

YMCA Geelong – Pets in the Workplace Policy

Policy Number	Date Approved	Date Last Amended	Status
YG 212-O	12/09/2024	12/09/2024	APPROVED

1. PURPOSE

The Y is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its employees and recognises the potential benefits of allowing pets at work, such as improving productivity, fostering a sense of connection and collaboration among employees, reducing work-related stress and anxiety and enhancing the overall wellbeing of employees.

Research highlights the benefits to pets accompanying their owners to work, including opportunities for enrichment, socialisation, bonding and regular exercise which can contribute to a pet's physical and mental wellbeing.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees of The Young Men's Christian Association of Geelong Inc. and related entities and Geelong and District YMCA Youth Services. For the purposes of this document we refer to these entities as the Y.

3. POLICY

3.1 Health and Safety Requirements

Pet owner must agree to abide by the following Health and Safety guidelines:

- All pet vaccinations, are complete and up to date based Animal Welfare Victoria routine health care requirements that is based off the age of the pet.
- Parasite control is being done on a routine basis and the animal is clean and free of ticks and fleas.
- Pet has no recent history (6-months) of infection or ringworm.
- Ensure pet is clearly identified i.e. collar with name, microchipped
- Pet owner must have pet in a prepared office ensuring there are no escape routes, cables, cords and rubbish bins are not easily accessible
- Pet should be well socialised with other animals and people
- Pet owner will be solely responsible for all clean-up inside and outside the building including correct disinfection and disposal methods; this also includes vaccuming of pet hair.
- Pet owner **will not** bring a pet to work that is ill or behaving abnormally and will remove the pet from the premises if it becomes ill while on Y property.
- Pet owner must control the pet at all times, using a leash while walking the pet and some form of containment in their work area.

- Pet owner must have full supervision of pet at all times
- Pet owner ensures a comfortable and safe office environment for pet, providing blankets, pet bed, food/treats, water and toys.
- Exercise pet during employees lunch break
- Allow pet sufficient toilet breaks on grassy patch outside
- If an accident occurs inside the facility, the pet owner will ensure the area is disinfected thoroughly.
- A pet in the workplace **is not** considered a sensory or therapy purposes and therefore, interaction with the public should be minimal.
- Should the Y introduce a Sensory or therapy support animal program in a workplace, pets in the workplace would be restricted.
- Pet Owners should give consideration to the suitability of their pet in the workplace prior to seeking permission to bring their pet in. This means if there pet is used to open space and free access to exercise then the work place is not a suitable fit for a pet that will be have restricted movement at work.

3.1.1 Pet-Free Zones

For Health and Safety purposes, pets will not be allowed in designated areas at any Y Geelong site as outlined by Y Manager these may included but not limited to; Kitchen, Café, Bathroom, Gymnastics Floor, Accommodation Lodges.

3.2 Behaviour Expectations

- Pet owner will not bring a pet to work that has bitten or is aggressive, destructive, excessively vocal or fearful.
- Pet must not cause an unreasonable amount of distraction to the pet owner or other employees.

3.3 Eligibility and Approval for Pets in the woprkplace

- The manager at the Y Geelong site has the discretion to approve or deny the request.
- In the case when there are co- occupied businesses at one site – both managers will be consulted on the approval process.
- A limit of one pet per workplace, per day will be decided on an equitable basis –refer to clause 3.5
- In some situations and some workplaces pets will not be appropriate due to business location, role of employee and ability to supervise their pet while performing work tasks or risk to the public.

3.4 Disruptions

- If a pet causes disruptions, the owner may be requested to remove the pet from the workplace.
- The pet needs to be hygienic and should there be concerns about the odours of the pet the owner may be requested to remove the pet from the workplace.

Failure to comply with the ‘YG 212-O Pets in the Workplace Policy’ may result in termination of pet privileges.

3.5 Equity

To ensure that the privilege is accessible to all employee who wish to utilise the Y Pet Policy, consideration will be given to the frequency of the pets attending workplaces to provide opportunities for others giving consideration to but not limited to;

- Frequency of the request (due to the size of some workplaces this will mean that an employee will not be able to bring their pet to work every day of the work week and frequency may be limited to one day a week or month)
- Impact to employee productivity
- Impact to co-workers in the office

3.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Area	Role/Responsibility
CEO	Risk Assessment Review Review and approve Policy with Senior Leadership Team
Management	<p>Authorisation Authorisation is granted at the sole discretion of the supervising Manager at the Y Geelong and can be revoked at any time. Approval will be provided in writing from the Manager; employees will be required to complete and sign a Pet Agreement prior to pet attending sites. Develop a Risk Assessment for the Pet in the Workplace approval.</p>
Employee	<p>Pet owner responsibilities is to ensure the health and safety requirements Clause 3.1 are met. Pet owner must keep a supply of plastic bags at all times and is responsible for the clean up and appropriate disposal of pet waste inside and outside the building. Pet owner must be aware of their pet to ensure they are comfortable and not displaying signs of anxiety: flat ears, hidden tail, excessive panting</p> <p>Consultation Employees will be required to obtain permission from work colleagues in shared spaces if they wish to bring a pet in the office. If an objection occurs, authorisation will be terminated. Objection reasons can include allergies, phobias and other general health, comfort reasons, distraction to work productivity, pregnancy.</p> <p>Notifications An approved pet owner must provide the workplace with 24 hours notice via email that they will be bringing their pet in the workplace and ensure that all employees have been given the opportunity to make other arrangements if they feel uncomfortable.</p>

3.7 Exceptions

Service animals, as defined by applicable law, are exempt from this policy and may accompany their owners at all times. Employees who require the assistance of a service animal should notify People and Culture Team for appropriate accommodations.

3.8 Liability:

The staff member assumes full responsibility for any damage, injury, or harm caused by their pet to the workplace, other staff and patrons. The Y accepts no responsibility for any injury to your pet while in the workplace.

4 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Pets in the Workplace Policy will be implemented on a trial basis from September-December 2024 and reviewed in terms of operational impacts and outcomes then the Policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis by the Senior Leadership Team.

5 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Pet	<p>For the purposes of this policy, a pet is defined as an animal such as a puppy (12 weeks to 18 months) or a dog (aged 18 months and older). The pet must not exceed 20 kg in weight.</p> <p>No dangerous animal breeds will be permitted in the workplace.</p>
Unreasonable Amount of Distraction	<p>An unreasonable amount relates to behaviours that significantly interrupt the work environment and make it difficult for employees to focus and complete assigned tasks, this includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequent barking, whining or loud noises or, ○ Interruption to employees productivity or, ○ Continuous attention seeking such as; biting, nipping, jumping, nudging, restlessness, destructive chewing etc.

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Animal Welfare Victoria Health Care Requirements (Vaccinations) - <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/dogs/health/routine-healthcare-for-dogs>

RSPCA Pet Vaccinations - <https://rspcavic.org/learn/vaccinations/>

<https://australiancan.org.au/pet-projects/pet-friendly-business/>

<https://this.deakin.edu.au/career/work-like-a-dog-the-pros-and-cons-of-bringing-pets-to-work>

<https://www.four-paws.org.au/our-stories/publications-guides/the-benefits-of-dogs-in-the-office>

<https://theconversation.com/why-more-companies-are-going-dog-friendly-123405>

<https://www.rspcapetinsurance.org.au/pet-care/health-and-wellbeing/tips-for-bringing-your-dog-to-work>

<https://www.rspcansw.org.au/blog/animal-care-information/take-your-dog-to-work-day-safety-tips/>

YG 212 Pet in the Workplace Agreement

5. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Meeting Approved: SLT

Meeting Approved Date: 12.09.2024

Policy Effective Date: 12.09.2024

Policy Review Date: 12/12/2024

Policy Owner: hr.geelong@ymca.org.au

Contact Details: People and Culture Team

Amendments

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
V1	15/08/2024	Emily Watson	Document creation
V1	12/09/2024	Shona Eland	<p>Following SLT meeting feedback on 12.09.2024 added;</p> <p>Clause 3.1 Pet Owners should give consideration to the suitability of their pet in the workplace prior to seeking permission to bring their pet in. This means if there pet is used to open space and free access to exercise then the work place is not a suitable fit for a pet that will be have restricted movement at work.</p> <p>Clause 3.3 In the case when there are co-occupied businesses at one site – both managers will be consulted on the approval process.</p> <p>A limit of one pet per workplace, per day will be decided on an equitable basis –refer to clause 3.5</p> <p>In some situations and some workplaces pets will not be appropriate due to business location, role of employee and ability to supervise their pet while performing work tasks or risk to the public.</p> <p>Clause 3.4 The pet needs to be hygenic and should there be concerns about the odours of the pet the owner may be requested to remove the pet from the workplace.</p> <p>Clause 3.8 Liability:</p> <p>The staff member assumes full responsibility for any damage, injury, or harm caused by their pet to the workplace, other staff and patrons. The Y accepts no responsibility for any injury to your pet while in the workplace.</p> <p>Clause 4 <i>The Pets in the Workplace Policy will be implemented on a trial basis from September- December 2024</i></p>