Dudley Zoo & Castle

Assistance Dog Policy

Should you require a different version of this document e.g. enlarged, highlighted, in a different text etc. please contact the zoo directly by phone (01384 215 313) or email (admin@dudleyzoo.org.uk) We will try to accommodate your request.

The following policy has been created with reference to *BIAZA Advice Regarding Admittance of Assistance Dogs to Zoos and Aquariums.* (Correct as of March 2025)

Dudley Zoo & Castle (DZC) welcomes the admittance of assistance dogs to our site and recognises the benefits of visiting such attractions for people with disabilities and specific requirements. However, we do not wish for any stress or harm to come to your assistance dog or our animals so there will some conditions to follow during your visit.

Your assistance dog must be suitably trained, well behaved and kept on an appropriate lead which provides optimal control by the handler. Due to the likelihood of crowds, the unpredictable movement of children and the potential to encounter the zoo's free-roaming peacocks, extendable leads are discouraged. If you must use an extendable lead, please contact the zoo to discuss prior to your visit.

The zoo recognises that the law does not require an assistance dog to wear a harness or jacket to identify it

as an assistance dog, however, if your dog does have a harness or jacket then we ask that it is worn during your visit so staff and other visitors can identify you quickly during an event where you might require additional assistance.

If you feel that your dog is distressed by our animals or one of our animals is distressed by the presence of your dog then please move away from that area. Please note that if any of our staff identify an issue, they ask you to move away from that particular area. Please do not allow your assistance dog to get too close to our animal habitats. A distance of at least 2 metres should help to keep your dog and our animals calm.

Several areas on our site have been identified as unsuitable areas for assistance dogs:

- The farmyard area.
- Lorikeet Lookout Walkthrough.
- Lemur Wood Walkthrough.
- Any indoor animal house.
- The pathway next to the tigers and tiger viewing area.

Alongside the zoo's discounted admission rate for people with disabilities, one free carer is permitted to accompany each visitor with a disability during their zoo visit. (please visit our website or contact our reception team for more information regarding admission prices) The aim of this offer is to ensure that people with disabilities or additional needs always have the necessary assistance whilst visiting our site. Depending on individual capabilities, it may be appropriate for a carer to wait with the assistance dog

outside of one of the above listed areas whilst the handler visits the area. The zoo does not recommend leaving assistance dogs with staff members outside of one of these areas as this could cause stress to the assistance dog. If you wish to discuss this further then please contact the zoo prior to your visit.

Animals must not be left chained-up in our carpark or left unattended in vehicles on hot days. The police will be contacted if the car park attendant identifies any animal in distress.

Please ensure that you bring enough water, snacks etc. for your dog for the duration of your visit. Water bowls can be filled by staff upon request. We recommend visiting the gift shop if you need water for a water bowl.

Your assistance dog must be in good health prior to your visit. Please do not bring your dog on site if they have shown any signs of poor health in the 24 hours prior to your visit.

Dog fouling is a hazard to our visitors and animals. Please ensure you bring waste bags with you for your visit. If you are able, please clean up after your dog. Please alert a member of staff immediately if you are unable to clean up after your dog. If you are unable to locate a member of staff nearby, please contact reception on weekdays (01384 215 313) and the gift shop on weekends (01384 215 315).

For the welfare of your dog and our animals, your assistance dog must have lived in the UK for over 6 months and be fully up to date with all vaccinations.

In the unlikely event that an assistance dog behaves aggressively towards our animals, staff or visitors then the dog handler will be asked to leave site immediately.

Emotional support animals do not have the same legal recognition within the UK as assistance dogs and are therefore not permitted anywhere on our site.

If you wish to discuss this policy further, please contact our reception team on 01384 215 313 (weekdays 09.00am to 16.30pm).