Volunteer Policy

Aim

This organisation values volunteers for the diverse skills and experience they bring to the project. It recognises that volunteers should be seen as complementary and additional to the staff group. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the interests of the volunteers are met, whilst bearing in mind that the children's safety and wellbeing is paramount.

Principles

This Volunteer Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation and that systems are in place for them to contribute to the settings work.
- We do not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- We expect that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.

Procedure

Recruitment

We will invite volunteers to visit project at a time convenient to the Manager, who will go through the application process and the other information with the volunteers. This approach will help volunteers who may lack the confidence or basic literacy skills to apply on their own.

References and checks

All volunteers must provide the organisation with two referees. We will ensure that all references are taken up before the volunteer starts work.

All volunteers will be expected to complete the appropriate level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and all offers of volunteering will be subject to this being satisfactory and will not begin volunteering here until this is received.

Any information, either disclosed on the volunteer's self-declaration or via the DBS check, will be dealt with in line with our Recruitment of ex-Offenders Policy.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given a thorough induction to, the organisation, work they will be doing as well as health and safety, equal opportunities etc. The volunteer may be given a particular area of work to focus on, depending on their interests.

Training needs will be reviewed through regular support and supervision. If a volunteer works only occasionally, we will maintain contact to see if they would still like to volunteer.

Insurance

We will provide a safe workplace and provide insurance cover against any injury caused by negligence. All volunteers are covered by the settings Employer's Liability and Public Liability insurance.

Equal Opportunities

We operate an equal opportunities policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our equal opportunities policy.

Health & Safety

Volunteers are covered by our Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which will be provided during the induction process.

Child Protection

All volunteers will be given a copy of our Child Protection policy and will be required to work within it. In addition, volunteers had a responsibility to ensure a child's welfare and should adhere to the following:

- Avoid being alone with a child, at all times, if possible. This prevents difficult situations arising, which could lead to false accusations.
- Never become involved with any child outside the normal hours of the project unless they have full consent of the main carer of the child. Any such relationships with children/families need to be declared to the setting.
- Confidentiality must be respected at all times, except where a child's safety is at risk.
- Take any concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child to the playleader.
- At all times act as a positive role model for the children.

Volunteer's Responsibilities

- Be punctual and notify staff as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a session
- Work as part of a team and under the supervision of the Manager.
- Respect confidentiality at all times, except where a child's safety is at risk.
- Have regard for and follow our Code of Conduct, policies and procedures at all times.
- Report all concerns, either about children, staff or other volunteers, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Report any information about changes to their suitability to work with children to the Manager on an ongoing basis. This includes arrests, charges, convictions, cautions and court orders.
- Always act as a positive role model for the children.

Volunteer Breaks

- Over 18-year-olds are entitled to a rest break of at least 20 mins if their shift lasts over 6 hours per day.
- 16–18-year-olds are entitled to a rest break of at least 30 mins if their shift lasts over 4.5 hours per day.
- 15–16-year-olds are entitled to a rest break of 1 hour in every 4 hours volunteered and a maximum of an 8-hour day. They also require at least 2 weeks off in a year.
- 13–14-year-olds are entitled to a rest break of 1 hour in every 4 hours volunteered and a maximum of a 5-hour day. They also require at least 2 weeks off in a year.
- These would apply to school/education holidays

Problems

If a volunteer has any problems, they should to talk to a member of staff. If there are any issues that cannot be discussed with staff then the volunteers should talk to a management committee member.

Support

We will provide regular opportunities for supporting volunteers and ensure that there are systems in place for any issues to be raised.

If a volunteer only works occasionally, we will maintain contact to see if they would still like to volunteer.

Duke of Edinburgh Placements

We also offer placements to 14- and 15-year-olds volunteering as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award. They will work under supervision from the Playworkers, complete introductory training (including safeguarding) and will work towards an agreed set of targets. If they are still with us when they turn 16, they will go through the criteria stated above.