

Date of Committee of Governance Endorsement: 13/12/2023

Next Review Date: 2028

Volunteer Policy

Purpose

Holden Street Neighbourhood House (Holden Street) acknowledges the important contribution made by volunteers and that this unpaid work makes a positive contribution to its overall operations, its programs and the community.

Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers with Holden Street whether the volunteer work is on site at the premise or held at other locations. It also applies to both formal and spontaneous volunteering and regardless of whether it is ongoing or once-off volunteering.

Guiding principles

All volunteers shall be treated with respect and gratitude for their contribution.

Holden Street commits to continuous improvement for effective and meaningful volunteer involvement.

Holden Street acknowledges and supports the reciprocal and collaborative nature of the volunteer relationship.

The common commitment to volunteering opens opportunities for many different people regardless of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, gender, skills and motivation, creating a positive context for social integration, support, community education and empowerment.

Holden Street is committed to providing satisfying roles for volunteers, who enhance the activities of the organisation, as well as providing opportunities in keeping with the interest and goals of individual volunteers.

Responsibilities

As relevant to the nature of the volunteer activity (formal or spontaneous regular or once-off) Holden Street's responsibilities include:

- Undertaking an appropriate selection and screening process
- Providing a position description for formal volunteers, outlining all relevant duties and responsibilities and ensuring that these are clearly defined
- Providing an induction and orientation process
- Providing training if necessary
- Providing appropriate support and supervision
- Providing volunteers with the opportunity to give feedback, discuss problems, and put forward compliments and complaints regarding their activities

- Providing access and support to grievance procedures
- Make reasonable adjustments to include and support volunteers with accessibility needs
- Keeping volunteers informed about what is happening in the organisation
- Ensuring that recognition of volunteers is on-going
- Offering the opportunity to meet with a Holden Street employee when a volunteer is concluding their role
- Providing reimbursements for any pre-agreed expenses incurred while volunteering. Note that any reimbursed expenses must be agreed before involvement in a program/activity takes place.
- Offering a friendly, welcoming, safe and non-discriminatory environment
- Ensuring it has adequate insurance cover.

A Volunteer's responsibilities include:

- Abiding by all Holden Street policies, including Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Reviewing, understanding and signing any policies or procedures as requested
- Attaining mandatory police check and a Working with Children's check if requested
- Attaining or showing any relevant certifications, or be willing to undertake training if requested
- Meeting the requirements of their unpaid volunteer work such as being on time or notifying if they cannot attend
- To ask questions or to seek support of feedback from Holden Street staff on their volunteering activities
- Informing Holden Street if they have accessibility needs to fulfil their role
- To have any reimbursement requests for expenses approved in advance of incurring the expense
- Ensuring that all Holden Street and personal information learnt while volunteering is kept strictly confidential and that it is not shared
- Giving feedback, discussing problems and putting forward compliments and complaints regarding their activities
- Contributing to a welcoming, safe and non-discriminatory environment
- Treating people at Holden Street with kindness and respect and in accordance with the Holden Street vision, mission and values.

Accountability

Volunteers are accountable to the Holden Street Committee of Governance via the Manager.

Relevant legislation, regulatory bodies

- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- Occupational health and Safety Act
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Unpaid Work)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

- The Crimes Act 1958
- Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Occupational Health & Safety Act Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

Relevant guidelines and rules

- Volunteer Registration Form and Manual
- The Code of Conduct for Staff members and all attendees at the House
- The Holden Street Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Australian Police Check
- Working with Children Check
- Finance Policy
- Occupational, Health and Safety Policy Cyber Security and IT Services Users Procedure
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Key Definitions

Governing body: the Committee of Governance, comprising the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and individual members.

Volunteering: Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain. The voluntary nature of positions in which people are engaged in Holden Street is through individual choice and an independent agreement. Volunteering does not apply to students placements at Holden Street or employees.

Formal Volunteers: People who give their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain to an organisation, such as Holden Street, in a structured way. This is the majority of volunteering at Holden Street and it is guided through formal processes and procedures. This is distinguished from 'informal volunteering' which is also time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, however this type of volunteering only takes place outside the context of a formal organisation or group such as Holden Street and is more individualised actions.

Spontaneous Volunteers: People who provide offers of assistance and volunteering that may arise following an emergency, crisis or event. People may offer to volunteer on a once-off basis at an event or for a short period of time when the needs of the organisation are high.