

**Purpose**

This policy outlines how St Kilda Community Housing manages requests from residents and housing applicants to keep pets at SCH properties. The policy aims to support responsible pet ownership while managing safety, property, nuisance, hygiene and legal risks.

Scope

This policy applies to all residents and applicants for housing in properties managed or owned by SCH. This does not include assistance-animals.

Policy Statement

SCH is committed to:

- Meeting our legal, regulatory, and contractual duties
- Taking a person-centred approach to decisions made
- Supporting renters to keep a pet at their property where it is reasonable to do so.

Legislative Framework

SCH properties are managed under the rooming house provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic). This includes SCH's non-gazetted properties, which operate with rooming house characteristics such as shared facilities.

Residents may only keep a pet with SCH's permission as the rooming house operator. SCH will assess requests through the pet application process and provide the outcome in writing.

Pet Application Process

Residents must complete a Pet Application Form before bringing or keeping a pet at an SCH property. Applicants who already have a pet, or intend to keep a pet, should complete the pet application process before moving in where possible. A separate application is required for each pet.

SCH may request information about the pet, including type, size, age, temperament, registration, vaccination, microchipping, behaviour, and where the pet will be kept.

SCH will notify the resident of the outcome in writing.

Assessment Criteria

When assessing a pet application, SCH may consider:

- whether the property, room or shared areas are suitable for the pet;
- the type, size, age, temperament and behaviour of the pet;
- the number of pets already approved at the property;
- possible impacts on other residents, neighbours, staff, contractors or visitors;
- risks of noise, nuisance, hygiene issues, safety concerns or property damage;
- local council laws, registration requirements, strata rules or other legal requirements;
- relevant SCH House Rules or property-specific conditions.

SCH may place reasonable conditions on approval.

Resident Responsibilities

Residents approved to keep a pet are responsible for the pet at all times. Residents must ensure the pet:

- is properly cared for;
- does not cause damage, nuisance, noise or hygiene issues;
- does not soil or damage shared areas;
- does not create safety risks for residents, staff, contractors, visitors or neighbours;
- complies with local council laws and animal welfare requirements;
- complies with SCH House Rules and any conditions of approval.

Residents may be responsible for damage, cleaning costs or other costs caused by their pet, subject to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

Pets Kept Without Consent

Residents must not keep a pet without SCH's permission. If SCH becomes aware that a resident is keeping a pet without permission, SCH may require the resident to complete the pet application process.

SCH may take further action under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, the resident's agreement, SCH House Rules and relevant SCH policies where required.

Issues After Approval

If an approved pet causes damage, nuisance, hygiene issues, safety concerns or unreasonable impact on others, SCH may require the resident to take corrective action.

If the issue is serious or ongoing, SCH may take further action under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the resident's agreement.

Definitions

Pet	An animal kept by a resident for companionship or personal purposes.
Assistance animal	An animal trained or accredited to assist a person with disability. Assistance animals are not treated as ordinary pets under this policy.
Permission	Written approval from SCH, consent taken to have been given under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, or approval by VCAT.

Related Documents and Policies

Housing Allocations Policy
Pet Application Form
Property Damage Policy
SCH House Rules

Legislation and Standards

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
Local Government Act 1989 (Vic) – pet registration and by-laws
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic)
Domestic Animals Act 1994

Version control

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