

Down Syndrome Society of South Australia Inc

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS POLICY

PRINCIPLES

1. Volunteering involves people undertaking defined activities:
 - of their own free will
 - without payment (other than out of pocket expenses), and
 - which will be of benefit to the community and the agency concerned
2. In many cases volunteers work within and under the direction of DSSSA to provide regular augmentation of service delivery. The Guidelines for Volunteers applies to these volunteers.
3. Other forms of volunteering involve people who participate in consultative and advisory capacities, or as 'friends'. Where the tasks of these volunteers require that they work within the Society, the Guidelines for Volunteers will apply.
4. DSSSA acknowledges the contribution that volunteers make to enhancing the lives of people with Down syndrome. Many of the services we provide could not operate as effectively or as extensively without the support and input of many volunteers.
5. DSSSA seeks to effectively train and support volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with adequate induction and training so that they are aware of their specific role within DSSSA and have the skills and understandings necessary to undertaking their role.
6. The involvement of volunteers will not displace paid staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DSSSA

1. While the attention of DSSSA will naturally focus primarily on the tasks to be performed and on ensuring a sustained quality of service, the interests of both paid and volunteer staff will be considered.
2. The different roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteer and paid staff need to be clearly defined and understood by all parties and a climate of mutual respect and confidence engendered. All volunteer roles are to be defined by way of Job and Person Specifications.
3. DSSSA must ensure that volunteer tasks:
 - are clearly defined and consistent with the Society's role and function in the same way as they are for paid staff.
 - are useful, meaningful and do not exploit volunteers.
 - that volunteers have a clear understanding of the objectives, role and function of the Society.
4. To ensure that an effective working relationship is established, volunteers must be given:
 - a clear description of the tasks to be performed
 - orientation and appropriate training
 - appropriate supervision

5. Responsibility for volunteer programs must be vested with a member of the paid staff who possesses the appropriate skills in working with volunteers.
6. DSSSA's policy on staff development and training should cater for volunteers while ensuring that the staff development and training needs of paid staff are not sacrificed to the needs of volunteers.
7. DSSSA should ensure that a volunteer's expectations, interests, time commitment and skills match the task to be performed. This involves a clear description of the task, competent assessment, and match of the volunteer.
8. Communication channels should be clear to all concerned and volunteer staff should be consulted on decisions which affect them. Consultation is especially necessary during times of change.
9. Volunteer activities should be assessed regularly. In addition and where appropriate, individual volunteers should be given the opportunity for a formal appraisal of their particular contribution of the Society.
10. Volunteers, as is the case for DSSSA employees, will be covered by Equal Employment Opportunity policy and legislation, The Whistleblowers Protection Act, 1993, and the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act, 1986.
11. Volunteers must be adequately protected from unsafe situations in accordance with the principles and practices as set out in the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act, 1986.
12. DSSSA must ensure that the budgetary and general resource costs of volunteer programs can be met. These costs include out-of-pocket expenses, accommodation and facilities as well as the time of paid staff for recruitment, orientation, support, supervision and training.
13. There should be clear agency guidelines concerning the payment of out-of-pocket expenses, assessed to be fair and reasonable, to cover matters such as mileage, fares and other costs associated with the job. The rates and circumstances attracting payment will as a minimum be based on those which apply to paid staff; however, some circumstances, such as the payment of mileage expenses, may require reimbursement to exceed this approach and it is important that the reasons for this are clearly understood by volunteers and staff.
14. DSSSA provides insurance cover for volunteers as part of its self insured program.
15. DSSSA must ensure that volunteers are made aware of and understand their duties and responsibility to the Society.
16. Disciplinary and grievance procedures applying to volunteers should be based in principles consistent with those for paid staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

1. The objectives, role and function of DSSSA should be clearly understood by volunteers.
2. Volunteers have the same obligation as paid staff for working within DSSSA guidelines.
3. Volunteers should make realistic commitments in terms of both time and area of involvement and acknowledge the right of DSSSA to expect these commitments to be fulfilled.

4. As with paid staff, volunteers need to be aware of their responsibility to act according to instructions from appropriate individuals, and to adhere to the normal reporting mechanisms as practised by DSSSA or as specifically established by their supervisor.
5. DSSSA deals with material of a confidential nature. DSSSA must ensure that volunteers who may have access to such information are aware of the importance of preserving confidentiality and that failure to do so may result in the volunteer not participating in the Society's activities in the future.
6. Volunteers bring energy, skills and attributes to DSSSA. Nevertheless, many activities will require that they participate in training, to enable them to perform particular tasks and to familiarise themselves with DSSSA. Volunteers should be willing to attend training and orientation sessions when offered.
7. After being made aware of the principles, practices and regulations set out or in association with the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act, 1986, volunteers will be required to observe these provisions.

INDUSTRIAL ISSUES

1. The involvement of volunteers should complement the work of paid staff. In deciding whether or not to involve volunteers, DSSSA should consider whether by doing so there the possibility of:
 - depriving others of a livelihood;
 - constituting a threat to the security and job satisfaction of paid staff; and
 - displacing paid labour.
2. The involvement of volunteers will be subject to the mutual agreement of management, paid workers and the relevant unions, as the central purpose of volunteerism is to enhance the services provided by the Society. DSSSA should ensure that tasks to be performed by volunteers rather than paid staff are clearly established, and mutually agreed upon by paid staff and the relevant unions.
3. While volunteering provides opportunities for people to learn new skills and test possible career areas, agencies should never stipulate or otherwise require that volunteering should be a pre-requisite to a paid job.
4. DSSSA will apply the principles and practices as prescribed in the Equal Employment Opportunity policy and legislation, The Whistleblowers Protection Act, 1993, and the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act, 1986.
5. Records will be kept, providing information on the extent to the contribution of volunteers to the Society. This information will be made available to appropriate bodies including relevant unions on request.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

1. An application is to be completed including the names and addresses of two (2) referees. Forms can be downloaded from the Society's website – click on the following link: [Volunteer Application Form](#).
2. Application forms are to include a declaration that the information provided in "true and accurate" and the applicant agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the Society.

3. Application forms are to include the information that a prospective volunteer **may** be asked to authorise and undergo a police personal history record check.
4. The Executive Director/nominee must be satisfied that the volunteer is of good character and may, if deemed necessary, require the prospective volunteer to undergo a police personal history check.
5. Selection processes of volunteers must apply the merit principle and be fair and equitable to ensure that:
 - there is a suitable fit between the role requirements and the qualities, skills, interests and background of the applicant
 - the prospective volunteer has a clear understanding of the objectives, role and function of the Society, and;
 - if required, there has been satisfactory completion of the police personal history record check.
6. Suitability for a position and appointment of a volunteer is at the discretion of the senior management of the organisation. An authorised management representative will confirm formal appointment in writing.
7. All prospective volunteers have the right to an appeal process through senior management if they have been unsuccessful in their application as a volunteer.

TRAINING

1. All volunteers are to undergo formal orientation and induction in accordance with standard human resources procedures.
2. All volunteers are to undergo training appropriate to their duties and organisational requirements including mandatory reporting.
3. Training should be provided by individuals or companies who have relevant experience, qualification and/or accreditation.

APPENDIX A

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS

Support and Respect

You have a right to be treated as a co-worker by the people with whom you work.

Volunteer Satisfaction

You have the right to be given suitable tasks with consideration for preference, temperament, life experiences, education and employment background.

To have a task that is challenging, worthwhile and enjoyable.

Orientation and Training

You have the right to know as much about the Down Syndrome DSSSA of South Australia Inc as appropriate, including the policy and programming.

You have the right to initial training and continuing education.

Explanation

You have the right to know if you are unsuitable for a task or your performance is unsatisfactory.

Say 'No'

You have the right to say "No" to tasks outside your abilities.

Sense of humour

You have a right to use your sense of humour, providing it does not embarrass or humiliate staff, people with Down syndrome and/or significant others.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Respect

You have a responsibility to respect the members, staff, fellow volunteers and the philosophy and policies of the Down Syndrome DSSSA of South Australia Inc.

Health

Infections spread readily. If you are sick consider other staff, volunteers and people with Down syndrome as well as yourself.

Speak up

You have the responsibility to ask questions about things you don't understand. Discuss concerns rather than keeping them to yourself. Relevant information should be passed onto the Co-ordinator.

Team work

When working with others, you have a responsibility to accept direction and supervision from paid staff and to maintain a good working relationship with your colleagues.

Open minded

Accept other peoples opinions even if you don't agree with them.

Don't force others to agree with your opinions.