



ALAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY

TITLE OF POLICY: Assistant Animals Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/2025

LAST REVIEW DATE:

NEXT REVIEW DATE: March 2027

TARGET AUDIENCE: Staff, Parents, Carers and Students

VERSION NUMBER: 1

1. Policy

Equity, diversity, and inclusion principles are part of everyday practice in Department of Education facilities in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). Assistance animals used to assist persons with a disability are permitted in Department of Education facilities. Assistance animals are required to be controlled, trained, and meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

Consideration must be given to known medical conditions or reasonably held concerns of other students and staff prior to allowing assistance animals on school grounds. Appropriate measures must be taken to accommodate those conditions or concerns while allowing the attendance of the assistance animal.

Principals can refuse entry if they reasonably suspect that the assistance animal:

- is untrained or has not been accredited
- is unhygienic
- has an infectious disease and presents a threat to public health and safety.

Principals must apply the principles of procedural fairness to all processes when managing complaints in accordance with the Complaints management in schools' policy.

The care and use of animals in Department of Education facilities must be in accordance with the Animal Protection Act 2018.

Appeals against refusal of entry:

If the applicant believes their assistance animal has wrongfully been refused entry, they can contact the principal, in the first instance, or the department, in accordance with the Complaints management in schools' policy and guidelines.

Legalised Documentation Requirement:

While the principal has the authority to allow assistance dogs onto school premises, the person requesting the presence of the assistance animal must provide legalised documentation stating that they require the assistance animal to be with them. This documentation must be provided to the school before the animal's entry is granted.

2. Business Need

To adhere to The Department of Education and Training policy/directive, Alawa Primary School has developed an Assistant Animals Policy.

This policy will ensure a consistent approach at Alawa Primary School, giving those with a disability confidence that others at Alawa Primary School are aware of the arrangements which support the attendance of their assistance animal and to provide for the management of and to prevent potential health and safety issues that arise because of the presence of assistance animals on Alawa Primary School premises.

Note: There is a distinction between therapy dogs and assistance animals. Therapy dogs provide therapeutic support but do not have public access rights. Assistance animals, which include guide dogs, hearing dogs, psychiatric dogs, medical alert dogs, autism dogs, and PTSD dogs, have public access rights and are protected under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

3. Scope

This policy and its associated guidelines apply to Alawa Primary School. When implementing the requirements of this policy, the Principal of Alawa Primary School should, where possible, without compromising on health and safety requirements, seek to accommodate cultural beliefs within the school community.

4. Definitions

- **Assistance animal:** A dog or other animal that is trained and accredited to assist persons with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and meets the standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place. Assistance animals are protected under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).
 - **Therapy dog:** A dog trained to provide therapeutic support but does not have public access rights. Therapy dogs are typically used in goal-oriented programs and do not have the same legal protections or access rights as assistance animals.
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5. Roles and Responsibilities

Principal is responsible for:

- Developing localised assistance animals procedure that allows for the contextual relevance of their school in line with this policy.
 - Recording the reasons for their refusal to allow an assistance animal entry to the school and all evidence supporting the decision in accordance with the Complaints management in schools' policy.
 - Implementing this policy in their workplace.
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6. Related Legislation and Policy

Legislation:

- **Animal Protection Act 2018** - [Link to legislation](#)

- **Anti-Discrimination Act 1992** - Link to legislation
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)** - [Link to legislation](#)
- **Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011** - [Link to legislation](#)

Policy:

- **Animals in school policy** - [Link to policy](#)
- **Complaints management in schools policy** - [Link to policy](#)
- **Complaint management in schools guidelines** - [Link to guidelines](#)