

Village Pet Policy & Procedure

Applies to Senior Services & Property and Housing Directorates

Retirement & Independent Living and Rental Housing Portfolio

Policy Statement

Uniting acknowledges the positive impact pets can have on people's lives, including enhancing companionship, fostering social connections, and promoting overall wellness. Research demonstrates that regular interaction with animals is an effective way to improve mental and emotional well-being.

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines for allowing pets in villages, in recognition of the positive impact pets can have on Residents' lives. By permitting pets, we aim to enhance companionship, promote social interaction, and support the overall wellness of Residents. This policy is designed to ensure that the presence of pets contributes to a positive living environment while balancing the needs and preferences of all Residents.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to Retirement & Independent Living within Senior Services and Rental Housing in Property & Housing.

3 Compliance

This policy is part of the Uniting Policy Framework and outlines expectations for pet ownership within villages. All villages are required to have documented rules that govern the use, enjoyment, control, and management of the site, including provisions related to pets. While this policy does not specify individual obligations, it references relevant legislation that mandates the establishment of such village rules.

4 Policy principles

Uniting acknowledges the positive impact of pets on Residents' mental, emotional, and physical well-being and encourages pet ownership as a means of promoting companionship, social interaction, and overall wellness. However, pet ownership must be managed in a way that respects the rights and comfort of all Residents.

4.1 Policy principles

These are the high-level guidelines and values that guide responsible pet ownership within Retirement & Independent Living and housing properties.

1. **Enhancing Wellbeing**
Recognising the benefits pets bring to Residents' health and well-being, pet ownership is supported as long as it contributes positively to the individual and the community.
2. **Compliance with Village Rules**
Pets must comply with the relevant village/building rules, and Residents are required to obtain approval from management before bringing a pet into their accommodation.
3. **Responsibility and Care**
Pet owners are responsible for the care, control, and welfare of their pets. This includes ensuring pets are healthy, well-behaved, and not disruptive to the community.
4. **Respect for the Community**
Pet ownership should not interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort, or privacy of neighbours. Pets must not cause noise, damage, or inconvenience to other Residents.

5. **Health and Safety**
Pets must be kept safely and hygienically. Dangerous or aggressive pets are not allowed. Pet excreta must be cleaned up immediately to prevent health hazards.
6. **Sustainability and Environmental Impact**
Pet ownership should not negatively affect the environment. Owners must ensure their pets do not disrupt the local fauna.
7. **Clear Communication and Consent**
Residents must inform village management of their intention to bring a pet into their accommodation and complete the necessary pet application form.
8. **Liability and Accountability**
Residents are liable for any damage or injury caused by their pet(s) and must cover costs/repair any damage. Owners must indemnify the village management against any claims or injuries caused by their pets.
9. **Ongoing Review and Fairness**
The policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the community, balancing the well-being of Residents and the safety of the environment.
10. **Pet Nuisance and Mediation**
If a pet creates a nuisance or disturbance, Uniting will offer assistance (i.e., mediation) to resolve the issue. Continued problems may lead to a request for a pet to be removed from the village.

5 Procedural Considerations

1. **Pet Approval Process**
 - Residents are required to obtain approval from management before bringing a pet into their accommodation.
 - Pets must meet health, behaviour, and size requirements, as determined by management.
2. **Factors for Approval**
When considering the approval of a pet, factors such as breed, unit size, unit location, necessary modifications (e.g., fencing), and arrangements for alternative care in the event of an emergency should be considered.
3. **Risk Assessment**
A risk assessment may be conducted if required, based on factors such as pet breed, size, and potential impact on the environment and community.
4. **Pet Care and Control**
Pet owners must ensure pets are healthy, well-behaved, and do not disrupt the community. They are responsible for maintaining pets' hygiene, keeping them within agreed-upon boundaries, and addressing behaviour issues promptly.
5. **Shared Space Guidelines**

- Pets are not permitted in common areas of the village unless required (e.g., dogs on a leash) or as otherwise agreed.
 - Owners must ensure that pets do not interfere with the enjoyment of shared spaces by other residents.
6. Pet Health and Safety Requirements
- Pets must be vaccinated and undergo health checks as necessary.
 - Owners are required to supervise their pets when appropriate to ensure their safety and the safety of others.
7. Waste Disposal
- Pet owners must clean up after their pets immediately, ensuring proper disposal of pet waste to prevent health hazards.
8. Environmental Considerations
- Owners must ensure pets do not disrupt local fauna, particularly by keeping cats indoors at night and using a bell to prevent hunting.
9. Communication and Documentation
- Residents must complete the necessary pet application form and inform management of their intention to bring a pet into their accommodation.
10. Liability and Costs
- Pet owners are responsible for any damage or injury caused by their pet(s), including repair costs and indemnifying the village management against claims or injuries caused by their pets.

6 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Village/Housing Manager	• Ensure the pet policy is communicated to all Residents and prospective pet owners. • Review and approve pet applications, ensuring that pets meet the criteria outlined in the policy. • Maintain records of approved pets, including details of the pet and owner. • Monitor compliance with the pet policy and address any concerns or complaints from Residents regarding pet behaviour or care. • Provide support and guidance to Residents on pet-related matters, including proper care and hygiene.
Area Manager	• Support the implementation of the pet policy by ensuring pet owners are aware of the rules and regulations. • Monitor common areas to ensure pets are following the guidelines of the policy.

Role	Responsibilities
	Assist Village Management in resolving any disputes or issues related to pet ownership.

7 Legislation and standards

- [ACT Domestic Animals Act 2000](#)
- [ACT Retirement Village Act 2012](#)
- [NSW Companion Animals Act 1998](#)
- [NSW Retirement Village Act 1999 No. 81](#)
- [NSW Retirement Village Regulations 2017](#)

8 Related Policy Documents and references

Village Pet Application

9 Definitions

Capitalised terms are defined below, or if not defined below, in the *Uniting Policy Framework Glossary*.

Term	Definition
Staff	Employees, contractors, sub-contractors and volunteers of Uniting.
Resident	Refers to Residents or clients. Resident of a retirement village means a retired person who has a residence right in respect of residential premises in the village and includes the following persons (each of whom is taken also to have a residence right in respect of the residential premises concerned) (a) the spouse of the retired person, if the spouse occupies the residential premises with the retired person, (b) If the retired person is in a de facto relationship with the other party to that relationship if the other party occupies the residential premises with the retired person, (c) Any person or class of persons prescribed by the regulations for this definition
Pet	Any common household animal that may be kept in a village accommodation is subject to approval and by the policy guidelines.
Common Areas	Shared spaces within the village, such as hallways, gardens, and community rooms, where pets may not be allowed unless specific conditions are met (e.g., pets on a leash).

Term	Definition
Pet Application Form	A form that residents must complete and submit to Uniting to request approval to have a pet within their accommodation.
Medical Certificate	A certificate provided by a veterinarian or other relevant professional is required to assess the pet's health and suitability within the village.
Nuisance or Annoyance	Any behaviour or activity by a pet that disturbs annoys, or disrupts other residents, including excessive noise, damage, or interference with other residents' use of common spaces.
Indemnification	The process where the resident agrees to hold Uniting harmless and responsible for any claims or damages caused by their pet, including any injuries or property damage.
Pet Excreta	Waste products (e.g., faeces, urine) produced by pets, must be immediately cleaned up and disposed of by the pet owner to maintain a hygienic and safe environment.
Pet Approval	The written consent granted by Uniting for a resident to have a pet in their accommodation is contingent on compliance with the Village Pet Policy.
Safety Risk	Any pet behaviour or condition that poses a potential danger to residents, staff, or visitors, including aggressive actions or unvaccinated animals.
Sustainability	Ensuring pet ownership does not negatively impact the local environment, such as through the inappropriate disposal of waste or damage to communal garden areas.