

OPEN DOORS YOUTH SERVICE INC.

VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS POLICY

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Unpaid staff are often an important part of organisations and can offer support and assistance in the general functioning of a service. They provide energy and time and can offer skills and a different perspective within the service.

By offering volunteers and students the opportunity to form part of the Open Doors team, they are also awarded the chance to contribute to the organisation and the service it offers. Through this process, volunteers and students have access to resources, information and experiences that will essentially support the pursuit of personal and career goals and achievements.

Relevant Documentation

- Institutional requirements for student placements

VOLUNTEERS

PROCEDURE

1. Selection and Recruitment of a Volunteer

- 1.1 Volunteers may be of any age, gender, culture or education level providing they can work within the Philosophy Statement and policy and procedures of Open Doors and have a genuine interest in the service offered.
- 1.2 Volunteers can actively approach Open Doors or Open Doors may advertise or seek out people to volunteer on an ongoing basis or for a specific project or purpose.
- 1.3 All enquiries regarding volunteer work are to be directed to the Coordinator.
- 1.4 If there is a vacancy for a volunteer at Open Doors, the Coordinator will arrange an interview with the person and complete a "Volunteer Intake Form" (see Appendix).
- 1.5 If there is not a vacancy for a volunteer at the time the person enquires, it will be at the discretion of the Coordinator whether or not to complete a "Volunteer Intake Form".
- 1.6 The purpose of the interview is:
 - For the Coordinator to gather information about the potential volunteer, and may include:
 - Experience with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people and issues
 - Experience in working with community organisations
 - Ability to relate to people in a positive manner
 - Personal attributes
 - Level of communication skills
 - For the potential volunteer to gather information about Open Doors
 - Assess the needs and availability of the potential volunteer
 - To discuss volunteering opportunities within the service.
- 1.7 Selection and recruitment of a volunteer will depend upon:
 - The volunteer and related information

- If there is a vacancy for a volunteer, given the organisation's current projects, general functioning and space
 - Who is available to orientate and supervise the volunteer on a general and overall basis
 - Whether the potential volunteer wants to pursue volunteer work with Open Doors after options and organisational information has been discussed.
- 1.8 Once selected, the volunteer will agree to and sign the Volunteer Contract and induction and training will commence.

2. Induction of Volunteers

- 2.1 Volunteers will receive the Open Doors Policy and Procedures Manual to familiarise themselves more closely with the organisation and agree to the procedures and conditions outlined in the document.
- 2.2 A staff member will be responsible for orientating the new volunteer and will include:
- A tour of building conducted
 - A discussion of workplace health and safety issues
 - An explanation of key work practices and policies
 - An explanation of the job role and performance expectations
 - A general discussion of the agency's role and purpose and how the volunteer's position fits with this
 - Location and use of equipment, resources and vehicles
 - Information about parking, transport, facilities, food and smoking
 - Operation of phone, photocopier and fax systems
 - Personal use of organisational facilities
 - Computer systems and software
- 2.3 Volunteers are covered under Open Doors public liability insurance for activities undertaken at the Open Doors office.

3 Training and Participation of Volunteers

- 3.1 If participating on a project or assisting a paid worker, training is provided by the appropriate worker, where necessary.
- 3.2 Volunteers can seek support and raise issues regarding work, with the Coordinator or the paid worker they are working with.
- 3.3 Volunteers are considered to be part of the Open Doors team, but will not be required to attend team meetings on a regular basis, however may attend to report on specific work.

4 Supervision and Performance Appraisals

- 4.1 Volunteers will be under the formal supervision of the Coordinator and will ultimately be accountable to the Coordinator.
- 4.2 Volunteers may complete a "Volunteer Feedback Form" (see Appendix) which will assist in the supervision process and provide the volunteer with the opportunity to raise issues and review their own work.
- 4.3 Volunteers will also be subject to performance appraisals, but may undergo a revised version of the staff performance appraisal process depending on the nature and duration of work conducted.

5 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The rights and responsibilities of volunteers are detailed in the "Volunteer Contract" (see Appendix).

6 Open Doors Rights and Responsibilities

- 6.1 The rights and responsibilities of Open Doors are detailed in the "Volunteer Contract" (see Appendix).

7 Out of Pocket Expenses

- 7.1 If during the course of their volunteer work, a volunteer is required to use their own money on a particular occasion for work-related materials (such as art materials) and approval to spend money for this purpose has been approved, these costs are to be reimbursed following the Petty Cash System.

8 Terminating Volunteer Contracts

- 8.1 If the Coordinator or the paid worker supervising the volunteer has a concern relating to the performance of a worker or receives a complaint regarding the volunteer, that worker will arrange a meeting with the volunteer as soon as possible taking into account the working times of the volunteer. The Coordinator is to be involved in this meeting if not initiating it.
- 8.2 At the meeting the Coordinator/worker is to outline their concerns to the volunteer. Where it is agreed that that a serious problem exists, the parties will attempt to reach an agreed plan of action to resolve the issue. The issue will be reviewed within four (4) weeks from the date of the meeting.
- 8.3 If the volunteer's performance or conduct is not deemed satisfactory by the Coordinator/worker at the time of review, the volunteer will be issued with a written warning. This will state that if the volunteer's performance or conduct does not improve to a satisfactory level within four (4) weeks from the date of the warning, then they may be asked to cease their volunteer work with Open Doors.
- 8.4 If, after four (4) weeks from the date the written warning was issued, the volunteer's performance or conduct is not satisfactory, the volunteer's contract will be terminated.

9. Volunteers Terminating Their Contract

- 9.1 Volunteers are not required to give notice to terminate their contract, but must inform the Coordinator of their wish to discontinue volunteer work with Open Doors, preferably in writing.

10. Grievances

- 10.1 Volunteers will have access to the grievance procedure outlined in Open Doors "Grievance Policy".

STUDENTS

PROCEDURES

11. Selection and Recruitment of a Student

- 11.1 Students may approach Open Doors to undergo a placement in line with their study requirements, Open Doors may approach an educational institution for a student or an educational institution may contact Open Doors.
- 11.2 All outside enquiries regarding student placement are to be directed to the Coordinator.
- 11.3 The Open Doors team will discuss:
- The possibilities and practicalities of taking on a student which may take into account office space, current projects and employee workloads
 - Who is qualified to take on a student and provide formal supervision
 - What work the student may undertake
- 11.4 Once the team has considered the above-mentioned issues and have decided to take on a student, the worker responsible for supervising the student will contact that person or the institution.
- 11.5 The subsequent interview between the supervisor and the student will be conducted using the "Student Interview Questions" (see Appendix).
- 11.6 Once selected, the volunteer will agree to and sign the Volunteer Contract and induction and training will commence.

12. Induction of Students

- 12.1 Students will receive the Open Doors Policy and Procedures Manual to familiarise themselves more closely with the organisation and agree to the procedures and conditions outlined in the document.
- 12.2 A student's supervisor will be responsible for orientating their student and will include:
- A tour of building conducted
 - A discussion of the agency's role and purpose and how the student fits with this
 - Discussion and planning around project and work to be undertaken
 - A discussion of workplace health and safety issues
 - An explanation of key work practices and policies
 - Location and use of equipment, resources and vehicles
 - Information about parking, transport, facilities, food and smoking
 - Operation of phone, photocopier and fax systems
 - Personal use of organisational facilities
 - Computer systems and software
- 12.3 Students are covered under Open Doors public liability insurance for activities undertaken at the Open Doors office.

13. Supervision and Record Keeping

- 13.1 The worker responsible for the student will keep a personnel file which is to contain all documentation and correspondence relating to the student's placement.
- 13.2 The student will receive formal supervision from the worker and is to be undertaken as often as considered necessary by the worker and the student.
- 13.3 Supervision may be documented with a copy being kept on the student's personnel file and a copy given to the student.

- 13.4 Student's are to complete a "Student Feedback Sheet" and a "Supervisor Performance Feedback Sheet" (see Appendix) to comment on their placement experience, the service and their supervisor at the end of their practical.
- 13.5 The Open Doors team will also have the opportunity to contribute to the student's final evaluation by completing a "Team Feedback on Student Sheet" (see Appendix).
- 13.6 The worker will ensure that supervision and field supervision is conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines provided by the student's place of study.

14. Student Rights and Responsibilities

- 14.1 The student's rights and responsibilities should be outlined in the educational institution's student placement documentation and should be referred to at the outset of the placement and when required.

15. Open Doors Rights and Responsibilities

- 15.1 The organisation's rights and responsibilities should be outlined in the educational institution's student placement documentation and should be referred to at the outset of the placement and when required.

16. Out of Pocket Expenses

- 16.1 If during the course of their placement, a student is required to use their own money on a particular occasion for work-related materials (such as art materials) and approval to spend money for this purpose has been approved, these costs are to be reimbursed following the Petty Cash System.

17. Terminating Student Placements

- 17.1 If the student's supervisor has serious concerns relating to the performance or conduct of the student, they are required to follow the grievance procedure as outline by the student's educational institution.

Links to Other Policies

- Grievance Policy
- Financial Management Policy
- Staff Development Policy

Acknowledgment: The ideas and concepts used in this document have been adapted from Community Action in Carole Park Inc and Othila's Young Women's Housing and Support Service.