

south dublin county volunteer centre

volunteer corps policy and procedures

Policy Statement

The South Dublin County Volunteer Corps exists as a volunteer led movement of citizens of the county who make themselves available to volunteer at various community events and / or emergencies in the county. It is a joint project of South Dublin County Council (SDCC), the County Development Board and South Dublin County Volunteer Centre (SDCVC).

Within the Corps we regard volunteers as a valuable resource and an integral part of the team. We aim to induct, support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

The purpose of this Volunteer Policy is to provide volunteers with clear guidelines, to explain Volunteer management systems, operating standards and to advise you about our code of conduct. It is intended as a support to training that will be provided and as a helpful reminder of training also.

policy guidelines

1.1 Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering within the Corps. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other Corps policies and procedures. These procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of the Corps and at the direction of the Corps.

1.2 Responsibility

The co-ordinating bodies of the Corps are responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All Corps volunteers are expected to facilitate this process.

procedures

1. Joining the volunteer corps

Purpose

To ensure that the recruitment process for the volunteer corps is fair, transparent and robust.

Responsibility

Board/Steering Committee, All Staff.

1.1 Eligibility

The Corps will consider involving anyone over the age of 16 years as a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the Corps and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the Corps. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the Corps will be accepted as a volunteer.

1.2 Applications

Volunteers for the Corps are recruited on a pro-active basis by SDCVC using publicity avenues that are suitable for the role. Potential volunteers may also apply speculatively or come via the volunteer placement service provided by the SDCVC. Volunteers are recruited in accordance with the SDCVC's equal opportunities policy. All volunteers are required to complete an application form.

1.3 Checks for suitability

Two References are taken up for each member of the Corps. If a volunteer refuses permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be placed.

South Dublin County Volunteer Corps reserves the right to exercise enhanced vetting and selection procedures in circumstances where a volunteer discloses information relating criminal convictions, investigations or court orders. Enhanced vetting and selection procedures would include Garda Vetting and additional reference checks.

1.4 Verification of Identity.

Applicants must bring photographic ID and proof of Date of Birth to the first volunteer corps induction event to also us to verify their identity

1.5 Parental Consent

Parental consent will be sought in respect of Volunteers under the age of 18 years on registration with the Corps.

1.6 Appointment

Volunteers become member of the Corps after all necessary checks have proved acceptable.

2 Recruitment and training

Purpose

To ensure that volunteers have the necessary tools and information to fulfil their role as volunteer corps members

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team.

2.1 Registration follow up.

All volunteers who register for the Corps will receive a follow up phone call from the Volunteer Corps Project worker to welcome them to the corps, inform them of the work of the corps and note to them their role when joining the Corps.

2.2 Induction and training

All new members of the Corps will be invited to participate in a general induction event for Corps volunteers that will occur on a quarterly basis. The volunteer training is a planned programme to enable volunteers to learn about their role, appropriate operations, and code of conduct, policies and procedures as well more about the volunteer corps.

Volunteers can participate in events prior to this induction program but will always work alongside an existing volunteer corps member who has participated in several events.

2.3 Event training

SDCVC is committed where possible to providing volunteers with information and skills to perform their tasks well and will endeavour to provide relevant training for volunteers. The training must be appropriate for the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer. Attendance at event briefings is mandatory.

2.4 Additional training

From time to time, additional training may be identified as necessary for certain projects of the Corps. We will inform the Corps of the availability of this training and open it to all members of the Corps who may require it for certain projects.

3. Uniform

Purpose

To ensure that volunteers are identifiable as members of the South Dublin County Volunteer Corp

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

3.1 Equipment

Volunteers are given the direction, equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.

3.2 Uniform

Volunteers are provided at their first event with T-shirt, Carry Bag and ID to identify them as members of the Corps. The teeshirt and ID **MUST** be worn at all events to identify the volunteer as a member of the Corps

After **three** events volunteers will be given a Corps hoodie.

4. On the day

Purpose

To ensure that volunteers can fulfil their role on the day and to ensure volunteers, the public and organisations have the best experience of the volunteer corps.

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

4.1 Role descriptions

Volunteers are provided with a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake for each project / event. This must include a title for the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place of volunteering, name of supervisor and tasks to be undertaken.

4.2 Supervisors

Each project /event has a clearly identified project manager who is responsible for Corps member on the day. SDCVC are responsible for all other aspects of volunteer management.

4.3 Scheduling and attendance

Volunteers are asked to sign up for events at volunteercorps.ie/upcoming-events

Working times are dependent on the needs of the project/event. Volunteers are given advance notice of the time. Voluntary time commitment is based on goodwill, but unscheduled absences can create problems for the project/event. When expecting to be absent, volunteers must inform the "project Manager" as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

4.4 Volunteer Briefing

For health and safety and risk management reasons, volunteers must attend the volunteer briefing at the start of an event. This is also when a record of attendance is taken. Volunteers who are late for a briefing cannot volunteer as they will have missed the health and safety requirements, unless agreed in advance with the Volunteer Corps Project Worker or Event Co-ordinator.

5. After the event

Purpose

To establish that the event was a good experience for volunteers and for the organisations involving volunteers

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

5.1 Feedback after events for volunteers

Volunteers are surveyed after event event/project to ascertain how things went and their feedback (positive and negative) to SDCVC is welcomed.

5.2 Feedback after events for organisations

Organisations are surveyed after event event/project to ascertain how things went and their feedback (positive and negative) to SDCVC is welcomed.

5.3 Corrective action

If it is necessary to evaluate a volunteer's performance or conduct within the Corps, corrective action may be taken following this. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or the dismissal of a volunteer.

Equally, if feedback from volunteers is that the event was not a good experience, SDCVC will follow up with the organisation to identify training needs, best practice or non-engagement in future events.

6. Volunteer Behaviour

Purpose

To establish that appropriate behaviour that members of the volunteer corps are expected to adhere to

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

6.1 Appropriate behaviour

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of the Corps and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of the Corps, they are responsible for presenting a positive image of the Corps to the outside world. Our first and foremost concern is to keep YOU safe and to ensure that you have an enjoyable experience. To this end, the following basic guidelines have been put in place in respect of how Corps members will conduct themselves:

Volunteer members of the Corps will:

- Portray a positive and professional image of the Corps and refrain from unacceptable forms of behaviour.
- Report for your volunteer project when called upon, in a timely manner and free from influence of alcohol and drug related substances.
- Comply with all reasonable instructions and lawful orders received during duty to the best of your ability.
- Prepare for your volunteer role by participating where possible in any relevant meetings or briefings relating to the work of the Corps.
- Show respect and consideration at all times for fellow members of the Corps, members of the public, other Volunteers, recipients of services from the Corps and Statutory bodies.
- Respect the privacy of persons served by the Corps and hold in confidence sensitive, private and personal information except in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Keep staff informed of progress, concerns and problems within the Projects participated in.
- Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of the Corps.
- Avoid activity that could be considered detrimental to the Corps and which could specifically result in personal injury to you, any volunteer or a member of the public.
- Wear the uniform and ID provided to you to identify you as a member of the Corps.

Volunteer members of the Corps will not:

- Use vulgar or inappropriate language, or make remarks that could be considered offensive.
- Solicit gratuities, gifts or bequests for personal or professional benefit.
- Discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status or disability, and/or sexual orientation.
- Sometimes the nature of our work will mean Corps members will come into contact with younger people (under 18 years). It is important to “keep safe” in these circumstances (for you and the young person). Volunteers should not therefore be in a situation where they are alone with a young person. Appropriate physical boundaries should be maintained at all times.

7. General Guidelines

Purpose

To inform the corps of general guidelines in relation to their participation in the Corps

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

7.1 Representation of the SDCVC/SDCC

Volunteers must seek prior approval from the SDCVC Manager before undertaking anything that might affect the Corps. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

7.2 Confidentiality

South Dublin County Volunteer Corps respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with the Corps.

7.3 Records

A system of computerised records is maintained on all volunteers, including dates and times of service, duties performed etc. Volunteer records are held at SDCVC and are accorded full confidentiality in accordance with GDPR. Volunteer can access their Volunteer Profile by logging in via the personal link provided or through volunteercorps.ie/upcoming-events.

7.4 Promotion of political or religious views.

South Dublin County Volunteer Corps is an inclusive organisation, open to all sections of the community. Whilst we accept and respect that individual volunteers may hold specific religious or political views, membership of the Corps should never be used as a platform for the promotion of these views. This includes (but is not limited to) the handing out of literature; the promotion of events; or the engagement of or invitation to others to join a particular religious or political cause. Should it emerge that Corps Members are involved in the promotion of religious or political beliefs, it will be dealt with under section 9 and the disciplinary and grievance procedure of the volunteer centre.

8. Support and Recognition

Purpose

To put in place procedures to recognise the valuable contribution made by those volunteering with the Volunteer Corps.

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

8.1 Recognition

Volunteer Corps members provide a unique service to the community, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Organisations using the Corps are responsible for thanking volunteers after each event/ project. SDCVC also thank all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make. SDCVC are also responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times such as International Volunteers Day.

8.2 Expenses

Corps projects are organised in local areas so that volunteers should not have to incur any travel expenses. Wherever possible, potential expenses such as parking, food etc... will be covered by the receiving project but this will be done by way of providing these facilities as opposed to monetary reimbursement. SDCVC are aiming to develop an expense claim system in 2018 to cover any additional expenses incurred by volunteers.

8.3 Insurance

Organisations involving the Corps are required to have insurance to cover the work of the Corps. SDCC and SDCVC will not accept any liability out of claims arising from the Corps being involved in events.

9. When things go wrong

Purpose

To inform the corps of general guidelines in relation to their participation in the Corps

Responsibility

Volunteer Corps Staff Team/All Volunteers

9.1 Service at the discretion of the South Dublin County Volunteer Corps

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of the Corps. The Corps may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteers relationships

There are circumstances under which volunteers will be asked to leave. Grounds for being asked to leave include, but are not limited to the following:

- Gross misconduct
- Being under the influence of alcohol and or drugs. This included turning up for an event smelling of alcohol
- Theft
- Inappropriate touch
- Abuse of members of the public, fellow volunteers, event organisers or Volunteer Corps staff
- Being disrespectful of cultural differences and diversity within the team or at an event
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Failure to respect personal boundaries and act in an inappropriate manner
- Misuse of programme equipment and materials
- Failure to abide by policies, procedures and code of contact
- Failure to complete volunteering duties to a satisfactory standard
- Promotion of political or religious beliefs.

9.2 Ending the service of a volunteer

Volunteer involvement will not be ended until the volunteer has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for being asked to leave with the Volunteer Coordinator. When a volunteer is asked to leave this will be communicated both in person and in writing to the volunteer. If a volunteer is deemed to have behaved with extreme detriment to relevant policies & procedures of South Dublin County Volunteer Centre and to the health and safety of others, we reserve the right to end its relationship with the volunteer with immediate effect. Otherwise, issues including volunteer conduct will be raised with individual volunteers in the first instance by the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of staff of the volunteer programme, if the aforementioned is unavailable.

9.3 Volunteer resignation

Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationships with the Corps. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.

9.4 Concerns and Issues.

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the volunteer centre manager. The Volunteer Centre manager will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a

written complaint, and take appropriate action. The Volunteer Centre manager makes the ultimate decision.

Version Control

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