

## Volunteer Policy

Reviewed by:	Melanie Hill, Head of Volunteer Development Clare Reilly, HR consultant
Ratified by:	OLT / Board of Trustees
Approval date:	April 2022
Next Review Date:	April 2025

History	Melanie Hill, Head of Volunteer Development	
Policy first ratified:	January 2014	
Date	Reviewed by	Next Review Date
February 2017	Melanie Hill	
April 2022	Melanie Hill	April 2025

# Volunteer Policy

## Contents

		Page no
1	Welcome and Introduction	3
2	Principles of the policy	4
3	Practice guidelines	4
	• Recruitment and selection	4
	• Age	4
	• Family Involvement	5
	• Responsibility and expectations	5
	• Boundaries	5
	• Diversity and equality	5
	• Confidentiality and data protection	6
	• Training	6
	• Dress code	6
	• Expenses	6
	• Insurance	7
	• Health and safety	7
	• Copyright, intellectual property and photography	8
	• Media relations	8
	• Social media	8
	• Leaving	8
	• Resolving concerns	9
	• Smoking and substance abuse	9
	• Whistleblowing	9
	• Safeguarding	9
	• Further information and advice	9
4	Volunteer Policies	10
5	Staff and Volunteer policies	10

# Volunteer Policy

Welcome to Shooting Star Children's Hospices

We are delighted that you have chosen to volunteer with us.

Shooting Star Children's Hospices welcomes and encourages volunteers to join our team working alongside and complementing the work of employees so that we can offer babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their families the best possible care and support from diagnosis to end of life and throughout bereavement.

Volunteers are vital to our success and bring unique qualities to the organisation enabling our services to be delivered more effectively.

We involve volunteers because:

- They bring credibility to our work – volunteers choose us and donate their expertise freely and are powerful advocates for our cause
- Connect us to our local communities and help us reach new audiences
- Offer a pool of skills and experience we would not otherwise have access to
- Expand the diversity of our teams, providing a wider perspective
- Challenge us, guide us and represent our values which are professionalism, respect, integrity, diversity and excellence
- They enable paid staff to concentrate on the work for which they were trained
- They allow us to extend our budget so that we can make the most of every penny raised

Thank you for your commitment to Shooting Star Children's Hospices. We hope this will be rewarding and enjoyable.

This policy explains the framework of the charity's volunteer programme. It helps define the role of volunteers within the organisation, and how they can expect to be treated whilst maintaining our values of Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Excellence.

## 1. Introduction

Shooting Star Children's Hospices is a leading children's hospice charity caring for babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions and their families. Whether lives are measured in days, weeks or years, we are here to make every moment count. We support

families from diagnosis to end of life and throughout bereavement with a range of nursing, practical, emotional and medical care.

## 2. Principles of the policy

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the policies and procedures of Shooting Star Children's Hospices and by the following principles of volunteering:

- The charity will endeavour to ensure that volunteers are able to contribute fully to the organisation and are properly integrated into the structure and ethos of Shooting Star Children's Hospices.
- The charity expects that volunteers and staff at all levels will work positively together to fulfil the mission, vision and values of the organisation.
- The charity recognizes that volunteers have personal and development needs and will seek to help volunteers to meet those needs, as well as providing them with the training to work effectively.
- The charity is committed to the effective support and management of volunteers

## 3. Practice guidelines

The following guidelines deal with some of the practical aspects of the volunteer's involvement with the charity. Further and more detailed information is contained in the relevant volunteer policies and procedures.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

All prospective volunteers will be recruited and selected following the charity's principles of selection and good practice to ensure their suitability. Each volunteer role has a role profile describing what the role entails. We carry out informal interviews to ensure the role is right for both parties. Some will also require a DBS check e.g. volunteering at our hospices or as an ambassador. Trustee Recruitment and Conflict of Interest are covered in separate individual policies.

### **Age**

For most volunteering roles the minimum age is 18. However, 16-year-olds may take part in our Young Volunteering scheme at the hospices. Typically volunteers on our Young Volunteer Scheme aspire to work in the medical profession or as other healthcare professionals and volunteering in a hospice kitchen gives them exposure to the hospice environment. In our shops 15-year-olds may volunteer providing they can commit to two hours per week and it is hoped that this will last for at least six months.

There is no upper age limit for volunteers but there may be situations when a volunteer is asked to stop volunteering e.g. when health issues are considered a risk to the person concerned or others around them.

### **Family Involvement**

We recognise that family members who are currently using our service may wish to support the charity by volunteering. Certain guidelines apply for them, for bereaved families and for ex-service users. Details are outlined in our Volunteer Family Involvement policy.

### **Responsibilities and expectations**

We want you to enjoy our volunteering with us and we take our responsibilities to you very seriously. All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement which sets out our mutual aims and responsibilities towards each other. We aim to be flexible and are always happy to discuss your individual situation. This is not a contract and Shooting Star Children's Hospices has no intention of creating a contract with a volunteer.

### **Representing Shooting Star Children's Hospices**

All volunteers have a responsibility to uphold the name and reputation of the charity at all times.

### **Boundaries**

SSCH is committed to providing high quality professional care to the children and families supported and as such we strive to adhere to good standards of practice. One of these standards includes the establishment and maintenance of professional boundaries in the relationships of all volunteers who come into contact, with family members. Further information can be found in Professional Boundaries – Volunteers Policy.

### **Diversity and equality**

SSCH is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff, volunteers and job applicants. We aim to create an environment in which all individuals are best able to make use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment and in which all decisions are based on merit. We do not discriminate against staff and volunteers on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, domestic circumstances, gender reassignment, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age. All staff and volunteers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff including volunteers, regardless of their status.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and volunteers treat visitors, service users, suppliers and former staff members.

Full details are contained in the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy available from your staff contact or the Volunteer Development team.

## **Confidentiality and data protection**

We take great care of how your personal information is collected and dealt with and there are safeguards to ensure this under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As a volunteer, you are bound by the SSCH Confidentiality Policy and we expect you to protect any personal or confidential information to which you may have access. A copy of our Confidentiality policy is available from your line manager or Volunteer Development

## **Training**

All hospice volunteers must attend an induction before starting in their volunteer roles. Inductions will be offered to all volunteers working at other sites. All volunteers will receive training relevant to their volunteering role and SSCH will endeavour to develop further skills where required.

## **Dress code**

SSCH expects all volunteers to adhere to the volunteer dress code policy. Volunteers are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to their volunteering environment and bear in mind that as a representative of the charity the way they present themselves plays an important part in the image that the charity portrays.

## **Expenses**

It is Shooting Star Children's Hospices policy to reimburse reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred by registered volunteers and volunteers are encouraged to claim expenses incurred while volunteering. Volunteers should always check with their managers what expenses can be claimed before they spend any money.

How to claim expenses:

- All expense claims must be submitted on a SSCH volunteer expense claim form
- Obtain an expense form from your line manager
- Complete the form and attach all receipts to the form (expense cannot be paid without the corresponding receipts)
- Include your bank sort code and account number on the form so the money can be paid directly into your account
- Return the form to your line manager for authorization
- Claims should be submitted monthly and no later than three months after the expenditure (one month at Year end -March) Claims older than 3 months will not be reimbursed (unless previously agreed with your line manager).

A few caveats:

- Mileage can be claimed for a direct route from the volunteer's home to the nearest hospice or shop (receipts are not required)
- Travel expenses can be claimed for a direct route from home to the nearest hospice or shop.

- Parking can only be claimed if no free parking is available. Before you start volunteering, discuss parking options with your manager.
- Volunteers entitled to free travel should use this option and adjust their volunteering hours accordingly
- Volunteers who work a full day where refreshments or lunch is not provided may claim for a meal up to a maximum of £4
- Volunteers may not claim mileage for attendance at Volunteer Social Events.

Always check with your manager if you are uncertain whether an expenditure can be claimed before you spend any money. If managers are unsure whether an expenditure is allowed, they should check with the Volunteer Development team.

Finally, as a charity it is our duty to minimise expenditure and maximise the value of donated funds. We therefore ask staff and volunteers to keep expenses to a minimum and to record, explain and follow the correct expense claim procedure.

### **Insurance**

The charity has appropriate insurance in place to cover its volunteers. These include employer's liability insurance and public liability insurance in the event of a volunteer being harmed due to the negligence of the charity or a third party being injured as a result of the actions of a volunteer whilst performing SSCH duties. However, the charity's insurance does not cover personal belongings.

- Volunteers using their own vehicle

Shooting Star Children's Hospices does not provide motor insurance for volunteers. Driving in connection with charitable volunteering can be classified by some insurance companies as "business use" rather than "social or commuting". Shooting Star Children's Hospices recommends that you notify your insurance company. They may adjust your premium slightly, but this would be unusual.

If SSCH has agreed to reimburse expenses for a volunteer using their own vehicle, the standard government mileage rate would apply, which includes an allowance for insurance as well as fuel, maintenance, tax etc. Please ask your manager or Volunteer Development if you require further information.

### **Health and safety**

Shooting Star Children's Hospices is committed to ensuring all volunteer's wellbeing and safety and expects volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment. All volunteers at Shooting Star C must:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their actions or omissions.
- Co-operate with staff by assisting them to fulfil their statutory duties.
- Follow the Health and Safety Policy and measures put in place by the charity or any organisation whose premises the volunteer is working on.

- Report accidents/incidents or dangerous circumstances to a member of staff, whether or not any person has been injured.
- Be aware of actions to take when an emergency situation arises and who to contact for support.

### **Copyright, intellectual property and photography**

In the course of your volunteering the rights to any original works that you may create will belong to the charity, unless otherwise agreed. Examples include photography, artwork, graphic design and written work, including the results of research.

We may use photographs of volunteers carrying out their roles for promotional purposes online or in leaflets. Volunteers may request that an image is withdrawn.

### **Media relations**

All media requests should be directed to the Communications and Marketing team – [press@shootingstar.org.uk](mailto:press@shootingstar.org.uk). The team is trained in media relations and also manages the charity's wider key messages so are equipped to use the correct and most timely message depending on the media activity.

No staff or volunteer should act as spokesperson or provide content such as family stories or images without direction from the Communications and Marketing team. If your volunteer role means interaction with the press is possible, and you would like to act as a spokesperson, please speak to your contact at SSCH or email [press@shootingstar.org.uk](mailto:press@shootingstar.org.uk).

### **Social media**

SSCH has a large number of staff and volunteers who are very active on social media and help us spread our messages much further than the official accounts can on their own. There is a Social Media Policy and separate guidelines to protect both the individual and the charity which are available from Volunteer Development or your staff contact. In summary however we would ask that your social media accounts are set up as personal accounts and do not have Shooting Star Children's Hospices in the account name or contain our branding and that you include a disclaimer 'views my own' if you mention that you volunteer with us. Please remember that you are legally liable for everything you write or post through social media. Only share things you feel comfortable with and don't say anything defamatory, libellous, harassing, pornographic or otherwise hostile as it could not only land you in a lot of trouble, but also reflect badly on the charity.

### **Leaving**

When a volunteer leaves there is a procedure to follow to ensure they leave with a good impression of Shooting Star Children's Hospices, that it is understood why they are leaving and to ensure it is an equitable process across the charity. Details are outlined in the Leaving Policy.



### **Resolving concerns**

SSCH takes the concerns of its volunteers very seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve any difficulties. If you have any problems or complaints about your volunteering please talk to your line manager in the first instance. If an informal approach has been reasonably tried and failed to resolve the situation, or the complaint is about your line manager, you should contact the Volunteer Development team. A copy of our Problem-Solving Policy for Volunteers is available from Volunteer Development.

### **Smoking and substance abuse**

All SSCH premises are smoke free. Volunteers are asked not to smoke when wearing a badge, branded clothing or anything that would identify them with the charity. Similarly, electronic or e-cigarettes should not be used, as from a distance they can be mistaken for tobacco products. Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted.

### **Whistleblowing**

We are committed to conducting our work with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff and volunteers to maintain high standards. Furthermore, we are audited by the Care Quality Commission and accountable to The Charity Commission and to the public who support us so generously. Therefore, we check and audit our activities to maintain our reputation as a trustworthy charity. If you suspect that any staff member or volunteer is behaving in a way that is unethical and likely to bring the charity into disrepute, or cause financial loss or dangers at work, you should report this immediately to your staff contact, Volunteer Development or the HR officer with designated whistleblowing responsibilities. A copy of the Whistleblowing Policy is available from Volunteer Development.

### **Safeguarding**

It is the responsibility of all staff, students, trustees and volunteers to ensure any safeguarding concerns are reported immediately. A copy of the Safeguarding Children Policy and Safeguarding Adults policy is available from the Volunteer Development.

### **Support, further information and advice**

If you would like further information, advice or support on any aspect of your volunteering please ask your staff contact or a member of the Volunteer Development team on 01483 230960 or email: [volunteers@shootingstar.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@shootingstar.org.uk)

**Shooting Star Children's Hospices recognises your contribution as a volunteer to the vital work of the charity. This is borne out in the policies and procedures the charity has developed which cover both staff and volunteers:**

## **4. Volunteer policies**

Problem Solving Dress Code  
Family Involvement  
Professional Boundaries - Volunteers

Recruitment and Selection  
Trustee Recruitment & Trustee Conflict of Interest  
Volunteer Leaving  
Volunteer Policy

## 5. Staff and volunteer policies

Accident and Incident  
Cash Handling  
Complaints and Duty of Candour  
Confidentiality  
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)  
Diversity and Equal Opportunities  
Financial Procedure for Shops (pending approval)  
Health and Safety  
Inclement and Severe Weather  
Lone Worker (pending approval)  
No Smoking  
Safeguarding Adults  
Safeguarding Children  
Social Media  
Substance Misuse  
Vehicles and Drivers  
Whistleblowing

