



Volunteer Handbook



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Leixlip Youth Premises Group

Our Mission Statement:

To make a positive difference in the lives of the youth and community of Leixlip, through the provision and management of a multi-purpose youth and community premises.

The premises will enable the community to both provide and develop a range of services and activities that will meet the changing needs of young people in Leixlip, while promoting their personal and social development.

1. Purpose of Handbook:

The purpose of this handbook is to

- Acknowledge the worth and contribution volunteers make to Leixlip Youth & Community Centre – in our Youth Clubs, the Coffee Shop and in the Centre in general
- Develop their role within the organisation
- Clarify the volunteer role for the benefit of both the volunteers and the Centre users
- To define the role of a volunteer and the “do’s & don’ts” of volunteering
- Have a clear process of how to recruit and support volunteers

2. The Benefits of Volunteers:

- Volunteers can help to legitimise organisations. Funders and other decision-makers have great regard for the fact that individuals are prepared to give up some of their free time to assist Community Organisations. This view is shared by others in society, giving greater integrity to an organisation’s cause.
- It often means a lot to the users of an organisation that their volunteers are there simply because they want to be. People frequently volunteer because they have some direct experience of the issue being tackled and thereby bring a real human element to it.
- For community development reasons, it is crucially important to involve local volunteers in local community organisations. Not only are they aware of local needs and bring local knowledge, but their involvement often signals that an initiative has been accepted by the community. Furthermore, volunteering is a very empowering activity and ensures true ownership of the organisation locally.
- Voluntary and community organisations such as Leixlip Youth Premises Group have management committees (also known as board of directors) that are composed of volunteers. These volunteers, who have specific legal responsibilities, use their own particular knowledge and expertise in a collective manner to govern an organisation. They are the trustees of the

organisation's funds and must ensure that these are raised and spent appropriately, at the same time as ensuring that the organisation's mission (the reason it was set up) is being achieved. If the organisation employs paid staff, they have all the responsibilities that any employer has.

- Volunteering benefits everyone; the individuals who do it, the organisation that they work in and its users. It also benefits the wider community and environment. It is a valuable and integral part of a democratic, civil society.
- Volunteers, by definition, do not demand any payment for the work that they do, so their involvement allows organisations to extend their limited budgets. They are motivated, for example, by wanting to "make a difference" and their commitment does not stem from the lure of salary.

3. Why Do People Volunteer With LYCC

To make a difference	To feel needed	To help someone
To gain or improve skills	To do their civic duty	To keep busy
To make new friends	To explore a career	To get a better balance in life
To do something different	For fun	To demonstrate commitment
To give something back	Donate professional skills	To do something they love
To feel good	To have an impact	To be part of a team
To test themselves	To be an agent of change	Because of concerns
To be challenged	To experiment	To feel proud
Because they were asked	Alternative to give money	For recognition
Because they have time on their hands		



4. Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

- Receive information about the organisation's purpose, work and values and its policy on volunteers.
- A clear description of the work he/she will undertake and of assigned tasks within the organisation
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Be seen as a valued part of the organisation through inclusion at training sessions, meetings, social functions etc.
- Receive appropriate training
- Know who to turn to with problems and difficulties
- Be appreciated and have his/her work valued by the organisation
- Make mistakes and learn from them
- Express his/her views, opinions on a subject
- Be listened to and taken seriously by other members of staff
- Receive regular and constructive feedback on performance
- Work in a safe environment
- Be covered by insurance
- Have choices and be able to negotiate on those choices
- Be able to say no
- Carry out voluntary work without being exploited
- Be reimbursed for any agreed expenses
- Be consulted on matters which directly affect work
- Be free from discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, race, sexuality, religion and disability.

Volunteer Responsibilities

- Be reliable
- Carry out work to the best of their ability and do so in a way that corresponds to the aims and values of the organisation
- Attend the work at the times agreed
- Notify the appropriate person if he/she is unable to attend for some reason or are running late
- Respect confidentiality
- Respect the rights of the user and other workers within the organisation
- Be honest if there are problems
- Attend training sessions, support meetings if these are agreed as part of the volunteering role
- Give feedback, communicating relevant and important information to an appropriate staff member
- Be committed to the work but also to recognise that there are personal and external limitations on time commitment
- Acknowledge decisions made by others
- Ask for help or support when needed

5. Recruitment Process for Volunteers

- The volunteer approaches a LYCC staff member and discusses why they want to volunteer and what areas they are interested in. The Volunteer can be shown around the Centre and told about what we do. Volunteers may also respond to an advertisement
- Volunteer Application Form and Garda Vetting form are completed
- An informal interview will take place and references are checked
- Volunteer is informed when Garda Vetting has been returned and, if appropriate, recruitment process will continue
- Volunteer receives an induction with a written role description, basic training and child protection training. They will also be informed of the LYPG's policies and procedures relevant to their role
- At the end of the recruitment process the LYCC Supervisor or volunteer may make the decision that they are not suitable for that particular volunteering role

6. Advantages of Good Support & Supervision

- Volunteers feel appreciated
- Volunteers are encouraged to use their skills to their maximum levels
- It keeps the Centre Supervisor aware of the volunteer's interests and concerns
- It helps to develop teamwork
- To monitor, evaluate and improve our provision for volunteer work
- Opportunity to discuss difficulties and recognise achievements

7. Working Times

Working times are negotiated between the Centre Supervisor and the volunteer and are as flexible as the tasks allow. Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of a full time paid staff but unscheduled absences can create organisational problems. When expected to be absent, volunteer should inform their Chairperson as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

8. Expenses

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge so it is essential that the Youth Club offer to reimburse any of pocket expenses they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation, the costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those on low incomes.

It is considered good practise that volunteers should not incur any financial costs when volunteering and that any cost should not become a barrier to volunteering

Areas to consider are

- Parking
- Mileage

Youth Club

The Role of a Volunteer

- To ensure all young people are present and accounted for and to bring to the attention of the Youth Leader if a child is missing
- To act as a positive role model for the young people
- To support the children to join in, participate in and to have fun in all activities
- To encourage, praise, respect and value each young person
- To follow the direction and guidance given by the Youth Leader with regard to the safety and care of each young person
- To look for support and to ask for help when the need arises
- To be aware of and follow the LYPG policies and procedures. If you have any concerns that someone is not following these guidelines please discuss this with the Youth Leader.
- To report all incidents or accidents immediately to your Youth Leader who will pass this information on to the relevant staff member where necessary
- To give support to the young people and to other volunteers
- To participate in briefing/ debriefing sessions at the start and end of each club session
- To be informed of the Codes of behaviour and Procedures
- To ensure confidentiality is upheld
- To arrive on time and inform the Youth Leader if you can't make it
- To work as part of a team and treat everybody with respect
- To know the young people you are working with (i.e. remember their names)

Volunteering & Training

- Introductions
- What happens during our youth clubs, upcoming events
- Code of Practice
- Rules & regulations
- Safety guidelines – incident reporting
- Role of a volunteer
- Children First E-Learning Programme to be completed
- KYS basic leadership training*

Basic Leadership Training and Child Protection Awareness training which is provided by Kildare Youth Services is made available to all adult volunteers

9. The Do's & Don'ts of Volunteering with the Youth Club

Do make sure to be on time

Do wear suitable clothing for the activity you are involved in e.g. comfortable shoes and jeans as you will be joining in the activities

Do make sure to tell the Youth Leader or Designated Liaison Person if you have any concerns about a child. It may be something you have heard or seen

Do check in with the Youth Leader if there is something you are unsure of in relation to your role as a volunteer

Do ask questions

Do make sure to have and give an opinion

Do make sure to have your mobile phone switched to silent throughout the day. Texting is not allowed

Do join in and have fun

Do listen

Do respect and encourage young people and other leaders

Do be aware of ground rules set by the group

Do be inclusive: work with all young people

Do be aware of policies and procedures

Do ensure that the Adult to Young Person ratios are adhered to. These are 2 trained adults to the first 10 Young People and an extra one Adult to every 10 Young People after that

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Don't be afraid to ask for help and support from the Youth Leader when the need arises

Don't ever be on your own with a young person

Don't ever make decisions on your own about a young person – always check out with the Youth Leader

Don't be afraid to make mistakes and to tell someone

Don't shout at young people or other members of your team

Don't lose your temper

Don't have any prejudices

Don't be judgmental

Don't show favouritism

Don't hit young people or other leaders

Don't put young people down/criticize

Don't provoke young people

Don't send out the wrong signals

Don't use bad language

Don't be under the influence of drugs & alcohol

Don't be late

Don't gossip, i.e discussing club matters at home or in the local community

Don't give out any personal mobile numbers of the staff or team

Don't withhold any information which should be shared. In relation to Child Protection concerns, information should be shared with the Child Officer in your club who will discuss it with LYPG Designated Liaison person for Child protection (DLP)

Don't be in a room with a young person on your own where the door is closed /no-one knows where you are

Don't physically touch a child or Young Person unless a hug has been initiated by them in the presence of another adult leader.

Don't contact Young People using your personal mobile phone or through your own social media accounts.

Don't bring young people home in your car regardless of the situation. Always arrange for a parent/guardian to collect them or, once directed by the LYPG DLP or in an emergency, dial 999 or 112

Coffee Shop

The Role of a Volunteer

- To set up the café ready for opening
- To take coffee and tea orders from the customer
- To operate the coffee machine
- To prepare and serve hot or cold beverages, such as coffee, tea, milkshakes.
- To serve scones, prepared foods, such as muffins, pastries
- To help with clean up and general tidying around the kitchen
- Refilling sugar, butter, jam etc and making sure there are napkins and cutlery available for customers.
- To deal with customer queries, requests and problems. Report any problems to Supervisor.
- Receive and process customer payments, operating a till.
- To keep the machine and work area clean.

Volunteering & Training –

- Introductions
- What is involved Coffee Shop
- Coffee Machine / Barista training
- Role of a volunteer
- Children First E-Learning Programme to be completed

The Do's & Don'ts of Volunteering with the Coffee Shop

- Be polite, friendly and helpful to customers.
- Focused on customer service.
- Able to work well with others – it can be a busy environment at times
- Be a good communicator.
- Be aware of food safety.
- Good at working in a team.
- Avail of our staff discounts in the Coffee Shop
- Do ask questions
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and support when the need arises
- Do check in with the Centre Supervisor if there is something you are unsure of
- Don't be afraid to tell someone if you've made a mistake

General Centre

The Role of a Volunteer

- To support customers and users of the Centre in a polite and responsible manner.
- To carry out general reception duties including dealing with customer queries, telephone duties, assist with photocopying, directing the public on usage of kiosk PC and giving assistance with the computer as required.
- To handle cash as required, give receipts, and handover of money to office
- In a diligent and reliable manner to open and close the Centre, locking up, setting alarms, key holding, etc
- To ensure the security of the Centre is maintained, front desk presence, viewing security cameras etc
- To ensure that the centre is a safe place at all times.
- To participate in all training programmes provided
- To assist with room setup ups as required etc

Volunteering & Training

- Introductions
- What happens day to day in the Centre
- Safety guidelines – incident reporting
- Fire Safety procedures
- Security & Lockup procedures
- Role of a volunteer
- Children First E-Learning Programme to be completed

The Do's & Don'ts of Volunteering in the Centre

- Be polite, friendly and helpful to customers.
- Be focused on customer service.
- Be a good communicator.
- Work well in a team.
- Avail of our staff discounts in the Coffee Shop
- Do ask questions
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and support when the need arises
- Do check in with the Centre Supervisor if there is something you are unsure of
- Don't be afraid to tell someone if you've made a mistake

Ways To Recognise Volunteers

Good Practice within the Centre

1. Match the volunteer's desires with the Centre's needs
2. Provide a clear role description for every volunteer
3. Give volunteers a real voice within the Centre
4. Provide meaningful and enjoyable work
5. Involve volunteers in decision-making processes
6. Use the LYPG Volunteer Policy
7. Allow volunteers the opportunity to debrief, especially if they work in stressful situations
8. Make sure the Centre Supervisor is easily accessible and has an 'open door' policy
9. Provide insurance cover
10. Supervise volunteers' work
11. Have a vision for volunteer involvement in the Centre
12. Do not impose new policies and procedures without volunteers' input
13. Encourage volunteers to attend relevant seminars, conferences and workshops from time to time
14. Give volunteers a proper induction
15. Offer to write volunteers letters of reference
16. Provide the opportunity for 'leave of absence'
17. Add volunteers to memo and e-mail distribution lists
18. Undertake individual supervision and support sessions
19. Maintain regular contact with volunteers, even if they work 'off-site' or at odd hours
20. Allow volunteers to finish their role with the Centre without feeling guilty
21. Conduct an exit interview when a volunteer leaves
22. Devote resources (time and money) to volunteer support
23. Provide access to accredited training
24. Give volunteers the opportunity to evaluate their own performance and role
25. Ensure volunteers have adequate space and equipment to do their work
26. Ensure confidentiality for your volunteers
27. Allow volunteers to air legitimate grievances and make sure they are dealt with
28. Ensure a safe and healthy working environment
29. Make sure that every volunteer has equal access to support

Supporting Their Development & Showing Gratitude

1. Create a climate in which volunteers can feel motivated
2. Say thank you often, and mean it
3. Make sure new volunteers are welcomed warmly
4. Highlight the impact that the volunteer contribution is having on the Centre
5. Show an interest in volunteers' personal interests and their outside life
6. Tell volunteers they have done a good job
7. Always have work for your volunteers to do and never waste their time

8. Send 'thank you' notes and letters when appropriate
9. Say something positive about their personal qualities
10. Let volunteers put their names to something they have helped to produce or to make happen
11. Ask volunteers themselves how the Centre can show it cares
12. Celebrate the year's work together
13. Accept that different volunteers are able to offer different levels of involvement
14. Accept that an individual volunteer's ability to commit may change over time
15. Pass on any positive comments about volunteers from clients to the volunteers themselves
16. Where possible, give the volunteer a title which reflects the work they do
17. Inform the local press about the excellent work of your volunteers
18. Use quotes from volunteers in leaflets and annual reports
19. Have social occasions that volunteers can attend, etc
20. Celebrate Youth Work Ireland's Volunteers Week

