

# **Skylight Circus Arts Volunteer Policy**

## **1. Volunteering with Skylight Circus Arts**

1.1 Skylight Circus Arts values volunteers within the organisation. We recognise and encourage the unique qualities of individuals, their experience, skills, knowledge and the commitment they can offer.

1.2 We work inclusively, and welcome the range of experience people from diverse backgrounds can bring to the work. We aim to work with volunteers to support equal opportunities and widen access to opportunities within our organisation.

1.3 Volunteering with Skylight Circus Arts should reflect the best available practice in working with volunteers. We will strive to do this by ensuring volunteers are not exploited or treated unfairly or unreasonably. We will ensure volunteers are given clear roles which complement the activities of paid staff but do not replace a paid role. Volunteers will be given adequate support and supervision by staff trained to offer it. Written information and guidance will be given to volunteers where appropriate and offered in alternative formats to suit specific needs.

1.4 Skylight Circus Arts will offer a range of opportunities according to the needs of the organisation and the particular skills and interests of potential volunteers. Volunteering should be of mutual benefit to the organisation and the volunteer. Where possible the experience is intended to offer some form of development and progression for volunteers that meets their interests and fulfils the needs of the organisation in the work we undertake. We may have specific tasks and roles in mind but we will also welcome creative suggestions and ideas that would be of mutual benefit.

1.5 Skylight Circus Arts accepts the role of volunteers and the services they offer with the understanding that volunteer involvement is at the sole discretion of the organisation.

## **2 . Definition of Volunteer**

2.1 There is no legal definition of a volunteer and the word can have different meanings depending upon the context in which it is used. For our purposes we will use the definition of volunteering as used in the 1997 National Survey Of Volunteering:

*“any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment.”*

### **3. Recruitment and selection**

3.1 Skylight Circus Arts aims to recruit and select volunteers in accordance with equal opportunity legislation and guidance. We will endeavour to ensure recruitment materials are distributed widely to all sections of the community and in formats appropriate to the differing needs of a diverse society.

3.2 We will regularly review our existing procedures and seek advice and support to ensure they are adapted to reach a wider audience when recruitment takes place.

### **4. Equal Opportunities Policy**

4.1 Skylight Circus Arts has an Equal Opportunities Policy which Skylight Circus Arts automatically adheres to in its practice for recruiting and selecting volunteers.

### **5. Screening and Police Checks**

5.1 Checks for criminal convictions and enhanced DBS disclosures will only be made when needed according to the nature of the voluntary work being undertaken for the organisation. A risk assessment will be made to assess whether such checks are necessary by legal requirement or to minimise any risk to vulnerable client groups.

### **6. Young Volunteers**

6.1 Volunteers who are below the age of 16 years old must have written consent of their parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering.

### **7. Risk Management**

7.1 Skylight Circus Arts will undertake risk assessments of agreed activities for volunteers.

### **8. Written Agreement**

8.1 Skylight Circus Arts will give each volunteer a written agreement which will be signed by the volunteer and a representative of Skylight Circus Arts. The agreement will set out what is expected of the volunteer and what they can expect from Skylight Circus Arts. It will include practical details such as the number of hours they will work, what their specific job role will be, how they will be supported, and what they can do if there are any difficulties. The agreement will make clear that the relationship between the volunteer and Skylight Circus Arts does not constitute any formal contract or offer of employment.

## **9. Role and Scope of Volunteers**

9.1 Your role may vary according to what opportunities exist at Skylight Circus Arts. The role will be reviewed on a regular basis according to the needs of Skylight Circus Arts and the volunteer.

9.2 Volunteers are encouraged to use their initiative and develop their role within the organisation as opportunities and circumstances allow. Skylight Circus Arts will encourage independence and increasing self reliance, but volunteers must always consult with paid staff. Volunteers must always seek approval from Skylight Circus Arts where there is likely to be an impact on the organisation's budget or other resources in carrying out their role.

## **10. Trial Period**

10.1 A trial/probationary period will be agreed by the volunteer and Skylight Circus Arts. The length of this will depend upon the nature of the tasks undertaken by the volunteer, but will in most cases be three months. This will be stated in the written agreement.

10.2 Skylight Circus Arts reserves the right to revoke a volunteer agreement at any time and for whatever reason without further recourse. The volunteer is entitled to relinquish their position at any time, for any reason without further recourse.

## **11. Induction**

11.1 Each volunteer will be offered a full induction process with further on-going orientation and training where applicable. This is to ensure an understanding of the work of Skylight Circus Arts and their role within the organisation.

## **12. Support and supervision**

12.1 Volunteers will be offered support and supervision. How this takes place will vary according to the needs of the volunteer, the role they have undertaken, and the judgement of Skylight Circus Arts.

12.2 Overall responsibility remains with the Creative Director. Specific, day to day support will be offered by named individuals. It may be their specific job to support the volunteer in their general work, or it may be that a particular task requires the expertise of a certain member of staff.

12.3 Volunteers will be required to give regular feedback to add to 'Theory of Change' evaluations.

## **13. Absenteeism**

13.1 If absence is expected volunteers should inform the Creative Director or named member of staff as far in advance as possible.

#### **14. Expenses**

14.1 Out of pocket expenses, travel and subsistence costs arising from work taking place away from the Skylight Circus Arts office will be reimbursed. Receipts are to be submitted to the administrator for expenses claims.

#### **15. Access to Property and Materials**

15.1 Volunteers shall be given appropriate access to the property of the organisation and those materials necessary to fulfil their tasks. Volunteers shall receive training in the correct operation of equipment. Property and material shall only be used when directly required for the volunteer task. Volunteers must seek assistance from the organisation if they are unclear or unsure about any aspect of the operation of equipment. Volunteers taking equipment on location will be accompanied by the Creative Director or named member of staff.

#### **16. Insurance**

16.1 Volunteers will be covered by Skylight Circus Arts's insurance policy whilst undertaking agreed activities.

#### **17. Confidentiality**

17.1 Volunteers will need to exercise confidentiality and diplomacy with regard to the work of the organisation. This will be stated in the written agreement and the induction process.

17.2 Failure to maintain confidentiality could lead to Skylight Circus Arts withdrawing the volunteering opportunity from the volunteer.

#### **18. Personal File**

18.1 Skylight Circus Arts will keep an administration file for each volunteer. The file may contain the following: contact details, supervision and training records, tasks undertaken, evaluation records, and copies of signed documentation such as the written agreement and induction.

19.2 The file will be stored securely and will only be accessible to named staff involved with the support of volunteers. Volunteers will have the right to view any information held in their file.

19.3 Information will be kept confidentially and in accordance with GDPR legislation.

#### **20. Complaints and problems**

20.1 Volunteers will be encouraged to discuss issues informally to facilitate a speedy resolution of any problems. Volunteers will be referred to Skylight Circus Arts's Complaints Procedure, as per staff members.

## **21. Consultation and Review**

21.1 Skylight Circus Arts will regularly review and update its policies, practice and procedures regarding volunteers. The views of volunteers will be sought as part of this process.

## **22. Volunteers and Benefits.**

22.1 Skylight Circus Arts acknowledges that volunteering will not adversely affect people in receipt of benefits provided they are honest and direct with benefits agencies. However, detailed rules and regulations govern this area and it is beyond the remit of this policy to address this in detail. Consequently, when volunteers in receipt of benefits join the organisation, we will advise them to seek specific guidance.

22.2 Skylight Circus Arts cannot offer advice on welfare benefits to potential volunteers. It is the responsibility of potential volunteers to enquire with the relevant benefits service as to how volunteering may affect them financially.

## **23. Media Produced**

23.1 All media and PR information produced must be passed by the Creative Director or named member of staff prior to broadcast or mailing.

23.2 Media produced is the property of Skylight Circus Arts and/or project funders or commissioners.

23.3 Volunteers may use media they've contributed to for showreel/job seeking purposes.

23.4 Volunteers are required to sign the image/audio release form prior to inclusion in media.

## **24. Health and Safety**

24.1 Skylight Circus Arts reserve the right to refuse access to volunteers under the influence of alcohol or substance misuse.

24.2 On induction, volunteers will be instructed on health and safety procedures.

24.3 We encourage volunteers to state any medical or special needs which may affect their volunteering. Skylight Circus Arts will work with the volunteer to find solutions to special requirements.



