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Volunteer policy

St Thomas' playgroup is an Ofsted registered childcare setting providing pre-school care and education for children .

We operate during term time only, opening five mornings a week Monday to Friday.

Why are we involving volunteers?

How do they fit into our day to day life?

We believe that volunteers add value to St Thomas' playgroup by some or all of the following:

- providing other role models for the children.
- supporting staff in the delivery of their daily programme of activities, the implementation of policies and procedures, maintenance of standards, and compliance with all statutory requirements.

Statement of intent - setting out the principles

Volunteers will not be used to replace paid playgroup staff, but will work alongside them, supporting them in their delivery of pre-school care and education, and adding value to their work. Voluntary activity should complement the work of paid staff.

Recruitment

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equality of opportunities policy. The applicant will have to complete a simple application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. The applicant will be informally interviewed by the Supervisor and/or the chairperson of the committee, and if this is successful the two references asked for will be taken up. If we feel they are not right for the particular volunteer role they are interested in, we will not proceed any further, and will let them know.

A DBS will be applied for every volunteer whom we offer a role to.

Use and development of role outlines

All volunteer placements will be subject to a review meeting with the Manager, which will usually take place after 3 or 4 weeks depending on the frequency of attendance. This is to ensure the volunteer and activities are properly matched. Thereafter, short reviews will take place half-termly. We aim to be flexible, and will encourage

input from volunteers on the development of role descriptions, and of this policy.

Induction & training

The manager will welcome the volunteer to the playgroup, and provide an induction covering:
the set up of the playgroup,
a list of staff, and volunteers

The chair person

all the relevant policies including this Volunteer Policy, the [Safeguarding children policy](#), the [Confidentiality policy](#), t
Essential procedures such as timekeeping, registering, what to do if you cannot come in, morning routines, and
fire procedures

Each volunteer will be given a volunteer role description, a volunteer agreement, and a copy of this policy.

There will be a trial period of one half term to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end.

Expenses

We are a charity and operate with very low margins, and are therefore unable to reimburse out of pocket expenses.

Support

The playgroup manager and other staff will offer support to the volunteers. There will be a short briefing session at the beginning and a de-briefing at the end of each session. (such as this is what we are planning to do today, you could help with this or that/how did you get on today?)

Health and Safety

We (St Thomas' playgroup and staff) believe that the health of children is of paramount importance. We make

our pre-school a healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers.

We aim to make children, parents, staff and volunteers aware of health issues, and to minimize the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy environment.

Please read our [Health policy](#)

We (St Thomas playgroup) takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

Please read our [Safety policy](#)

Insurance

Volunteers are insured under both public and employer's liability cover.

Confidentiality

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality pre-school care and education.

We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

To this end we have an explicit confidentiality policy which all workers, including Management Committee, volunteers and staff, are obliged to observe. **Volunteers are required to sign a copy of the Confidentiality policy, which will be kept in the staff file.**

Please read our [Confidentiality policy](#)

Resolving Problems

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the clients who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisation's standards, here is how it will be dealt with:

1. Initially with a meeting with the manager who will explain their concern.
2. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with a representative of the management committee will be convened.
3. If your work still does not meet with our standards then we shall have to stop using your services.

At all times you will be able to freely state your case and can have a friend to accompany you

This policy was adopted by St Thomas' Playgroup in December 2017 and will be reviewed in 2018