

## **Lifeline K9's Assistance Dog Welfare Policy**

The welfare of all dogs in our assistance dog training program is our top priority. Handlers are responsible for ensuring their dog's physical and emotional wellbeing at all times. All dogs in the program must have their five welfare needs met to ensure they are happy, healthy, and able to perform their role effectively.

### **The Five Welfare Needs**

#### **1. A Suitable Environment**

- Dogs must have access to a safe, clean, and comfortable living environment.
- They must be provided with adequate shelter and a designated rest area.
- Handlers must ensure their dog is not exposed to extreme temperatures or hazardous conditions.

#### **2. A Suitable Diet**

- Dogs must be fed a nutritionally balanced diet appropriate for their age, breed, and health needs.
- Fresh water must be available at all times.
- Handlers should monitor their dog's weight and overall health, making dietary adjustments as needed.

#### **3. The Ability to Exhibit Normal Behaviours**

- Dogs must be given regular opportunities for exercise, play, and mental stimulation appropriate to their needs.
- They should be allowed to engage in natural behaviours, such as sniffing, exploring, and social interactions (where appropriate).
- Training should always be positive and force-free, allowing the dog to learn in a supportive environment.

#### **4. Protection from Pain, Suffering, Injury, and Disease**

- Dogs must receive regular veterinary care, including vaccinations, parasite prevention, and health check-ups.
- Any signs of illness or injury must be addressed immediately.
- Handlers must use only approved training equipment that does not cause discomfort or distress.
- 5. The Need to Be Housed with, or apart from, Other Animals
- Handlers must ensure their dog is comfortable around other animals and not placed in stressful or unsafe social situations.
- If a dog does not get along with another pet in the household, appropriate management must be in place to prevent conflict.

### **Monitoring and Enforcement**

If a dog's welfare needs are not being met, the handler will be required to make necessary improvements. Any failure to provide proper care may result in removal from the program. The wellbeing of the assistance dog must always come first.