



Volunteer Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the interests of the volunteers are met, whilst bearing in mind that safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in the organisation is paramount. Lightyear Foundation prides itself on being a volunteer-led organisation. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our charity, and as such this policy is in recognition of the value, diverse skills and experience volunteers bring to our organisation. It's also a peer-to-peer commitment to make sure volunteers are happy and well supported.

Principles

This volunteering policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation and that systems are in place for them to contribute to the settings work.
- We expect that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- We recognise that volunteers should be seen as complementary and additional to the staff group.

Recruitment

Potential volunteers will be invited to have an initial meeting with a Lightyear representative (volunteer or staff member). Following this, they will be invited to an event or meeting. Where possible, each new Lightyear volunteer will be given a 'buddy' to help integrate new members and support them in their first 6 months.

References and checks

All volunteers must provide the organisation with two referees. We will ensure that all references are taken up before the volunteer starts work.

All volunteers will be expected to complete an enhanced level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Volunteers are required to disclose if they have received any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings, whilst volunteering with us which may affect their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults. We will also review their DBS check status on a regular basis to verify this.

Induction and Training

Staff will be taken through an induction when they start with the organisation which includes a clear explanation of health and safety issues and policy, the child protection policy and procedure and risk assessments amongst other areas. Records of these inductions will be kept and new staff and volunteers asked to sign these records to confirm that they have taken part.

The volunteer may be given a particular area of work to focus on, depending on their interests.

All volunteers are provided with robust training and ongoing support to ensure the quality of our work and a positive volunteering experience. All volunteers must watch a volunteer training video followed by a questionnaire to ensure they have actively taken part in the training and understand the volunteer policies. We also have a series of videos teaching basic Makaton signs to aid better communication in our sessions and the community.

We'll share opportunities for training courses/sessions in the local area if volunteers would like to take up these opportunities to supplement their knowledge, including safeguarding and child protection training.

Insurance

We will provide a safe workplace and provide insurance cover against any injury caused by negligence in the UK. Public Liability insurance: Zurich policy number XAO1220647993 expires November 2023.

Equal Opportunities

We operate an equal opportunities policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our equal opportunities policy.

Health & Safety

Volunteers are covered by our health and safety policy, a copy of which is available on our website: www.lightyearfoundation.org.

Child Protection

All volunteers will be given a copy of our child protection policy and will be required to work within it. In addition, volunteers have a responsibility to ensure a child's welfare and should adhere to the following:

- Avoid being alone with a child, at all times. This prevents difficult situations arising, which could lead to false accusations.
- Never take a child to the toilet – if a child requests to go to the bathroom, find their parent/carer/teacher and reunite them to take them instead.
- Never become involved with any child outside the normal hours of the project unless they have full consent of the main carer of the child.
- Confidentiality must be respected at all times, except where a child's safety is at risk.
- Take any concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child to Dr Josie Rawes josierawes@gmail.com tel 07735 593977, Chair of Trustees or CEO Katherine Sparkes katie@lightyearfoundation.org or 0796 808 1152.
- At all times try to act as a positive role model for the children.

Volunteers' responsibilities

- Be punctual and notify staff as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a meeting or event where you are expected.
- Help staff/other volunteers set up at the start and tidy up at the end of an event/session.
- Help to provide a safe, stimulating environment for children.
- Work as part of a team and under the supervision of the session leaders.
- Help ensure that equipment is maintained and that anything damaged or dangerous is removed.
- If there are any concerns about a child's behaviour, the volunteer should refer this to Josie Rawes, Child Protection lead.

Photos

Our photographers regularly take photographs during our sessions and events and you may feature in these. Volunteers are encouraged to let us know if they do not wish to be featured in photographs and this request will be fully supported. We send images to the local media to let more people know about Lightyear and use photos on our own website and social media.

However – please note, volunteers are not permitted to take their own photos or video during sessions.

Problems

If a volunteer has any problems, they should to talk to Emma Zeale, Volunteer Manager: emma@lightyearfoundation.org or CEO Katherine Sparkes katie@lightyearfoundation.org or 0796 808 1152.

Last reviewed: 30/09/2023