the service animal present.

B. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

Emotional support animals that are leashed, caged or being held under the control of a handler or owner are permitted in outdoor areas on Laurel Ridge’s campuses and around Laurel Ridge’s facilities.

Emotional support animals are not permitted inside of Laurel Ridge’s buildings and facilities except when the animal has been approved as a reasonable accommodation for a disability in accordance with standard procedures for requesting such accommodations.

- i. Official requests must be made through the Office of Accommodations and Disability Services at <https://laurelridge.edu/disability/>.

C. Safety, Academic and Student Services Programs

- a. This policy does not apply to animals used by law enforcement or emergency personnel in the exercise of their official duties.
- b. This policy does not apply to animals that have been authorized for use in academic programs, teaching or research, or approved student activities (therapy animals program).
- c. College Personnel reserve the right to remove an animal if:
 - i. it is out of control, and the handler does not take effective action to control it; or
 - ii. it is not housebroken.

Definitions

Caged: An animal being restrained in an enclosed pen, box, or other similar container controlled by the owner or other responsible person who prevents the animal from escaping.

Direct physical control: The owner or other responsible person is physically holding the animal in such a way that it is not likely to escape.

Emotional support animal: Animals which provide emotional support to a person but are not trained to perform work or tasks related to a person's disability. An ESA provides their owners with therapeutic benefits through companionship. May also be called assistance animals or comfort animals.

Handler: The individual responsible for the care, supervision, and behavior of a service animal.
House broken: the animal has been trained to avoid excreting in inappropriate places.

Leashed: An animal being restrained on a cord, chain, or other similar restraint, not to exceed eight (8) feet in length, controlled by the owner of the animal or other responsible person.

Service animal: any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability; on a limited case-by-case basis, a miniature horse that has been similarly individually trained may also qualify as a service animal. This includes an animal that is being trained to become a service animal. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Therapy animal: An animal trained to provide comfort and affection to people in hospice, disaster areas, retirement homes, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and more.

Care and Supervision

Care and supervision of the animal is the sole responsibility of the handler. The handler is required to maintain control of the animal at all times. Care and supervision cannot be delegated to another student. If the animal is not under control or poses a risk to the health and safety of others, the individual may be asked to remove the animal. Handlers using service animals, emotional support animals, or therapy animals are responsible for the cost, care, and supervision of the animal including:

- Ensuring all animals have a tag that identifies the owner and the contact information in the event of an emergency.

- Complying with any and all county and state laws including but not limited to animal license requirements, vaccination and identification tags.
- Maintaining control of the animal and taking effective action when it is out of control.
- Ensuring the animal is kept as clean as possible. Regular bathing/grooming and pest control measures are the responsibility of the owner.
- Ensuring that the animal is housebroken. The owner is responsible for cleaning up all animal waste (both indoors and outdoors) in a timely, effective fashion. Solid waste should be put in an outdoor trash can.
- Providing financial compensation for any damages created by the animal aside from ordinary wear and tear. Owners of the animal are solely responsible for any damage to persons or property caused by their animals.

Responsibilities

All students, staff, faculty, administrators, community members, and visitors of the College must adhere to the animals on campus policy and the College is committed to uphold the policy.

Authority

Authority to enforce this policy up to and including the revocation of the privilege of having an animal on Laurel Ridge Community College owned or controlled property or facility rests with the Chief of Police of the Laurel Ridge Police Department.

Document History:

Approved: President K. Blosser, May 2023.