



VOLUNTEER POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Open Doors Project exists to provide outdoor experiences and activities for children with learning disabilities in Birmingham.
- 1.2 This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and directors within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.
- 1.3 The Open Doors Project recognises volunteers as an important part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission, vision, and values (see separate policy), and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, the children we work with, and the volunteers themselves.

2. WHO IS A VOLUNTEER

- 2.1 Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.
- 2.2 Volunteers are valued for:
 - Bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisation.
 - Championing our cause within the wider community.
 - Enhancing the quality of the work we do with our children.
 - Giving up their own time to improve the wellbeing of children with learning disabilities.

3. BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

- 3.1 The Open Doors Project recognises that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.
- 3.2 Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references. All prospective volunteers will be interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised.
- 3.3 Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles, or signposted to the local volunteer centre.
- 3.4 For opportunities working directly with our children, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check. If the volunteer does not already have a valid DBS check on the online update service it will be arranged for them by The Open Doors Project.

4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

4.1 We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to equality and diversity. We welcome applications from people from all backgrounds.

4.2 Please see our Equality and Diversity policy.

5. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

5.1 The volunteer co-ordinator (Kate Millington) has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

5.2 All volunteers will have a designated staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision.

5.3 New volunteers will have an induction meeting with the volunteer co-ordinator in order to discuss the project, and their role as volunteer. They will be given all relevant policies to read.

6. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

6.1 Volunteers will be offered ongoing support and supervision as appropriate and this will be discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

6.2 The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

6.3 The organisation expects volunteers:

- To be reliable and honest.
- To uphold the organisation's values and comply with its policies.
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute.
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

6.4 Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them.
- To receive adequate support and training.
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment.
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner.
- To have opportunities for personal development.
- To be recognised and appreciated.

6.5 Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Please see the Health and Safety policy.

7.2 Volunteers will be covered by The Open Doors Project's insurance for all projects.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

8.1 Please see the Safeguarding and Data Protection policies.

8.2 Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.

9. MOVING ON

9.1 When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

9.2 Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

10. PROBLEM SOLVING AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

10.1 The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

10.2 We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty.

10.3 Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning The Open Doors Project and its work.