



Policy Number	Review Date	Next Review Date
23	March 2022	March 2023

Little Village Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Little Village aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers; with their involvement informing and developing our work, and our work enabling individuals to thrive through learning and developing skills, and personal development.

Our commitment to our volunteers:

- To create an environment where individual differences and contributions are truly recognised and valued.
- To ensure that everything we do is grounded in our four values: Love, Solidarity, Thriving and Sustainability.
- To ensure we are inclusive, respectful and anti-racist, living out our values in the way we treat each other.
- To recruit and support volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities, faith communities, abilities, sexual orientations and gender.
- To provide a safe environment to volunteer in, ensuring compliance with all regulations and guidelines.
- To provide adequate information and training related to the responsibilities of the volunteer.
- To provide a verbal induction to Little Village and the volunteers role within it.
- To explain what is required of the volunteer and to encourage the volunteer to achieve the desired results.
- To, where possible, assign a buddy/mentor to provide regular support and act as a 'go to' person for questions and provide a clear escalation route for any concerns and challenges.
- To welcome and actively encourage comments, feedback and ideas from all volunteers.
- To value and recognise the significant contribution volunteers make to achieving the aims of the organisation and to regularly acknowledge commitment/volunteer work.
- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us.

To be fully compliant in relation to any necessary data held about volunteers, ensuring that this is held both safely and securely.

Practical guidelines

1. Volunteer agreements and voluntary work outlines

Volunteers are requested to electronically sign the volunteer agreement on commencement of volunteering with Little Village. In addition to reading this document, every volunteer is given a verbal introduction to the work they will be doing, and the tasks expected of them. If required, a written description of the work can be provided. Any written description does not constitute a contract. The volunteer agreement can be made available in accessible formats on request.

2. Induction and training

All volunteers get support to settle in and get to know Little Village. Volunteers will be provided with an initial induction covering core policies, health and safety, safeguarding and an introduction to their role. Where certain roles require additional training, volunteers will be asked to attend or complete relevant courses, either in person or online. We provide or organise the provision of any training that is needed. Where possible and relevant, we will offer optional additional training to volunteers in the same way we do for staff.

3. Support

Every volunteer has a named member of staff, or a buddy volunteer assigned as their main point of contact. That person is available to the volunteer to provide support and mentoring and to answer any questions. Volunteers can speak to the staff member or buddy volunteer about any problems that arise or ask for help if they need it. If they feel the need for additional support, volunteers should ask the volunteer administrator.

4. Being part of Little Village

We believe it is important for everyone to feel part of Little Village - our staff and volunteers as well as people who donate items and the families who use our services. We encourage volunteers to provide feedback on any ideas that will help improve what we do and how we do it and to raise any issues they feel are important or are concerned about.

5. Expenses

We want to make sure that there are no barriers to volunteers getting involved in Little Village. One way we do this is to help with expenses to cover travel if this is a barrier to you attending. We can cover travel costs of up to £5 per day (on the basis you will attend a volunteering session for a minimum of 2 hours). To claim travel expenses, please complete an expense form with supporting receipts and submit to the Session Lead within one month of the expense being incurred.

6. Health and Safety

Volunteers must read Little Village's health and safety policy and adhere to the procedures and guidance outlined in the policy. They will also be given Covid-specific and other health and safety training, where relevant to their role.

7. Equal Opportunities

Little Village is an inclusive, respectful and anti-racist organisation. This commitment is reflected in our Equal Opportunities Policy and throughout all of our processes. Little Village will not condone, accept or ignore any forms of discrimination or unacceptable behaviour by volunteers, staff and the partners and families we work with.

8. Complaints

Little Village has a complaints policy which sets out how we deal with any complaints. We help volunteers resolve any grievances or complaints as set out in the policy. Volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns with their named contact person at any time and to escalate accordingly in line with the grievance or complaints policy if necessary.

9. Volunteering and receiving support from Little Village

We actively encourage those who have had support from Little Village to join our volunteer team; their direct experience is hugely valuable to the improved running of our service. If a volunteer continues to require support whilst a member of the Little Village team, we would expect that support to be provided through the standard channels, with a referral from a professional partner which will be processed in accordance with the referrals policy.

We ask that the provision of clothing and kit be made outside of the hours of the volunteer's session to create clear separation between the two roles.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of service users, fellow volunteers, and Little Village matters in the same way as paid staff. Any data about volunteers will be held in accordance with the Little Village data protection policy. Data will not be shared with any third parties other than in the event of a safeguarding concern. Volunteers with access to Little Village online accounts and/or use of Little Village equipment, including PCs and phones, are required to read and sign the Little Village Use of Company Mobile Phones, PCs and Personal Device Policy.

11. Insurance

Little Village has insurance that covers all volunteers while they are on site or doing work for Little Village.

Young Adult and Child Volunteers

In addition to the above principles, the below principles should also be adhered to relating specifically to volunteers under the age of 18:

Volunteers under 19

- We can only accommodate volunteers under 18 during sessions where there is a volunteer leader present with a DBS check, and at sites where our building insurance covers young people.
- In advance of attending their first volunteering session, we ask that the young person, or their parent, fill in the volunteer registration form, providing us with an emergency contact and any relevant health and wellbeing information.
- We ask that volunteers under the age of 16 are accompanied to and from sessions by an adult with parental responsibility.
- Volunteers under 18 will not be able to leave the premises during their volunteer sessions.
- For volunteers aged 16-18 we need parental confirmation of how the young person will be getting to and from the sessions.
- We would ask that parents / guardians familiarise themselves with the Little Village policies, accessible on the website.

School Groups

As well as the above, additional provisions apply for school groups:

- Little Village should be notified in advance of the number and names of children attending.
- The children must be accompanied by adults from the school at all times with appropriate levels of responsibility and DBS certification.
- During their time with us, the children visiting remain the responsibility of the school and the accompanying adults.
- Little Village must be notified in advance of any additional needs of any child such as allergies, behavioural or emotional needs.
- Children will be given clear instructions and safety guidance relating to the tasks available during the visit. If the Little Village staff member in charge feels that the children are not respecting the safety guidance, Little Village reserves the right to curtail the length of visit.

We want to make our volunteering opportunities as fulfilling as possible, and love feedback from all our volunteers. Please do let us know if there is anything we can do to improve the volunteer experience.

Signed:

Sophie Livingstone,
CEO, Little Village

Reviewers:

Rebecca Wilson, Head of Programmes
Caley Eldred, Trustee

Review Date: March 2022