Club Dog Policy

No Dogs Permitted on Club Trips Except Registered Assistance Dogs

Introduction

The Club is dedicated to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable experience for all members and participants on our trips and excursions. In recognition of our diverse community and in compliance with relevant health, safety, and legal considerations, the Club has adopted a clear and comprehensive Dog Policy. This document outlines the reasons for the policy, the expectations for compliance, the process for requesting exceptions, and the responsibilities of all parties involved.

Policy Statement

No dogs are permitted on any Club trip, excursion, or event, with the sole exception of registered assistance dogs. This policy is designed to protect the health, safety, and comfort of all participants while respecting the legal rights of individuals who rely on assistance animals.

Rationale for the Policy

The decision to restrict dogs from Club trips is not taken lightly. It is based on multiple considerations, including:

- Health and Safety: Some members may have allergies to dogs, while others may have phobias or anxieties. In addition, the presence of dogs can sometimes lead to tripping hazards, unpredictable behaviour, or accidents, especially in unfamiliar or wild environments.
- Environmental Impact: Club trips often take place in natural settings, such as national parks or conservation areas, where dogs can disrupt local wildlife, disturb sensitive habitats, or introduce non-native seeds and diseases. Many parks or reserves also have their own regulations prohibiting pets.
- Group Dynamics: While some dogs are well-behaved, not all are accustomed to crowds or new settings. Unpredictable behaviour, barking, or aggression (even if rare) can disrupt group activities and affect the enjoyment and safety of others.
- Legal Compliance: The Club must abide by all applicable laws, including those governing assistance animals, public spaces, and event management. This policy reflects our commitment to legal compliance and to upholding the rights of all individuals.

Definition of an Assistance Dog

For the purposes of this policy, an “assistance dog” is defined as a dog that has been trained and registered to provide support for a person living with a disability. Examples include guide

DRAFT

dogs for people who are blind or have low vision, hearing dogs, and service dogs trained for physical, medical, or psychiatric assistance. The assistance dog must be registered with an accredited assistance animal organisation and must meet all requirements as defined by relevant state or national law.

Process for Bringing an Assistance Dog

Participants who require the accompaniment of a registered assistance dog must:

- Notify the Club in advance of the trip to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- Provide documentation or certification that the dog is a registered assistance animal.
- Agree to comply with all health and hygiene protocols, including but not limited to ensuring the dog is up-to-date on vaccinations and is appropriately groomed for public settings.
- Ensure the dog is under control at all times, preferably by harness or leash, unless the handler's disability prevents the use of these devices.
- Be responsible for the dog's behaviour and for the clean-up and disposal of all waste.

Responsibilities of Participants

All Club members and participants are expected to:

- Respect the policy and refrain from bringing non-assistance dogs on Club trips or events.
- Support and show consideration for individuals accompanied by assistance dogs.
- Refrain from petting, feeding, or otherwise interacting with assistance dogs unless given express permission by their handler.
- Report any concerns or issues regarding dog behaviour or policy compliance to Club organisers as soon as possible.

Consequences of Policy Breach

Failure to comply with the Dog Policy may result in:

- The participant being asked to leave the trip or event.
- Review of the participant's Club membership status.
- Potential exclusion from future Club activities if breaches are repeated or deemed serious.

Appeals and Special Considerations

The Club recognises that exceptional circumstances may arise. Participants wishing to appeal this policy or request special consideration must submit a written request to the Club Committee outlining their situation. The Committee will review such requests on a case-by-case basis and respond in a timely manner. The Club's priority remains the safety and wellbeing of all members.

DRAFT

Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't I bring my dog if it is well-behaved?

Even the best-trained dogs can behave unpredictably in new environments. Additionally, the presence of dogs can trigger allergies, phobias, or reactions in other participants and can impact wildlife or local regulations.

Are emotional support animals allowed?

Only registered assistance dogs, as recognised by relevant laws and with the proper documentation, are permitted on Club trips. Emotional support animals that do not meet these criteria are not allowed.

What documentation do I need for my assistance dog?

You must provide proof of registration and certification from an accredited assistance dog organisation, as well as evidence that your dog is up-to-date on required vaccinations.

Are there any exceptions for specific types of Club trips?

This policy applies to all Club trips and events unless an official exception is granted by the Club Committee.

How does the Club respond to breaches of this policy?

Any breach will be taken seriously and may result in immediate exclusion from the trip or event, with further consequences as appropriate.

Conclusion

The Club's Dog Policy reflects our collective commitment to safety, inclusivity, respect for the natural environment, and legal compliance. By adhering to this policy, we ensure that Club activities remain enjoyable and accessible for everyone. Members are encouraged to reach out to Club organisers with any further questions or for clarification regarding the policy.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

DRAFT