

Volunteer Policy

Introduction and Scope

Whizz-Kidz recognises the significant and valuable role that volunteers play in supporting us to achieve our aims. This policy reflects our commitment to ensuring the volunteer is integrated into the heart of Whizz-Kidz, that volunteering with us is a constructive and rewarding experience and that all volunteers are treated in an equal, fair and just manner.

This policy sets out to provide guidance to staff and volunteers and outline procedures and support mechanisms available to volunteers. It defines the term “volunteer” and provides a framework of best practice which we will endeavour to follow when appointing, managing and supporting our volunteers.

Definition of the Relationship

Volunteers are individuals or groups who offer their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain beyond reimbursement of expenses; helping us to achieve our aims.

There is no contract of employment between Whizz-Kidz and its volunteers and volunteers are not considered employees of Whizz-Kidz.

Whizz-Kidz' Commitment to the Volunteer

Whizz-Kidz views its volunteers as a valuable resource and is committed to providing support and recognition of their input. Volunteers are supported through the provision of resources necessary to complete their duties; induction and appropriate training and a supervision commitment. Volunteer contributions are recognised through written references (where appropriate), invitation to special events and opportunities to feedback to the development of volunteer management at Whizz-Kidz. Volunteers have the right to refuse any request made of them and are not bound by contract, but are obliged to volunteer in line with this Handbook, the Volunteer Policy and the Volunteer Agreement.

Commitment of the Volunteer

Whizz-Kidz expects volunteers to behave in a manner which reflects positively on the organisation and to promote the key organisational messages where possible. Whizz-Kidz expects volunteers to execute agreed duties, unless otherwise informed, and requests that volunteers carry out in the name of the charity only those tasks approved by supervising staff. Whizz-Kidz expects volunteers to be supportive of staff, other volunteers and of the Whizz-Kidz ethos and aims.

We would ask that all volunteers volunteering on a regular basis to please, where possible, give us four weeks' notice if they are considering leaving their volunteering role. We also ask that volunteers attending irregular events such as Wheelchair Skills training or an Ambassador Club to please give us at least one week's notice if you are not able to attend a scheduled event.

Principles

This Volunteer Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Whizz-Kidz will endeavour to ensure volunteers are properly integrated into its organisational structure, that they are kept abreast of organisational developments and that necessary mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work.

- Whizz-Kidz does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Whizz-Kidz recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development opportunities and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs.
- Whizz-Kidz expects staff to work positively with volunteers.

Recruitment and Selection

Whizz-Kidz recruitment and selection of volunteers is designed to ensure that we recruit volunteers who are suitable for the role they would like to do:

- a) Whizz-Kidz will provide volunteer role descriptions which outline duties and responsibilities.
- b) Prior to appointment, volunteers are invited to engage in a two-way discussion of the proposed role including its requirements and expectations with a view to assessing mutual suitability.
- c) Commencement of the volunteering opportunity is subject to either a relevant Criminal Record Disclosure and reference clearance.
- d) Volunteers may be subject to a probationary or trial period of 1 - 2 months depending on the role.
- e) Support, guidance and supervision are provided as appropriate.

Disclosure of Criminal Record

Due to the nature of our work all volunteers, aged 16 years or older, are subject to a criminal record disclosure as part of the recruitment process. Whizz-Kidz complies fully with the code of practice provided by Disclosure Scotland, Access NI and the Disclosure and Barring Service and undertakes to treat all volunteer applicants fairly in line with our commitment to equal opportunities and to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Our Criminal Record Disclosure Policy which includes information about the recruitment of ex-offenders can be made available to all applicants during the recruitment process.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Whizz-Kidz is committed to promoting equal opportunities. Volunteering opportunities at Whizz-Kidz are open to all regardless of age, race, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. Whizz-Kidz recognises the positive benefits a diverse volunteer pool can bring to the organisation and is committed to ensuring our recruitment and selection procedure reflects this.

Disabled Volunteers

Whizz-Kidz promotes diversity in all areas of volunteering and as a disabled children's charity, we encourage disabled people, in particular, to volunteer with us. All the venues that we use are fully accessible and we may be able to provide extra support when required for expenses (please liaise with the Volunteer Manager about this prior to volunteering). We would ask where possible, for volunteers to bring their own carers and support workers if required, as we have a limited budget for volunteer expenses. The carer or support worker would need to provide a recent criminal record disclosure certificate prior to attending a Whizz-Kidz event.

Disabled volunteers can act as role models and mentors to the young wheelchair users that we work with and may inspire them during their journey towards independence. Disability should not be a barrier to volunteering and volunteers can still claim benefits as long as you are aware of the restrictions explained in the 'Volunteering while getting benefits' leaflet produced by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organisation as well as task specific training to ensure they can carry out their work on behalf of Whizz-Kidz effectively and efficiently.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the organisation.

Support and Recognition

All volunteers will have a named supervisor responsible for the management of their work, who is there to provide guidance and assistance. Those engaged in more sustained volunteering will have more formal supervision sessions at agreed intervals. These sessions shall be conducted via email, phone or face-to-face as appropriate and agreed.

Supervising staff will review the volunteering placement as often as required, with the aim of ensuring that recognition keeps apace with role development. Whizz-Kidz is happy to provide a confirmation of contribution for volunteers who have given a minimum of a full week of their time or a reference for those contributing over longer, sustained periods. Volunteers may be invited to "thank you" events and consulted where possible.

Volunteer Expenses

It is Whizz-Kidz' policy that volunteers should not be out of pocket for their contributions, therefore we are happy to reimburse reasonable receipted travel and subsistence costs. Minimising costs maximises income to Whizz-Kidz therefore, Whizz-Kidz asks volunteers to keep expenses to a reasonable and necessary level. Below is some guidance of what constitutes reasonable expenses and the procedure for claiming them. If you so wish, expenses can be donated back to the charity, the tax on which can then be reclaimed through Gift Aid.

If volunteers have any queries with regards to expenses, they should consult the Volunteer Manager prior to any commitment being made.

Travel and Subsistence

- Up to £5.00 lunch costs reimbursed on production of receipts; this only applies when volunteering for an unbroken 4 hour period.
- Volunteers will be reimbursed for all **necessary** travel expenses - assuming they have chosen the most cost effective option. (The use of a taxi is only approved when necessary and in advance by the Volunteer Manager.)
- For individual volunteering in the London Headquarters, a maximum of £10 a day can be claimed for travel and lunch.
- For volunteers helping at events such as Wheelchair Skills Training and Ambassador Clubs, reasonable travel expenses can be claimed up to a maximum of 30km from the venue. Any further expenses will have to be covered by the volunteer, and for this reason we try to recruit volunteers for events that live within 30km of the venue. Whizz-Kidz has a budget of £30 per day for volunteers attending our services and if your expenses may exceed this amount, please seek approval from the Volunteer Manager in advance of the event.
- If it is essential that a volunteer stay overnight in the course of their volunteer duties, Whizz-Kidz will organise this for the volunteer, but it must be agreed in advance with the volunteer's supervisor.).
- If relevant, dinner will be reimbursed up to a cost of £20.00 including non-alcoholic drinks and service if this is on the receipt, per night.

Procedure for Claiming Expenses

All claims must be made using the Volunteer Expenses Claim Form – only **fully completed forms with receipts attached will be accepted**. The form must be signed by the volunteer

and returned to the volunteer's supervisor for authorisation and then sent to the Volunteer Manager at HQ. Payment of authorised expenses is made by BACS transfer directly into the volunteer's bank account (N.B. full bank, or building society, account details must be completed on the Volunteer Expenses Claim Form for this to be processed). Expenses are paid to volunteers in the middle and at the end of each calendar month.

Partnership Working

Whizz-Kidz is keen to develop relationships with partner organisations. When volunteers attend Whizz-Kidz events from partner organisations, Whizz-Kidz requests that partners sign a Memorandum of Understanding which clarifies our behaviour and safe working protocols, and confirms the criminal record disclosure status of volunteers.

Health and Safety

All volunteers volunteering in Whizz-Kidz' buildings, or on the premises where a Whizz-Kidz event is being held, are to be given a Health and Safety induction. All volunteers in the course of representing Whizz-Kidz are covered by the organisation's Public Liability Insurance. We endeavour to ensure that any events which volunteers are asked to attend on behalf of Whizz-Kidz are safe and accessible. This is achieved through the prior completion of risk assessments at Whizz-Kidz' organised events and in some cases written confirmation of appropriate insurance cover at third party organised events.

We ask that all volunteers organising an event for the general public address Health and Safety issues as a matter of course. If you have any questions about this matter, please speak to the Volunteer Manager in the first instance.

Concerns and Complaints

Whizz-Kidz is committed to the welfare of our volunteers and we believe that any concerns brought to light at an early stage can be dealt with in an informal manner between volunteer and Supervisor. In the unlikely event that a dispute cannot be resolved in this manner, the Volunteer Manager can be involved. All volunteers have the opportunity to feedback to the Volunteer Manager through evaluation forms or meetings, depending on the volunteer role. You can contact the Volunteer Manager by calling 020 7798 6117 or emailing volunteers@whizz-kidz.org.uk.