

DORSET RURAL MUSIC SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER POLICY

DEFINITION

This policy defines how DRMS aspires to support volunteers in line with statutory requirements and best practice, enabling them to have an excellent volunteering experience.

This policy applies to all DRMS volunteers who support us by giving their time, experience, knowledge and skills free of charge. All volunteering is undertaken by choice. Volunteers are never obligated to donate their time, but we are very grateful when they do. Volunteering with us may be on a one off, occasional or regular basis. All volunteers are subject to the same policy regardless of their role or frequency of volunteering.

INTRODUCTION

Dorset Rural Music School (DRMS) is one of the last rural music schools in the country, set up after the war to bring high quality music teaching and experiences to people living in rural areas. We are passionate about creating opportunities for everyone to engage in music, whether they want to explore new genres, study an instrument, compose. We work with exceptional musicians to teach individuals and groups of any age. We co-create community events to inspire and connect people. We work with local schools and community groups. We do this without core funding. We do this to make a difference.

To enable us to achieve our aims, we believe in involving volunteers to help us extend our reach. We believe that volunteers bring new skills and perspectives to our work and allow us to work more closely with local communities. Volunteers are integral to what we do and we value their contribution and the strengthening effect it has on our work. We are committed to recruiting and training as many diverse volunteers as possible and creating an environment where all volunteers are able to fulfil their potential, maximise their contribution and feel comfortable in being themselves.

PRINCIPLES

- All volunteering is undertaken by choice; this freedom to volunteer also implies a freedom to stop volunteering whenever they wish.
- We do not expect volunteers to replace paid staff, but to complement and add to our work. They will be treated equally, as part of a team.
- The volunteering role will be clearly defined in the relevant Role Description so that volunteers are aware of their responsibilities.
- We will provide induction, training and ongoing support to ensure volunteers can do their work effectively and hope to provide an environment in which volunteers feel supported and valued and gain something from their contribution.

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- We hope that volunteers will undertake to respect the guidelines set out in the Volunteer Agreement. This is a two-way document which lays out what DRMS requests of volunteers and what the volunteers should expect of us.
- DRMS commits to recognising and celebrating the impact of the contribution of our volunteers at regular volunteer meetings and social events.

RECRUITMENT

- DRMS will seek to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds to reflect the makeup of the local community.
- DRMS will advertise locally and try to use methods which appeal to people of different ages and from different backgrounds.
- Prospective volunteers will complete a Volunteer Application Form with details about their relevant skills and experience and reason for volunteering.
- The Director will have an informal interview with all potential volunteers. This will include a two-way discussion to find out the prospective volunteer's skills, suitability for volunteer roles available and expectations of volunteering.
- DRMS will provide a Role Description so that volunteers are clear about the role they will be undertaking.
- Any volunteer who will be working with vulnerable adults or children will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service Check; this will be paid for by DRMS.
- If DRMS feels that someone is not suitable for a volunteering position, we will be honest with them and thank them for their time and interest.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

- All volunteers will be given a Role Description which will provide clear information about what is expected of them.
- All volunteers will be provided with a Volunteer Handbook which will give them information about DRMS and will summarise all the main policies they need to be aware of and the support that we will offer them.
- All volunteers will receive an induction, which will cover a summary of the overall project, what to expect from the role, key policies and communication structure.
- There will be an introductory period of 3 months for volunteers to see whether they're comfortable with, and suitable for, the role. If volunteers are not seen to be suitable for the role DRMS may ask them to no longer volunteer with them at any time during this period.

EXPENSES

- Volunteers are entitled to claim expenses as set out in the Volunteer Handbook.
- Volunteers should check with Trust staff before incurring any other expenses. DRMS reserves the right not to reimburse expenses that have not been authorised in advance.

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- We encourage volunteers to claim expenses on a monthly basis. Expenses should be listed on the Expense Form. Receipts should be provided electronically.
- Expense forms and electronic copies of receipts should be emailed to the DRMS office
- Once authorised, expenses will be paid directly into the volunteer's bank account.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

- DRMS will hold a minimum of 1 event a year to provide volunteers with the opportunity to meet, discuss their role, share ideas and plan future work.
- DRMS will stay in touch with volunteers
- DRMS will provide positive feedback on the contribution of volunteers.
- DRMS will seek to regularly invite volunteers to express their views around the volunteering experience, to include raising any concerns.

INSURANCE

- All volunteers are covered by DRMS's insurance policy

DIVERSITY

- Volunteering is open to everyone irrespective of age, gender, disability, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Further information about our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion can be found in DRMS's Equal Opportunities Statement (volunteers are included in the scope of this policy).
- We are committed to working with volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- We will try to ensure that our recruitment materials reflect our commitment to diversity and that the materials we provide for volunteers are accessible.
- DRMS is keen to involve young people in our work. Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 are welcome to volunteer alongside other volunteers. Under 16s may volunteer for age appropriate tasks providing they are directly supervised by an appropriate adult.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Volunteers should expect to be carrying out their role in a safe working environment. Volunteers will be made aware of health and safety in their induction. Whilst all volunteers have a shared responsibility for safety, it is ultimately the responsibility of DRMS to ensure procedures are in place to minimise risk.
- Risk assessments will be carried out by DRMS for the activities that we are organising. Volunteers may be required to have some knowledge of risk assessments as part of their role.
- Further information can be found in DRMS's Health & Safety Policy

RESOLVING PROBLEMS

- Although the relationship between a volunteer and an organisation is entirely voluntary all volunteers will be given a Volunteer Agreement. This lays out what DRMS expects of volunteers and what they should expect from us.
- Volunteers should seek to resolve issues and concerns - relating to their role - in the first instance through the Director. If a volunteer feels that resolution has not been achieved, volunteers may organise a meeting with one of Trustees. If, after that, the situation remains unresolved and there seems to be no way to resolve it, it would be inappropriate for that person to continue volunteering.
- If a volunteer is not adhering to the Volunteer Agreement, then the Director will initially discuss this with the volunteer and explain their concerns. A written record of this conversation should be sent by email. If this does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with one of Trustees may be organised. The volunteer can have a friend present at this meeting, if they would like. If the volunteer is still unable to adhere to the volunteer agreement, then the role of the volunteer may be terminated.
- In the event of behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct, the role of the volunteer may be terminated by DRMS immediately.
- In all cases, the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision made and action taken.
- DRMS will seek external advice if we feel we need additional support in dealing with a problem.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- We expect volunteers to adhere to the same Confidentiality Policy as paid staff
- We need to protect volunteers, so they must be free to discuss any concerns they have, but they should not discuss anything of a confidential nature to anyone outside of DRMS.

REVIEWING AND IMPROVING

- Volunteers will be made aware of the Volunteer Policy as part of their induction and the main points will form part of the Volunteer Handbook. Volunteers can be provided with a full copy of the policy if they would like one.
- We will look at ways in which we can give volunteers recognition for the valuable time and skills they are offering us.
- DRMS will keep in touch with other volunteer-involving organisations, keep up to date with volunteer-related issues and continue to ask for advice, so that we are regularly reviewing how we work with volunteers in line with current best practice.
- This policy will be reviewed annually.

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Next review: October 2024