

STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2026

ORIGIN

[ed. For context]

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

[ed. For context]

Terrier.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. From The Royal Kennel Club – Breeds A – Z. For context and not part of the Official Breed Standard.]

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier shares the same ancestry as the Bull Terrier, which was developed in the 1860s by James Hinks who crossed Bulldogs with terriers and other breeds to develop a new type of dog for vermin control and blood sports. When Hinks later added other terriers and breeds, some that changed the head shape, of the breed, devotees of the original type of Bull Terrier cross remained loyal to their preferred type, from which the modern Staffordshire Bull Terrier is derived. It was not until the 1930s that The Kennel Club recognised the breed. It carried the name Staffordshire as the breed was developed in the Black Country of Staffordshire and northern parts of Birmingham. Unlike other breeds it is shown traditionally in a broad leather collar ornamented with brass emblems, containing the Staffordshire Knot – as a tribute to its origins. Despite its rough and ready beginnings, the Staffordshire Bull Terrier is known as a wonderful family pet. Their intelligence and affinity with children are noted in the breed standard.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Smooth-coated, well-balanced, of great strength for his size. Muscular, active, and agile.

CHARACTERISTICS

Traditionally of indomitable courage and tenacity. Highly intelligent and affectionate, especially with children.

TEMPERAMENT

Bold, fearless, and totally reliable.

HEAD

Short, deep through, with broad skull. Very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop, short foreface, with a minimum ratio of 1 part muzzle to 2 parts skull. Nose black or as dark as possible in blue dogs, with open nostrils.

Eyes:

Dark preferred, but may bear some relation to coat colour. Round, of medium size, and set to look straight ahead. Eye-rims dark.

Ears:

Rose- or half-pricked, not large or heavy. Full drop or pricked ears highly undesirable.

Mouth:

Lips tight and clean. Jaws strong, teeth large, with a perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

NECK

Muscular, rather short, clean in outline gradually widening towards shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS

Legs straight and well-boned, set rather wide apart, showing no weakness at the pasterns, from which point, the feet turn out a little. Shoulders well laid back with no looseness at elbow.

BODY

Close-coupled, with level topline, wide front, deep brisket, well-sprung ribs, being rather light in loin; muscular and well-defined.

HINDQUARTERS

Well-muscled, hocks well let down with stifles well-bent. Legs parallel when viewed from behind.

FEET

Well-padded, strong, and of medium size. Nails black in solid-coloured dogs.

TAIL

Medium length, low-set, tapering to a point and carried rather low. Should not curl much and may be likened to an old-fashioned pump handle.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Free, powerful, and agile, with economy of effort. Legs moving parallel when viewed from front or rear. Discernible drive from hind legs.

COAT

Smooth, short, and close.

COLOUR

- White. Red, fawn, black, blue, or any one of these colours with white.
- Any shade of brindle, or any shade of brindle with white.

* Any other colour, including black and tan or liver, or combination of colours unacceptable.

SIZE

Desirable height at withers:

Desirable height at the withers 36cm – 41cm (approx. 14" – 16"); these heights being related to the weights.

Weight:

Males: 13kg – 17kg.

Females: 11kg – 15.4kg.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 76: STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIER

FCI Classification: Group 3 – Terriers.

Section 3 – Bull-type Terriers .

Without working trial.