




Stormont Community Engagement Project

Volunteer Policy

April 2018

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The Policies and Procedures outlined in this document apply to all volunteers and were presented to and adopted by the committee for the Stormont Community Engagement Project at their meeting on 9th April 2018. This document and the policies and procedures outlined now supersede any previous policies or procedures.

Any queries about anything outlined in this document should be sent to the Committee Chairperson via email:
Stormontcommunity@gmail.com

PURPOSE OF THE VOLUNTEER POLICY

This Policy provides information for persons Volunteering with Activities and Events run by or associated with Stormont Community Engagement Project.

This volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at and cared for when volunteering with Stormont Community Engagement Project. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

ABOUT US

Stormont Community Engagement Project is a group that was established in January 2014 by Stormont Presbyterian Church to help oversee and source funding for a number of Community projects. This group has no say in the day to day running of the Youth and Family Ministry of the church, however it is responsible for the Community Summer Scheme and other Seasonal Schemes that are run, eg: Peter Pan in January 2015.

The need for this group was identified after consultation with Belfast City Council and other funders in relation to securing funding for community activities, mainly our Summer Scheme. It was identified that a “smaller organisation” with clear cut community aims and objectives and which is community run was required for successful applications.

The group has its own Office Bearers, Constitution, Bank Account and Policies relating to their operation. As well as being insured for the activities on offer.

Stormont Presbyterian Church holds one post on the committee for one of their office bearers.

It should be noted though that the programs run by the project within the church premises are done in partnership with Stormont Presbyterian Church and the church representatives is responsible for updating the Kirk Session on the group’s activities.

OUR VISION AND MISSION FOR VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering with Stormont Community Engagement Project, you will be making a positive contribution to the lives of children, young people and their families from the local community. You will also be helping us with our community development programs in the area. Volunteers are vital to the success of our work and in helping develop new and exciting programs that benefit the local community.

ATTRACTING VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in. Within the majority of our programmes there are three levels of leadership volunteers can be involved in. Assistant Leaders: you will be helping to run programmes and activities under the supervision and direction of staff and other key leaders. Leaders: after volunteering with us for some time, some volunteers progress to being leaders. These volunteers have specific responsibility for a certain age group or area within our programs. Leader in Charge: after volunteering with us for a number of years an opportunity usually arises for a volunteer who wishes to take on more responsibility and gain more knowledge about how our programs work to take on the role of leader in charge. This person works hand in hand with the Designated Committee Member for that programme or a staff member that is recruited to oversee program areas and supervise volunteers.

The range of roles available at each of our programmes are normally advertised on our website, around Stormont Presbyterian Church and on their Facebook and Twitter. Anyone wishing to become a volunteer will be required to complete an annual volunteer form. If you would like more information you can speak to any of the committee at any point during the year.

Volunteering is crucial to the success of our programs and we are committed to helping volunteers develop new skills in a positive environment.

ACCESS NI CHECKS

All volunteer roles will require an Access NI check to inform us of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have.

For example, any volunteer position that involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Access NI check.

Access NI checks will be completed on our behalf by a third party.

More information on this can be obtained from secretary of the committee who can be contact at Stormontcommunity@gmail.com

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

It does not matter how much you already know or how many times you have volunteered with us in the past, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise. We always take into consideration your previous experience and how you would like to develop when assigning tasks so as we can help aid your learning and development to help make your volunteer experience a positive one.

There will be an induction meeting prepared and delivered by a member of our committee before the start of each program that volunteers should attend.

This meeting will include amongst other information:

- the role of the volunteer;
- introduction to the team of volunteers and key staff;
- tour around our facilities;
- be provided with a copy of or shown where they can obtain a copy of all the relevant policies.;
- be provided with information around child protection including contact details for the designate officer;
- essential procedures such as timekeeping, rota;
- information about training and ongoing learning opportunities
- information on the program they are volunteering for

New volunteers will also be provided with some information about Stormont Community Engagement Project, our vision, mission and our future plans.

If at any time during your involvement with us you feel like you no longer wish to volunteer please speak to the leader in charge and we will always strive to see what we

can do to make your volunteering experience more positive or to allow you to end your time with us.

Likewise, if we feel you are not suited to the volunteer role you are placed in two members of our committee will arrange to meet with you to discuss your ongoing involvement.

SUPPORT

A member of the Stormont Community Engagement Project Committee will be assigned to be a key contact person for you to support you and the young people engaged on our programs.

One of their most important roles is to offer support to you as a volunteer.

Therefore, they will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. They will ensure they are available at regular intervals during your time volunteering with us should you wish to talk to them. They will also attend team evaluation meetings to discuss how the program is going and to ensure volunteers are supported. They are here to support you, to find out how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues arising. Should you wish to discuss anything with them you can contact them at any time on the contact number given to you at your induction.

By having this key contact, it ensures we are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

RECOGNITION AND REWARD

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this, we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. We hold daily team brief and de-brief meetings to listen to and equip our volunteers and we also hold social events each year to celebrate our achievements; this might be a celebration evening for volunteers and the end of the year or a team meal at the end of a specific program. All of our volunteers are also encouraged to attend our AGM in January so we can say a public thank you.

During these events, you will get an opportunity to meet other volunteers and supporters of our work and share in our plans for the future. We will also take opportunities on our website and Facebook page, annual general meetings, to praise the achievements of our volunteers.

The care and welfare of our volunteers is of utmost importance to us therefore we will ensure that there is always a listening ear or shoulder to lean on should you need it

EXPENSES

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. Upon agreement, we may be able to reimburse any reasonable out of pocket expenses and at times any expenses for travel. You will be advised if this is available before being asked to pay for anything during your time volunteering.

In order to claim expenses a payment authorization form must have been completed prior to the purchase. A valid receipt must then be provided and the correct claim form completed within two weeks and forwarded to the treasure who will then arrange reimbursement.

If at any time the expense of volunteering could present a barrier to your involvement, then please speak with the leader in charge.

INSURANCE, HEALTH AND SAFETY, ACCIDENTS AND RISK ASSESMENT

All the activities of Stormont Community Engagement Project are covered by a public liability insurance policy that covers volunteers and the activities of the group.

If you require any more information on this you should contact the group treasurer.

Extensive Risk Assessments are carried out on all of our programs and activities for insurance purposes and can be shared with you upon request. However, all staff and volunteers have a responsibility when it comes to managing risk. Therefore, we ask all staff and volunteers to be vigilant when helping deliver programs and to ensure all health & safety breeches and accidents are reported immediately using the correct reporting procedures.

During the initial volunteer meeting for each program we will cover your responsibilities for Health and Safety and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always strive to have a first aider on site.

You will also be informed of how to complete reports and who to contact should you have a concern.

RESOLVING PROBLEMS

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us.

However, if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know.

First of all, talk to the person who leads the team you are volunteering with and he or she should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes a problem. If you do not feel this will resolve things you can speak to any member of the Committee or address your concerns directly with the Chairperson.

CONFIDENTIALTY

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines. These will be explained to you during the program volunteer briefing and this also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

At all times you are expected to respect the confidentiality of those you are working with and the young people in your care. At no time are you permitted to speak to the press or share information with the media or outside bodies as a representative of the organization.

Whilst we encourage volunteers to share information about their experience and volunteer work with us, at no time should volunteers share information which could identify an individual person, bring the organization into disrepute or place a young person at risk.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Stormont Community Engagement Project and Stormont Presbyterian Church are committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing us as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality. In order to help this, we have a strict policy regarding clothing and emblems, which is explained below.

We are also committed to providing opportunities to everyone regardless of their race, ability, gender or religion.

CONDUCT AND DRESS WHILST VOLUNTEERING

Stormont Community Engagement Project has guidelines on the conduct and dress of all of our staff and volunteers.

All staff and volunteers should wear appropriate clothing at all times ensuring that their dress is appropriate for the tasks they will be carrying out. Some of our programs carry specific dress requirements as set out by the programs funders however guidance on this can be obtained from the designated committee member.

As a rule, staff and volunteers should refrain from wearing the following,

- Football and other sports tops,
- Items of clothing with badges or emblems which could be identified as being from one side of the community or another,
- Clothing with offensive wording or graphics,
- Clothing which is revealing and would not be deemed as appropriate for wear around young people.

The conduct of staff and volunteers should at all times be courteous and in line with the groups policies and procedures. Staff and Volunteers are expected to represent Stormont Community Engagement Project in a courteous and pleasant manner at all times and at no time should the behavior of staff or volunteers bring or be deemed to bring the group into disrepute.

VOLUNTEERING WHILST ON BENEFIT

You can still volunteer with us if you are receiving benefits provided that we follow the legal guidelines. We recommend you discuss your willingness to volunteer with someone at the local jobs and benefits office to find out what you can and cannot do while receiving benefits. Likewise, we will take advice on roles you can and cannot undertake.

JUNIOR VOLUNTEERS

The Stormont Community Engagement Project Committee understands the importance of providing opportunities for young people to volunteer and become involved in their local community.

Therefore, where possible they will encourage Junior Volunteers or Trainee Leaders to be involved in their work.

A Junior Volunteer or Trainee Leader is defined by the committee as a young person between 13 and 17 years of age. Each young person expressing an interest in volunteering with us will be required to complete an application form and follow the same procedures as over 18 leaders.

The committee will ensure all safeguarding procedures are put in place for junior volunteers and trainee leaders and that permission is obtained from parents / guardians at all times.

It is recommended that junior volunteers and trainee leaders complete the 'Trainee Leaders' programme and they will also be expected to attend all training relevant to the programme they are volunteering with

DISCLAIMER

All staff, volunteers, Committee members and those involved with the work of Stormont Community Engagement Project are expected to work in accordance with this policy at all times.

If there is a particular issue you wish to discuss then please contact the Committee Chairperson via the groups email.