

**Volunteer Policy**

**INTRODUCTION**

Volunteers give freely of their time to PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL and in return they have the right to involvement and participation throughout the Service, and recognition for the work they perform.

The aim of this policy is to define good volunteering practice for use throughout the Service and to provide guidelines for staff relation to volunteering.

The responsibility for volunteers working within individual projects lies with the co-ordinator. It is expected that all staff will work alongside volunteers and treat them with the respect thet deserve.

PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL promotes equality and diversity and actively seeks to involve a variety of individuals who can contribute and add value to our work either as members, staff or volunteers. It is recognised that volunteering can benefit the organisation by increasing the range of skills, interests, life experience and cultural backgrounds available to young people.

As well as providing a valuable resource, PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL recognises the benefit of volunteering to the individual volunteer. Where possible, the organisation will aim to respond to volunteers’ needs by providing opportunities to gain relevant skills and work experience.

It is also acknowledged that not all volunteers want to move into employment, and welcomes all individuals interested in giving their time freely to support PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL. ‘Volunteers’ fall into the following two categories:

**Unpaid staff**

This includes any volunteer who is working within a project alongside paid workers. There is no minimum time requirement for this, i.e. minimum 6 hours as there is with paid workers. The work will include face to face youth work, together with contributions to programme planning and team meetings, etc. Any volunteer working as an unpaid youth worker will have access to our training programme and will be expected to undertake a full induction. The minimum age for an unpaid volunteer is 21.

**Facilitators**

This covers volunteers who are able to deliver a specific time limited piece of work, i.e. creative arts/drama. A brief organisation induction will be required to ensure that the volunteer is aware of PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL policies and a full unit induction will be required. There is no minimum age range for this as a young person with a skill to share.

* **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The volunteering opportunities will be widely marketed in line with PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL recruitment guidelines. Recruitment materials may be available in different accessible formats. Any requests for information will be dealt with as promptly as possible.

* **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

Potential volunteers will be invited to attend a Recruitment Interview where they will be able to gain information and a greater understanding of the PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL and the opportunities available for volunteers.

If an individual is interested in undertaking voluntary work, contract details will be taken and a full time worker will make contact to arrange mutually convenient visit to a designated project. On these visits volunteers will meet staff and young people and gain an insight of practical youth work delivery. Following these introductory visits should the volunteer wish to proceed; they will be required to complete an application form and will have a further short interview with the appropriate full time worker. It is at this point that references and CRB clearance will be sought.

It should be made clear to all volunteer applicants that the Recruitment, introductory sessions and interview have two key purposes:

1. To determine whether they are suitable for the role. This will be achieved by enquiring into the volunteers’ needs, aims and motivations, together with suitable references and CRB clearance.
2. To determine whether PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL is suitable for the volunteer. This will be achieved by providing information about the organisation and potential volunteering opportunities, enabling the applicant to make a decision as to whether any potential position would be of interest to them.

* **REFERENCES**

Any offer of a voluntary opportunity shall be made subject to the checking of references. These can be professional or personal, but not from a relative. Applicants will be informed of the need to provide referees and asked to bring details to their interview.

Volunteers working with PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL will be working face to face with young people therefore ALL volunteers must complete a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) form. This must be explained fully at the interview stage in order to ensure that the applicant has a thorough understanding of the process, and any potential implications.

* **ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION OF POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER**

Potential volunteers should be informed of the outcome of their interview as soon as is practically possible. They should be told at interview the timescale for response.

Any applicant that is tuned down will be offered the opportunity for feedback.

* **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

Volunteers will undertake a PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL Induction as well as an Initial Induction relating to the unit they are working within.

The Initial Induction will include familiarisation of policies and procedures. Volunteers will then be able to access all of the training opportunities available to other staff.

* **COMMUNICATION**

In order to involve volunteers as fully as possible, PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL is committed to keeping volunteers informed about the activities of the Service and the unit in which they are working, and facilitating volunteers’ input and comments. This will demonstrate the value and significance placed upon volunteers and their work.

Staff should make every attempt to include volunteers in the circulation of information within the project. This will include leaving copies of appropriate messages, memos, etc., in the volunteers’ in-tray in their absence. Final responsibility for keeping volunteers informed will rest with the relevant full time worker.

* **ONGOING SUPPORT**

It is expected that all staff will support volunteers on a regular basis where appropriate, referring all requests that they cannot deal with onto the full time worker or the Project Manager.

Volunteers must be included in project staff meeting to discuss evaluation and planning.

Staff can support and recognise the value of volunteers by remembering to thank the volunteer.

Staff will be expected to assist in keeping records up to date for any volunteer under their supervision.

* **REFERENCES**

PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL will be in a position to provide a reference after the volunteer has been actively working with the organisation for a minimum of three months.

* **PAID POSITIONS**

Volunteers are welcome to apply for paid positions within PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL, but will be subject to the same application/interview procedures as all other applicant.

It is also acknowledged that not all volunteers want to move into employment, and welcomes all individuals interested in giving their time freely to support PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL.

* **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Volunteers are required to comply with the PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL policy on confidentiality.

* **REPRESENTING PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL**

Where volunteer are representing the Youth Service at a conference or external event, they must behave in a manner that will not endanger the Service’s professional reputation.

* **COPYRIGHT**

During their time withPRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL the copyright of any documents or work created by individuals who are volunteering or on work placement during their time with PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL will br deemed to belong to the organisation.

* **EXPENSES**

Volunteers are entitled to prompt reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of their voluntary work, these must be paid through project budgets and agreed with the co-ordinator prior to being incurred. Records of such payments must be kept.

* **ABSENCE/ILLNESS**

Volunteers are performing a valuable role within the organisation, and are relied on by staff to fulfil agreed duties at stated times. If they are unable to attend, or expect to be late, it is important that volunteers inform the full time worker as soon as possible. Continued inability to attend or to contact the appropriate worker to explain their absence, will result in a review of their position. An interview will be held with the volunteer to clarify the situation. The outcome of this interview may be that agreement is reached that result in a more acceptable level of commitment to the Service.

* **COMPLAINTS/ISSUES**

Any complaints and/or issues that arise either on the part of the volunteer or PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL must initially be raised through a supervision meeting between the volunteer and the co-ordinator. Details of this meeting will then be passed on to the Deputy/Executive Head teacher, dependent upon the nature of the complaint/issue. Where a complaint is made concerning the co-ordinator, and no resolution has been reached, the volunteer should make contact directly with the Projects Manager who will then arrange to meet the volunteer.

* **WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

When the volunteer has commenced their work within a specific project the co-ordinator will meet with them to agree an outline of appropriate tasks. This is by no means intended to be a contract of employment (see appendix 2). This must be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the development of the volunteer.

* **CONTRACT**

In order to ensure volunteers are covered by all relevant PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL policies, including third party liability, all volunteers will receive a formal contract, which they are required to sign.

**Appendix 1**

**TASK DESCRIPTION SHEET**

This needs to be completed by the co-ordinator together with the Volunteer. It should reflect the needs of the Volunteer and PRISM INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

*This is not a contract of employment*

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| **Purpose of Role**  E.g. To support arts/general programmes etc. |  |
| **Tasks to be carried out**  e.g. organising events, supervising young people |  |
| **Venue where work will be carried out** |  |
| **Days and times volunteer is able to work**  e.g. Tuesday 7-9pm |  |
| **Who Volunteer is accountable to** |  |
| **Volunteer Support**  e.g. dates of staff meetings, review meetings |  |
| I have understood and agree to the above task description  Signed Dated | |