



Assistance Dogs Policy

Policy Statement

St Edmund's College is committed to supporting disabled staff, students, Fellows, and visitors who rely on the assistance of a highly trained assistance dog, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Under this Act, assistance dogs are permitted on College premises to facilitate accessibility and equal opportunity and the arrangements set out in this policy are intended to ensure this can be done safely and considerately for all members of the College community.

Application & Scope

This policy applies only to assistance dogs that have been trained to assist individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions by performing specific tasks or alerts that mitigate the effects of that disability/condition. For health, safety, and welfare reasons, St Edmund's College does not permit other animals, including therapeutic or companion animals, onto College premises unless authorised under a separate process.

Recognised Assistance Dogs

In the UK, assistance dogs are recognised under the Equality Act 2010 as an auxiliary aid that supports disabled people to access services on an equal basis. Assistance dogs may be trained to assist with a wide range of disabilities and long-term health conditions, including (but not limited to) visual or hearing impairments, mobility needs, and medical alert/response (for example, seizure or diabetes alert).

To support safe and workable arrangements, the College may ask for reasonable evidence that a dog is an assistance dog and that it is highly trained, well-behaved, hygienic, and suitable for a shared College setting. This may include a letter from an appropriate health professional confirming the need for an assistance dog (focused on functional need rather than diagnosis), and proof of public liability insurance (particularly for residential or long-term/regular arrangements). The College may also ask for a brief description of the dog's trained tasks/alerts and any practical requirements relevant to College settings.

The College has a preference for assistance dogs trained by an Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) member organisation (whose members are accredited to international standards). Owner-trained assistance dogs are permitted where the handler can demonstrate that the dog meets the same high standards of task training, behaviour in public spaces, hygiene and control expected of a working assistance dog. Recognised assistance dogs do not include emotional support animals.

Where an individual wishes to bring an assistance dog onsite they should notify the College in advance wherever practicable before bringing them on to the site, particularly where accommodation is required or where regular access is anticipated. Student requests to bring a service animal into College should be directed to the Director of Student Wellbeing, those of Fellows to the Vice-Master and those of staff to the HR Manager and Governance Risk & Compliance Manager.



The College may undertake a risk assessment (and review it periodically) to determine whether any additional controls are required to protect the health, safety and welfare of College staff and members, the handler and the dog.

Assistance Dogs Certification

Assistance Dogs are typically trained by members of **Assistance Dogs (UK)** (www.assistancedogs.org.uk) or an equivalent organisation in another country.

Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK) is a coalition of assistance dog organisations; the College's preference is for dogs trained by an ADUK member organisation (or an equivalent organisation internationally). Owner-trained dogs may also be accepted where they meet the same high standards of training, behaviour, hygiene and control.

Where reasonably necessary (particularly for accommodation or long-term/regular arrangements), the College may request reasonable evidence as set out in the "[Recognised Assistance Dogs](#)" section above.

Regardless of certification, assistance dogs on College premises must demonstrate appropriate behaviours, including:

- Remaining calm and settled beside the handler, such as sitting or lying quietly on the floor.
- Refraining from wandering freely around the premises.
- Avoiding fouling in indoor public areas.

Access and Restrictions

Assistance dogs, when present as working assistance dogs, are permitted to accompany their owners in all College areas unless there is a genuine health and safety risk, such as in kitchens or food preparation areas or other specialist environments where a specific risk cannot reasonably be managed. Assistance dogs perform essential tasks for disabled persons and are highly trained to function safely within shared environments.

Because St Edmund's College enforces a strict no-dog policy for non-assistance animals, we ask that assistance dogs wear visible identification, such as a harness, jacket, or ID tag, where available. We request that they be recognisable as assistance dogs to ensure ease of access for handlers and to avoid unnecessary challenges from College staff. However, lack of visible identification will not in itself prevent access.

Responsibilities of the College Community

To support the appropriate functioning of assistance dogs, all College staff and members should observe the following guidelines:

- **Do Not Touch or Feed:** Avoid touching or feeding an assistance dog unless invited by the handler.
- **Do Not Distract:** Refrain from distracting or startling an assistance dog, as this can disrupt their focus.
- **Do Not Interfere:** Do not interfere with an assistance dog's service to their handler.



Assistance Dogs on College premises

When Assistance Dogs are in College properties, their owners must comply with the following guidelines:

A. Information

Assistance Dog owners shall provide information about the animal and its tasks/duties, if reasonably requested by relevant College staff.

B. Identification

Many assistance dogs carry identification and/or wear a harness or jacket, which can be helpful in reducing misunderstandings. However, it is not a requirement for assistance dog handlers to carry ID, and access will not be refused solely because a handler cannot produce an ID card, tag or booklet. Assistance Dog owners are encouraged, where available, to use a harness/jacket/ID to help staff and others recognise the dog as a working assistance dog. However, identification is not mandatory and is not a condition of access.

C. Insurance

Assistance dog owners are responsible for ensuring that their assistance dogs are covered by public liability insurance and provide a copy to the College's Governance, Risk and Compliance Team. This ensures that harm or damage by the Assistance dog is underwritten. For short visits, the College may not routinely require evidence of insurance, but may request it where reasonably necessary, particularly for residential or long-term/regular arrangements.

D. Access restrictions

Assistance dog owners must respect access restrictions established by the College on grounds of health and safety. This could include access via prescribed routes, so that other routes are available to other members of the community with allergies or phobias who could be impacted. Where there is an identified conflict of needs (for example, a disability-related allergy), the College will seek practical and equitable adjustments for all parties, which may include routing, seating, ventilation, scheduling and cleaning arrangements, informed by risk assessment.

Assistance dog owners must ensure that assistance dogs do not enter staff and students' privately assigned spaces, such as bedrooms and flats within residences, without permission.

E. Animal misbehaviour

Preventing and correcting assistance dogs' misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility. Assistance dog owners must make sure that their assistance dogs do not cause harm or injury to others and damage to College property and remain under the handler's control at all times.

F. Cleanliness

Assistance dogs and their owners will have received the appropriate training to ensure that the dog toilets at appropriate times and locations. Assistance dog owners are responsible for promptly cleaning up their dog's waste and disposing of it in an appropriate dog fouling bin when on College grounds. No dog fouling bins are available within main College buildings but there are bins outside the College perimeter which are used by members of the public for this purpose. Where feasible, the College will provide information on suitable outdoor toileting areas and waste disposal points (including out-of-hours arrangements).



G. Animal care and supervision

Animal care is primarily the assistance dog owner's responsibility. The owner ensures regular health checks, vaccination, and an adequate standard of grooming of the assistance dog. Assistance dog owners must ensure the assistance dog has its requirements in relation to feeding, watering and toileting fully met. Owners must ensure that assistance dogs are kept on a lead or harness at all times when walking around the College unless this would interfere with a trained task, in which case the dog must remain under the handler's close control by other effective means.

H. Animal training

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any additional training needs for their assistance dogs and for the correct and safe performance of their duties.

I. Accommodation

If the owner of an assistance dog lives on site, they should enter discussions as early as possible with the College to ascertain what arrangements may need to be made. Of the rooms on site, a very small proportion will be suitable. If a suitable room is not available, it may not be feasible for the assistance dog to reside on site. For residential arrangements, the College may request reasonable evidence of suitability (including insurance) and may undertake a risk assessment to determine any additional controls required.

Removal of Assistance dogs

The College reserves the right to remove or bar entry to an assistance dog when it poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Unresolved animal misbehaviour may also provide grounds for removal, after all reasonable measures have been taken to address this. The College may also require removal if the dog is aggressive, disruptive, unhygienic (including fouling indoors), or not under control. Wherever possible, the handler will be given an opportunity to regain control before removal is required, unless immediate removal is necessary.

Damage

Assistance dog owners are responsible for any damage to persons or College property.

Conflicting disabilities

Where an assistance dog poses adverse health risk to a student, Fellow or member of staff, the College will consider the needs of all parties and agree reasonable, practical adjustments to support equitable access. Medical evidence may be requested only where necessary and proportionate to assess competing needs and identify appropriate adjustments to determine suitable alternative and equitable arrangements for either or both parties.

Complaints

Any issues in relation to assistance dogs on College premises that cannot be resolved informally should be raised in accordance with the appropriate College complaints procedure.