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# Dogs at Work Policy

The Employee Handbook Series



# Dogs at Work Policy

COVID 19 has changed the world and the way people work. As the UK gets back to the 'new normal', employees are returning to their workplaces and many of them are asking if they can bring their dog with them. Having pets in the workplace can make it a friendlier and happier workplace, but it can also have its downsides. So, if you're going to allow your employees to bring their dogs to work, then you'll need to have in place a policy to cover this.

When you're drafting a Dogs at Work Policy should ensure it explains who can bring their dog to work, how they book them in, and any restrictions on an employee bringing a dog to work. The policy will also need to clearly set out what a dog can and can't do when it is in the workplace, the responsibilities of the person who brought their dog to work and what happens when the rules are broken. We also suggest you make it clear that you have the absolute right at your discretion to stop a particular dog being brought into your workplace. This will allow you to decide when a dog is not allowed at work and it will remove the need for you to 'prove' that the dog isn't fit or safe to attend work.

## Your responsibility as an Employer

As a matter of law employers must give employees employment contracts which cover the key terms of the employment relationship, but the contract won't cover all of the policies, procedures and expectations for the relationship between a business and the people within it. A employee handbook can include information for all team members, including employees, workers, apprentices and agency staff. Not only can a employee handbook bring together useful guidance for everyone on the culture, values and expectations the business as but it will often be a resource that can save a dispute from arising or provide the best framework for resolving a dispute. The non-contractual

policies and procedures that can be included in a employee handbook will sit alongside contracts of employment to set out how employees are expected to act and how the employer will deal with certain situations.

Putting all the policies and procedures together in one place that is accessible to everyone working in a business is good practice and can provide an invaluable framework for reference on all of the HR issues to cover. If any grievance or dispute arises, having a policy or procedure to refer to and follow can help prevent the situation escalating. If the worst occurs and a claim comes before a tribunal, being able to show the policies and procedures that were followed can make a huge difference to the outcome.

**If your business wants to welcome their four-legged friends then it might be best to have a Dogs at Work Policy. For more information get in touch with our Employment Law team.**

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