

Being a Good Neighbor

One of the challenges of living in a neighborhood community is making the transition from life in the residence hall to integration within a non-University or an off-campus neighborhood setting. Many behaviors that are acceptable in on-campus facilities are not acceptable in residential neighborhoods. Here are a few suggestions on how to be a good neighbor and member of your community:

- **Say hello and get to know your neighbors**
Opening the lines of communication makes it easier to talk about those petty annoyances before they become big problems. As you see them in the halls, laundry room, lobby, in front of the building/houses, or by the mailboxes, smile and say hello. If they appear to be receptive, introduce yourself.
- **Watch out for the safety of your community**
If you observe any suspicious behavior in your community, report it to the Metropolitan Police Department. Watch and listen for unusual things such as loud noises or suspicious or unknown people loitering.
- **Understand and follow the local community and landlord rules**
Many communities have rules for things like where you can park, where your pet can be, when certain facilities are open, quiet hours, trash pickup, and more. These should all be spelled out either in your lease or in a supplemental set of rules and regulations. Know them and follow them. Your neighbors and landlord will thank you.
- **Keep your noise and belongings within your own space**
Talking on mobile phones in community hallways, leaving trash or personal items in public areas, or loud, late-night congregations in common areas may be a way of life in the residence hall setting, but may be disturbing to others and frowned upon in off-campus residential areas. Be conscience of your volume and your neighbors and landlord will thank you.
- **Observe reasonable hours for noisy activities**
Vacuuming, hanging pictures, moving heavy furniture. All these activities produce noise which can travel beyond the walls of your apartment/house into shared walls. Make every effort to restrict these activities to daytime hours. Check your lease/rental regulations and local regulations, and follow any specified quiet hours.
- **Treat your neighbors' children with respect**
Watch your words and behavior around neighborhood children and remember they may follow the example you set. Understand that your neighbors' children have a right to be there, and that they are, after all, children. Treating neighborhood children with respect can go a long way to maintaining and improving your rapport with your neighbors.
- **Take pride in your environment by keeping visible areas neat and tidy**
Keeping your yard, entrances, balconies, and walkways neat and tidy, and putting covered plastic garbage cans and recycling bins curbside no earlier than the morning of pick up keeps everyone's home looking appealing.
- **Understand that not everyone loves your pet like you do**
If your lease allows pets, be aware of the rules concerning where they can be when they are outside your apartment or house. Keep your pet on a leash unless it is in your backyard or inside your home. Don't let your dog roam free in the neighborhood or shared yard and don't let your parrot practice his opera while you're at work. When walking your dog, don't let them run on the lawns of others. Walk them by the side of the road and at all times be prepared to clean up after your pet. Be aware of any noise your pet(s) may make while you are at work or school. Ask a neighbor who is home during the day about it. And if your landlord doesn't allow pets, don't try to get away with it.
- **Don't let your right to party overshadow your responsibility to your neighbors**
Let them know ahead of time when the party will be happening so that they can prepare. It is your responsibility as host to ensure your guests understand the rules of respect for your neighborhood - including where it is okay to park - and that they remain inside your apartment/home (or within your own personal area outside) during the party. And remember: even when you're having a party, local regulation for quiet hours apply.