

GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL



VOLUNTEERS' HANDBOOK



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Introduction

This Volunteers' Handbook contains a range of information important to your role as a Glen Innes Severn Council Volunteer. It provides a range of information including Council policies, Authorised Statements, WHS and emergency information.

Volunteers may be involved and/or work in areas such as:

- Tourism;
- Recreation;
- Land Care;
- Environment;
- Special Events;
- Art Gallery;
- Library Services;
- Life Choices – Support Services;
- Children and Family Services; and
- Youth Services.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is considered to be a person who undertakes an activity on behalf of Council either directly or indirectly and is not entitled to an employment contract with Council in regard to that activity. Although there is no direct personal remuneration which could be considered income for the volunteer undertaking the activity, there may be arrangements made for the payment of out of pocket expenses associated with the activity.

Principles of Volunteering

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer;
- Volunteer work is unpaid and always a matter of choice;
- Volunteering is not compulsory to receive pensions or government allowances;
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community;
- Volunteering is an activity usually performed in the not for profit or local government sector;
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others;
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality; and
- Volunteering is an opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people.

Volunteer Program Purpose

Our volunteer program aims to provide volunteers with a sustainable and satisfying level of engagement with community members in our Local Government Area.

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Roles for Volunteers

Council and the individual volunteers each have an obligation to ensure that volunteer participation is safe, effective and most of all enjoyable. Volunteers contribute to a range of activities and through their commitment and energy volunteers enrich the fabric of the local community. Volunteers will be recruited in line with the procedures outlined in this manual.

Rights and Responsibilities of Glen Innes Severn Council

- Acknowledge the extent and importance of volunteer contributions;
- Increase awareness both internally and externally of the contribution of volunteers;
- Conduct relevant induction for volunteers;
- Provide information on Council policies and procedures impacting on activities;
- Provide clear operational guidelines for each activity;
- Ensure staff provide open and honest information and respond to concerns and queries;
- Provide clear guidelines on the relationship between staff and volunteers and Councillors;
- Consult on matters that will impact on volunteers participation;
- Provide opportunities to engage in worthwhile activities;
- Regularly review the role of volunteers and volunteer activities;
- Maintain adequate volunteer recruitment processes;
- Maintain Equal Employment Opportunity policies in engaging volunteers;
- Provide a safe working environment;
- Provide relevant insurance cover;
- Provide adequate resources for volunteers to conduct activities in accordance with adopted Management plans and policies;
- Where appropriate, acknowledge and identify the skill levels of individual volunteers;
- Where appropriate, identify and provide opportunities for skill development for individuals;
- Actively promote volunteer and group activities;
- Where appropriate, provide each volunteer with identification whilst undertaking volunteer work; and
- Provide appropriate levels of supervision and on the job training.

Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

- Complete the work that was volunteered for and be dependable;
- Work as part of the team;
- Be willing to learn and further develop;
- Follow any guidelines, policies and procedures relevant to the volunteering position;
- To act in a manner that does not undermine Council in the community;
- Ask for help when needed, ask questions when more information is required;
- Accept supervision in the spirit in which it is meant;
- Provide proof of identity to Glen Innes Severn Council;
- Respect the confidentiality of other volunteers, Council employees, Council and others as appropriate;
- Record attendance details in an attendance register, log book or minutes of a meeting for insurance purpose;

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- Where required, undertake a Prohibited Employment Declaration as per the *Child Protection Prohibited Employment Act, 1998*;
- Work within your own physical limits and area of skill;
- Notify your supervisor of any issue relating to work task allocation, which may impact on your participation, for example prior or existing physical restrictions; and
- Attend training as required.

Recruitment

How Volunteers can be recruited

Volunteers will be recruited by completing the Application for Volunteer Work Form, available from Council’s website or the relevant section of Council.

Prohibited Employment Declaration

All people looking after children and young people have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for them. Legislation was introduced in New South Wales that affects all people working with children and young people.

- *Commission for Children & Young People Act, 1998*
- *Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998*

These laws make up the Working with Children Check, the goal being to create workplaces where children are safe and protected.

The *Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998* defines child-related employment as: “any employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised”.

It is the responsibility of those seeking volunteer work that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised to:

- Complete a declaration saying whether or not they are a prohibited person when applying for child-related employment; and
- Agree to allow Council to undertake all aspects of the employment screening process, including verification of the Working with Children Check by the Human Resource Officer (Payroll).

It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for volunteer employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised. It is therefore the responsibility of a prohibited person not to apply for any such position.

Termination of a Volunteer

In instances of misconduct or breaches to the volunteer responsibilities, the supervisor has the right to dismiss the volunteer. This includes:

- Theft of property or funds;
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst volunteering;
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, clients or staff;
- Disclosure of confidential information regarding the Council and/or customers;
- Breaching any other volunteer responsibilities;

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- Malicious damage to Council or community property; and
- Not working in a safe manner.

Application Form

A volunteer application form is attached to this manual. All volunteers must complete the form prior to the commencement of their volunteer activities. This is to be submitted to the Manager/Supervisor of the Section of Council that is seeking to engage a volunteer. The details on these forms should be entered into the relevant Glen Innes Council volunteer database.

Volunteer Database

A volunteer database has been developed in each section where volunteers are utilised. This ensures that all appropriate information relating to the engagement of volunteers is maintained and all checks are updated as required under legislation (working with people who are older currently requires National Police Certificates to be updated every three (3) years and volunteers Working With Children Checks require updates and verification every five (5) years).

The Director/Manager/Supervisor of each Council Section is responsible for maintaining and updating their relevant area of the Volunteer Database. Information contained in the database is held in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA)*.

Work Health and Safety

Volunteers, whilst not considered to be employees of Council are still owed a statutory duty of care while undertaking activities on behalf of Council, see *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. Before volunteers are permitted to undertake an activity on behalf of Council a risk assessment of the activity will be undertaken by Council's supervisor / co-ordinator / team leader to ensure the following:

- The activity is suitable for volunteers;
- The activity does not place volunteers at risk to their health and safety;
- The volunteer has the physical capacity to undertake the activity;
- The volunteer has the knowledge and skills required to undertake the activity in a safe manner; and
- A copy of the risk assessment shall be forwarded to Council's WHS Coordinator and filed in Dataworks in the Volunteer Section. In some cases, completion of an online volunteer induction, specific to an event such as the Australian Celtic Festival will be requested.

Council's Responsibility

When satisfied that the activity is appropriate for volunteers, Council is to ensure the following matters are addressed before the activity is commenced and within agreed timeframes:

- An induction check list is completed and registered in Dataworks;
- The potential hazards have been identified;
- A risk assessment has been completed and a copy shall be forwarded to Council's WHS Coordinator;
- Consultation has been undertaken with the volunteers regarding safe work methods;
- Appropriate risk management procedures have been developed;
- Volunteers have been provided with information, instruction and training with regard to risk management procedures;
- Any plant or equipment to be used by volunteers is safe;
- There is a system in place for the safe handling, use, storage and transport of plant, equipment or any substances to be used in the activity;

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- At the location for the activity there are safe means of entry and exit which are identified to the volunteers;
- Arrangements are in place for the appropriate monitoring and supervision of the activity; and
- Records are kept of attendance, tasks undertaken and information on incidents including near misses.

Volunteers Responsibility

While undertaking activities on behalf of Council, volunteers have responsibilities for health and safety. In particular volunteers, through their actions or omissions, are not to place themselves or other persons at risk while undertaking Council related activities. Depending upon the nature of the activity the responsibilities for volunteers may include the following:

- Be aware of and follow the approved risk management procedures for the activity;
- Follow the directions of the person in charge of the activity;
- Use plant or equipment in accordance with the correct procedures;
- Bring to the attention of the appropriate person any matter which could affect the safe undertaking of the activity; and
- Report to the appropriate person as soon as practical any incidents or near misses, which relate to health and safety of the voluntary activity.

Manual Handling

Manual handling results in around one-third of all occupational injuries within the Australian workforce. Please take care in any activity involving manual handling and be aware of the dangers. Manual handling is simply the action of:

- Lifting;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Carrying;
- Lowering;
- Moving;
- Holding; and
- Restraining.

Manual handling is more than simply carrying an object. It can include a wide range of activities that can prove a risk to your health and well-being. It should be noted, injury is not always simply caused by the size of the load but also the method used to lift or move the load.

Always assess any task involving manual handling risk with great care and consider your own stature, strength and that of others in the workplace. For more information on correct Manual Handling Techniques please speak to your supervisor.

Training

Council also has the responsibility to ensure volunteers are provided with appropriate training which, depending on the activity, may include the following:

- WHS induction training;
- Manual handling;
- Traffic control;
- First aid;
- Sharps and sun protection;

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- Responding to an emergency;
- Use of communication equipment (where required);
- On the job and/or formal training specific to the activity; and
- On the job training in specific risk management procedures as required.

Equal Employment/Volunteering Opportunities

Glen Innes Severn Council is committed to promoting a working environment that recognises and values the diverse social profile of their volunteers. Council will develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and procedures for all volunteers, both existing and potential, that are fair and do not discriminate unlawfully, either directly or indirectly, against any volunteer.

In all policies and practices of Glen Innes Severn Council, there shall be no discrimination or harassment in voluntary employment with regard to:

- Race (including colour, nationality, descent, ethnicity, ethno-religious origin), gender, pregnancy, marital status, disability, sexual preference, age or carers responsibilities.

It is unacceptable for volunteers to make comments to other volunteers, Council employees or members of the public, which are discriminatory with regards to:

- Sexuality or sex;
- Health or marital status;
- Physical or intellectual ability; and
- Race, ethnic or religious background.

Discrimination and/or harassment will not be tolerated. Where instances of discrimination and/or harassment occur, they will be investigated in a confidential manner. If proven, the person responsible will be dismissed from their voluntary engagement.

Volunteering Code of Conduct

Confidentiality

Confidentiality exists between Council and the customer/consumer. If a customer/consumer discloses/advises of intent to, disclose confidential information to volunteers they must advise that they will need to pass it on to the supervisor, then document the information and pass on promptly. Any information gained in the course of their volunteering must not be disclosed to anyone else by the volunteer. Volunteers will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (attached as an annexure) prior to the commencement of their duties.

Volunteers shall not use confidential information gained through their activities as a volunteer for themselves or for any other person for the purpose of securing a private benefit.

Volunteers shall not disclose private or personal information as defined in the *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998*.

Acceptance of Gifts/Benefits

Volunteers may accept token gifts (aggregate value less than \$50.00 over a 12 month period) from users of their service as appreciation of a job well done for example chocolates and flowers. Gifts of cash can never be accepted. Gifts may not be accepted when they are more substantial

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in nature and/or where there is the implication that the Volunteer/someone personally associated with the Volunteer may receive a favour in return.

Conflict of Interest

Volunteers may not use their position to gain profit or advantage. They will be aware of circumstances where a possible conflict of interest may arise and declare it if necessary. In addition to identifying any conflicts of interest, volunteers cannot pursue endeavors that are personal or belong to other roles whilst working in Council Services.

Use of Resources

- Volunteers must not improperly use Council resources;
- Volunteers shall use Council resources effectively and economically; and
- Volunteers shall not use Council property for their own purposes.

Policy and Procedures

Volunteers agree to be bound by relevant policies and procedures of Glen Innes Severn Council applicable to their volunteering position.

Equitable Treatment of People and Situations

- Volunteers shall treat members of the public, Council staff and Councillors fairly and equitably and with respect, courtesy, compassion and sensitivity;
- Volunteers shall not act contrary to any statutory law in their voluntary capacity;
- Volunteers shall not act unreasonably, unjustly, oppressively or in a discriminatory manner; and
- Volunteers shall refrain from any form of conduct, in the performance of their duties, which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment or give rise to the reasonable suspicion or appearance of improper conduct.

Duty of Care

Council has a legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to all volunteers to ensure that they are not exposed to any risk of injury or illness from either the tasks they are undertaking, the equipment they are using or the environment that they are working in.

Dress

To protect persons from UV exposure, volunteers working outdoors will be required to wear long sleeve or three quarter length sleeve shirts with collar, loose fitting long trousers, enclosed footwear, a hat with a broad brim, sun cream and sunglasses. Volunteers working indoors will wear appropriate and sensible clothing and footwear for the activities they may be undertaking.

Alcohol and Drugs

Volunteers are not permitted to drink alcohol or take illegal drugs while they are performing work on behalf of Council, or report for duty when their job performance is likely to be affected by alcohol or illegal drugs.

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Reporting of Corrupt Conduct

Council is committed to an ethical workplace and requires volunteers to report corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste of public money.

Incident Reporting

All accidents, incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses must be reported to your Supervisor immediately so that it can be entered into SafeHold (Council's WHS reporting system for staff, paid and unpaid). It is important to report everything no matter how small so we can make improvements to minimise the risk of something similar occurring.

Media Protocol

Volunteers are not permitted to make any comments to the Media on behalf of Council other than where approval has been granted under the *Section 355* Community Committee of Council. The Media Policy states that the Chairpersons of Community Committees have authority to comment to the media on Committee matters and that Chairpersons of Community Committees shall always strive to portray Council in a positive light.

Any queries for a statement to the media must be referred through your supervisor, to the Media and Communications Officer up to the General Manager or Director of the work activity for permission.

Council also has a Social Media Policy which defines Social Media as: Internet based tools for sharing and discussing information among people. It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared over open digital networks. When using social media Council volunteers should only share official and approved posts already published by Council, ensuring that public confidence in the integrity of local government is upheld.

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act

Council will obtain personal information from volunteers including names, address, telephone numbers, child protection screening (where applicable) and other contact details. Personal information obtained by Council is governed by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA)*. This legislation provides direction for the collection, protection, storage, disposal, access and use of personal information by Council.

Council will take all reasonable care to protect personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. To ensure that personal information held by Council is current, please notify Council if any of your details change.

Insurance

Insurance policies are in place to cover Council's volunteers. To be covered by Council insurances volunteers:

- Must be aged between 15 - 90 years (those under 16 years must have a parent or guardian sign the registration form);
- It is possible for young people aged between 12 and 16 years to assist with Council run activities on an ad hoc basis for periods of short duration (not extending more than two (2) hours per occasion). The young people will require signed consent from a parent or guardian for the activity and must at all times be directly supervised by their parent or a suitably qualified Council staff member, holding a current Working with Children Check;

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- Be registered with Council, by completing an application for volunteers form and have completed an induction specific to the tasks required with their supervisor;
- Please note other family members or friends are not covered under this policy if assisting you with your duties, they must register and meet this criteria;
- If using your own car, you are required to have your own comprehensive car insurance policy, however, injuries sustained as a result of your voluntary duties will be covered under our personal accident policy. Your comprehensive insurance excess will be covered under Council's insurance policy if the accident is of no fault of your own; and
- If you sustain an injury whilst undertaking your voluntary duties for Council, you are covered under our insurance policy, but you first need to claim from Medicare and your Health Fund (if applicable).

Personal Accident Insurance

Council's personal accident insurance policy covers volunteers whilst performing activities authorised by Council. The insurance also covers volunteers on direct route to and from the authorised event or activity.

It should be noted that the policy only covers volunteers aged between 15 and 90 years. As a result persons outside of this age bracket cannot be engaged in any voluntary activities (other than on an ad hoc basis for periods of short duration, as defined in the second dot point under insurance).

Council will take all reasonable care to ensure that volunteers operate in a safe working environment. Volunteers are required to act in a responsible manner and in accordance with standard operating procedures. Wilfully or deliberately causing injury is not covered by Council's insurance.

Any accident that occurs whilst under the care and control of Council should be reported to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. A report must be completed by the supervisor and returned to Council's risk management personnel within 24 hours.

Public Liability Insurance

Whilst working under the care and control of Council, volunteers are protected against public liability claims under Council's public liability insurance cover. Council's insurance does not cover incidences where damage has been caused through wilful or deliberate acts.

If damage is caused or an incident arises, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's risk management personnel.

Volunteer's Personal Property

Volunteer's personal items are not covered by Council's insurance whilst undertaking volunteer activities. Volunteers are encouraged not to bring or wear items of any significant value (including jewellery). Council will supply all necessary protective equipment. All attempts should be taken to secure personal items against theft or damage.

Smoke Free Policy

Council has in place a Smoking in the Workplace policy that prohibits smoking in general workplaces and motor vehicles.

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Related Documents: Volunteer Policy, Volunteer Application Form and Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement/s.			

Use of Council Equipment

Volunteers may be provided with Council equipment to assist in performing various activities. If a license or qualification is required to operate plant or equipment, a volunteer must provide evidence of such qualification or licence. Training will be provided to ensure that equipment is used correctly and within the guidelines or instructions provided by supervisors.

Damage to Council equipment by volunteers whilst working under the care and control of Council is covered by Council's Property Insurance. Council's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to Council property. If equipment is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed.

Use of Council Motor Vehicles

Volunteers may be requested to use a Council motor vehicle during the course of performing various activities. The volunteer coordinator must sight and retain a copy of a person's driving licence before allowing them to drive the vehicle.

Damage to a Council vehicle by a volunteer whilst working under the care and control of Council is covered by Council's Motor Vehicle Insurance policy. Council's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to Council property.

If a motor vehicle is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's risk management personnel and registered in Dataworks.

The vehicle log must be maintained each time a vehicle is used by a volunteer.

Fines and Infringements

Any court imposed fine or infringements received as a result of the actions or omissions of a volunteer will be the responsibility of the volunteer. They are wholly responsible for payment of such fines and infringements.

They include, but are not limited to:

- Parking;
- Speeding;
- Littering;
- Unpaid tolls and resultant fees; and
- Red light camera.

Out of Pocket Expenses

From time to time, volunteers may need to use their own money to purchase materials or pay fees. Volunteers must have prior approval from their supervisor before they use their own money.

Out of pocket expenses will only be reimbursed if a claim is submitted with proof of payment attached i.e. a tax invoice. The supervisor must sign the claim form and supply a cost number for allocation of the expense.

Recognition of Volunteers

Volunteers are entitled to request a statement of tasks that they have undertaken in their role with Council.

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Grievances Procedure

If a volunteer has a grievance about any aspect of their tasks, other volunteers or Council staff, the following process should be followed:

Step 1 - If you feel comfortable to approach the person directly to discuss the issue, do so.

Step 2 - The volunteer can approach the Supervisor or the Committee Chairperson in the area they are working within for a discussion and advice on how to best resolve the issue. This discussion should be treated as strictly confidential.

Step 3 - If Step 2 does not help resolve the problem, then the issue should be notified to the relevant Manager in writing.

Step 4 - If the matter remains unresolved, the volunteer may request the matter be referred to the Director of the Division or other authorised officer for discussion. A further meeting between all parties shall be held as soon as practicable.

Step 5 - If the matter remains unresolved the General Manager shall provide the volunteer with a written response. The response shall include the reasons for not implementing any proposed remedy.

References

This handbook references or has been informed by the following policies, procedures and information:

- Australian Celtic Festival Strategic Plan 2015-2020;
- Cash Handling Policy;
- Code of Conduct;
- Code of Meeting Practice;
- Complaints Policy;
- Customer Service Standards;
- Drug and Alcohol Policy;
- Human Resources Policy Statement Register;
- Smoke Free Work Place Policy;
- Sun Smart and Personal Protective Equipment Policy;
- The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015;
- Tourism Destination Management Plan 2016-2020;
- Work Health and Safety Policy;
- Workplace Discrimination and Bullying / Harassment Policy; and
- Section 355 Community Committees of Council Manual.

Annexures

- 1) Application for Volunteer Work Form;
- 2) Glen Innes Severn Council Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement.

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Annexure 1



GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL

APPLICATION TO PERFORM VOLUNTARY WORK FOR COUNCIL			
Privacy Statement			
The information requested by Council on this form may constitute personal information under the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> . By completing this form you are giving Council permission to collect and retain your personal details. If you do not wish to provide the information, Council may not be able to consider your application. For more information about volunteering, call Council on 67302300, or visit the website at http://www.gisc.nsw.gov.au/			
PLEASE PRINT DETAILS CLEARLY			
Name:			
Date of Birth:		Male	Female
Address:			
Day Time Telephone:			
Name and contact details of person to be notified in an emergency:			
What days/times are you available:			
Area of Council where you will be volunteering:			
Do you have any special skills or interests e.g. computer skills, languages spoken?			
Do you have any existing medical condition, injury or disability that could affect your work:			YES/NO
If so, please give details:			
Name and phone number of referee:			
I have read Council's policy on volunteers and agree to comply with it (If you do not understand the attached Volunteers' Policy, please speak to your Supervisor).			
Signature of applicant:		Date:	
Council Use Only			
Applicant accepted	YES/NO	Date:	
Supervisor's Name		Signature	
Date Started		Date Finished	
Work Area		Supervisor	
Induction Completed Date		Signature of Trainer	
Duties			

Reference Number: CS_0003	Version Number: 2.0 Date of Effect: 25/7/19	Review Date: July 2022	Responsible Officer: MCS
Related Documents: Volunteer Policy, Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement, Volunteer Handbook (other documents noted within) and various Volunteer Role Descriptions.			

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Related Documents: Volunteer Policy, Volunteer Application Form and Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement/s.			



Glen Innes Severn Council Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

In the course of your volunteer duties with Council you may have access to personal or confidential information. This could include:

- Information about other people (including their names), in receipt of services from or connected with Glen Innes Severn Council;
- Information about other volunteers, such as their contact details or where they live (which can't be shared without their prior consent); and
- Information relating to Council business such as a funding application or other plans that you are made aware of through your volunteer role.

This information must not be disclosed to or discussed with any other consumers, family, friends or community members.

Confidentiality exists between Council and the consumer. If a customer/consumer discloses /advises of intent to, disclose confidential information to volunteers they must advise that they will need to pass it on to the supervisor, then document the information and pass on promptly. This and any other information gained in the course of their volunteering must not be disclosed to anyone else by the volunteer.

Any information and/or photos must not be shared on any form of social media without the appropriate consent of the person and/or their parent (where applicable) in consultation with the relevant Council staff.

Any concerns you have or relevant information you receive in the course of your work must be referred to the relevant Council staff.

A proven breach of confidentiality is a serious betrayal of trust and may lead to disciplinary action and in some cases dismissal.

In signing this agreement you acknowledge that you understand your obligation to maintain confidentiality and you agree that you will not obtain, use or disclose information in any way which is contrary to the conditions set out above.

I (please print your name) _____ have read the above information, accept the conditions as set out in the agreement and agree to be bound by them.

Signature of Volunteer: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Council Staff: _____ Date: _____

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Related Documents: Volunteer Policy, Volunteer Handbook, Volunteer Role Description			

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