Aston Villa Football Club
Code of Conduct and Booking Advice
Owners of Assistance Dogs

We want everyone to enjoy their visit to Aston Villa.

We work with expert partners and specialist groups to make sure our stadium is welcoming and inclusive for all guests with access requirements.

Definition of Assistance Dogs

An assistance dog is trained to help a disabled person. It is usually expected that the dog will have been qualified by an organisation registered as a member of Assistance Dogs (UK) or an equivalent organisation in another country.

Dogs trained by members of Assistance Dogs (UK) (or by an equivalent recognised organisation abroad) have formal identification and are allowed to accompany their owners everywhere in the UK - unless there is a genuine health and safety risk.

Aston Villa may refuse access for a dog in some circumstances:

- If the dog is not qualified by a recognised organisation and, after assessing the case, the dog's presence is not considered a *reasonable adjustment*.
- If the dog is from a country that does not meet the full membership criteria of established international assistance dog bodies (such as Assistance Dogs International, Assistance Dogs Europe, or International Guide Dog Federation), and after assessment is not considered a *reasonable adjustment*.
- If the dog does not meet expected behaviour standards.

Types of Assistance Dogs

The following assistance dog organisations are registered members of Assistance Dogs (UK):

- Guide Dogs
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
- Support Dogs
- Canine Partners
- Autism Dogs
- Dogs A.I.D
- Dogs for Good

- Darwin Dogs
- Medical Detection Dogs
- Service Dogs UK
- The Seeing Dogs Alliance
- Veterans with Dogs

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the use of Emotional Support Dogs will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with staff or visitor needs.

Support Dogs / Dogs for the Disabled can also be trained to do other tasks, for example:

- Open and close doors
- Call an ambulance
- Pick up objects
- Assist with dressing or undressing
- Provide physical support
- Raise an alarm
- Operate control buttons

Reasonable Adjustments

As a reasonable adjustment, you are permitted to bring an assistance dog to Villa Park after communication with the club. You must agree to the following:

- The dog must behave as a well-trained assistance dog.
- The dog must always be under the owner's control.
- The dog must be kept on a lead and seated safely.
- The owner must clean up after the dog. Poo bags must be carried at all times (unless the owner is a sight guide dog user and exempt).
- Assistance dogs must be appropriately vaccinated.
- Preventing and correcting any misbehaviour is the owner's responsibility.

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- Owners are responsible for any harm or injury caused to others, their property, or Aston Villa property by their dog.
- The dog must not be ill, in poor health, unclean, or unkempt.
- The dog must behave appropriately and not disrupt others.

Accessible Seating Information

Anyone attending Villa Park with an assistance dog must sit in a wheelchair user bay.

- There are 118 wheelchair user spaces, each with room for a personal assistant.
- These are in the Doug Ellis, Lower Holte, and Trinity Road stands.
- These spaces are mainly for wheelchair users with specific mobility needs and supporters with assistance dogs.
- As there are no fixed seats for disabled supporters in wheelchair user platforms, the owner sits in the chair provided and the dog uses the wheelchair space.
- Bringing your own seat is not permitted.

Booking Tickets

- All supporters requiring a personal assistant must register with the club **before** buying tickets - email: accessibility@avfc.co.uk
- Supporters wishing to purchase tickets for themselves and their assistance dog must also be registered as a disabled supporter to access these areas.
- When buying online, wheelchair spaces may not show as available - call the ticket office to check live availability.
- Once tickets are booked, you will receive a short questionnaire about your dog's duties and abilities. This helps us plan for your needs, especially in an evacuation.

Families with More Than Two in Attendance

If you are bringing other supporters as well as an assistance dog, we suggest sitting in the Lower Doug Ellis stand. The dog owner and dog can sit in Row A and other family members can sit in Row B.

Please **do not** book all seats in Row A - these are for wheelchair users and assistance dog owners. If seats are booked incorrectly, we may need to move and split the group to ensure suitable spaces are available.

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Wheelchair and Assistance Dog Positions

Wheelchair user bays suitable for assistance dogs are in the following locations:

- Trinity Road Stand – Lower: Row 13; Middle: Champions Club (Hospitality)
- Lower Doug Ellis – M5 Row A; Q1 (away supporters)
- Lower Holte – L2 and L3; Terrace View (Hospitality)

If using a wheelchair in these areas, please see the Wheelchair Code of Conduct on our website.

If all wheelchair bays are sold out, we cannot relocate general seats to these areas.

Please do not buy general seating if you need a wheelchair bay for your assistance dog. You may be asked to leave the stadium. Refunds are only available if requested 48 hours before kick-off, in line with our ticketing terms and conditions.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Owner

The owner must ensure the assistance dog:

- Is under control when moving around the stadium.
- Has its needs met for exercise, toilet breaks, and feeding.
- Always behaves appropriately and does not disturb others.

Concerns

If there are concerns about the dog's behaviour or welfare, the Safeguarding Team may ask for support from outside agencies (e.g., a dog trainer) to help resolve the issue.

Guidance for Supporters and Staff

When interacting with an assistance dog or its owner:

- Talk to the handler, not the dog.
- Do not call the dog – it must stay focused on the handler.
- Do not touch or praise the dog without asking the owner first.
- Do not feed the dog.

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Contacting us

If you have any questions about the use of assistance dogs at Villa Park, please email accessibility@avfc.co.uk.

Updates to this Code of Conduct

We reserve the right to update this Code of Conduct at any time.

Where significant changes are made, we will issue an updated version and may also communicate these changes through other appropriate channels. This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, operational practices, or where clarification is needed.

The next scheduled review is in August 2026.

August 2025