

## Avon Tyrrell Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support Animals Policy

### Introduction

Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Centre recognises the important contribution that assistance dogs and emotional support animals provide to a number of our visitors.

As an inclusive residential outdoor centre, committed to supporting the Equality Act 2010, we want to provide reasonable adjustments to enable people to come and enjoy our facilities with appropriate support in place, whilst also considering the impact of animals to the safe operations of the centre and the impact the presence animals may have on other visitors.

### Definitions

**Assistance Dog** - is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as a dog trained to guide a blind person, assist a deaf person, or assist a disabled person with a disability that affects mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or the ability to lift, carry, or move everyday objects. The Equality Act also includes dogs trained by a prescribed charity to assist a disabled person with a prescribed kind of disability.

**Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)** support the mental health and emotional stability of their owners by accompanying them. They do not receive specific training and do not necessarily perform tasks for their owners aside from accompaniment. They may do these things, but an animal does not have to in order to be an ESA.

### Assistance Dogs

We recognise that for many people, assistance dogs help them with day-to-day activities that many other people take for granted. These dogs may carry out a variety of practical tasks, support independence and confidence, recognise and alert owners to potential health concerns and play a key role in their lives.

Avon Tyrrell, welcomes trained well-behaved assistance dogs to accompanying our visitors across all permitted publicly accessible areas of our site, including our accommodation and activity bases

This includes, but is not limited to guide dogs, hearing dogs, medical alert dogs and accredited emotional support dogs.

(Avon Tyrrell recognises and accepts that training can be provided by a recognised and accredited organisation for example a member of Assistance Dogs UK, a non-accredited charity, a professional trainer or owner trained).

## Responsibility of Handlers

Assistance dogs are expected to be highly trained and provide an essential service to their owner.

In all cases it is expected that an assistance dog will:

1. Be trained to behave well in public.
2. Have a safe and reliable temperament.
3. Sit or lie quietly on the floor next to their owner when required.
4. Be healthy and not constitute a hygiene risk.

Assistance dogs will be able to accompany their owners around the site, in their accommodation and in public areas, provided they do not cause undue disturbance, distress or harm e.g. due to allergies to other guests.

Handlers should behave responsibly, and all dogs must be always kept on leads when accessing Avon Tyrrell public areas. Handlers must also ensure any faeces is promptly cleared up.

Where assistance dogs are required to join their owner on activities, we ask that they wear recognised identification, so it is clear to other guests that they are a working animal.

For the safety of all guests the management reserve the right to restrict access. If there is a clear identifiable reason why banning or limiting access of assistance dogs to specific areas is considered reasonable. We commit to inform all parties concerned at the earliest possible opportunity of our decision.

If it becomes evident that the dog is not behaving in line with the list of expected behaviours, we reserve the right to restrict access to specific areas/times or require the dog to be removed from Avon Tyrrell site or the grounds for ongoing issues.

We strongly recommend that assistance dog owners obtain third-party liability insurance cover of at least £1million which covers the duration of the dog's visit to Avon Tyrrell. As per our standard terms and conditions, visitors are responsible for the cost of repairs necessitated by any damage they may cause to Avon Tyrrell property and equipment and any excess cleaning required to accommodation. In the case of a charge being deemed necessary, this cost will be added to your final invoice and the booking contact lead person informed.

## Staff responsibilities

Due to the nature of the adventurous outdoor activities, we provide, when on outdoor sessions our staff will ensure that any assistance dogs in attendance do not compromise the safety of any staff member, participant or member of the public. To support this the

instructor may stop the session at any time and notify the guest that the dog will need to be removed from the activity base. The Duty Instructor or Duty Manager should be called for support as needed.

### Assistance Dogs in Training

As standard, Avon Tyrrell does not allow assistance dogs in training to be present in accommodation areas or in activity bases as they may not be trained to the standards expected of an assistance dog<sup>1</sup>. If guests wish to bring an assistance dog in training, they should contact Avon Tyrrell and discuss their specific requirements so we can advise on permitted areas of access. If agreed, an assistance dog in training would be expected to display the level of appropriate behaviour and temperament of an assistance dog.

### Emotional Support Animals

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) are not defined in UK legislation, and it is unlikely to be a reasonable adjustment for Avon Tyrrell to give access to multiple types of ESAs and dogs not trained as assistance dogs.

If guests wish to bring an ESA then they should contact Avon Tyrrell to discuss their specific requirements. These will be considered alongside other factors including type of animal, implications of loss/escape of animal, hygiene, cleanliness, disturbance of other visitors, and registration of animal as an ESA (e.g. with Emotional Support Animal Registry UK).

Specific conditions may be put in place including, but limited to:

1. Animal may only be allowed in an individual's accommodation.
2. Animal to be kept in an appropriate animal crate when unaccompanied.
3. Animal not to be taken on activity session.

## Review

This document will be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation that would require Avon Tyrrell to amend its policy and procedures.

As a minimum, it will be reviewed every two years.

## Document Control Sheet

Document Name:	Avon Tyrrell Assistance Dogs and Emotional Support Animals Policy
Document Owner:	Head of OL Operations
Issue Date:	May 2025
Next Review Date:	April 2027
Document History:	First issued May 2025
Document approved by:	Assistant Director of Outdoor Learning
Date approved:	May 2025