Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Guide

Volunteering VICTORIA

Creating written policies and procedures is good practice for volunteer-involving organisations. They provide clarity about the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of volunteers.

Make policies work for you

Volunteer groups and organisations of any size can benefit from writing down their policies and procedures. Such documents do not need to be long or cover every aspect of what you do. Rather, for key issues, think about:

- » your general approach to the issue
- » who the issue specifically affects
- » who is responsible for dealing with it
- » what steps should be followed

Where possible, use clear plain language without abbreviations or other terms that people may not be familiar with.

Provide clear information

Policies and procedures provide clear guidance on the expectations of an organisation. Make sure volunteers are made aware of the policies which affect them, preferably when they start volunteering or are inducted into the organisation. Ensure that they feel comfortable clarifying any questions they might have, asking for further support (e.g. training) and providing feedback about the policies. These are 'living' documents that rely on the input of the people that they affect to remain useful and relevant.

By highlighting your policies and procedures, you make volunteers aware of them. This shows that your organisation has thought through its response to issues that affect them and their work.

If things go wrong, you will have an agreed starting point to resolve issues in everyone's best interest.

Policies and procedures work together

A policy states what is required. It is a document that outlines an organisation's clear expectations with respect to standards of behaviour and performance. It provides clear guidelines and boundaries.

A procedure states how by providing detailed information on the process that employees and volunteers can refer to when a certain situation arises.

Determine which policies

Policies and procedures govern the 'why' and 'how' for activities in your organisation. They provide a standard for everyone to follow and give information on key areas. They are also an important part of risk management and can provide a basis for performance management processes. The policies and procedures required for your organisation depend on the types of programs and services you deliver.

We have provided many helpful guides on our website, such as:

»	The principles of volunteering	»	Sexual harassment
»	Recruiting volunteers	»	Protecting privacy for volunteers
»	Volunteer screening	»	Confidentiality and intellectual property
»	Orientation for new volunteers	»	Insurance and liability
»	Managing volunteers for retention	»	Health and safety
»	Dealing with conflict		

Your organisation could consider implementing policies and procedures on the following topics to guide workplace operations, interactions, and behaviour. You may also require other policies for issues specific to your operations.

Some questions or prompts are provided as a starting point only:

» **Rights and Responsibilities**
Organisational and volunteer rights and responsibilities

» **Insurance**
What is and is not covered under insurance?

» **Dress Code**
What dress code is expected?

» **Intellectual Property**
Do volunteers give over rights to their intellectual property?

» **Recruitment and Selection**
Note if volunteers will be engaging with vulnerable people

» **Volunteer Agreement**
Is there a standard volunteer agreement?

» **Induction and Onboarding**
What induction is provided for new volunteers?

» **Training and Support**
What training is provided to volunteers?

» **Wellbeing**
Do volunteers have access to counselling?

» **Supervision and Peer Support**
Mechanisms to network and debrief with others?

» **Coaching and Mentoring**
Is mentoring or coaching provided?

» **Security**
How are volunteers protected?

» **Incident and Injury Reporting**
What incidents need to be reported? How are they reported?

» **Reimbursement**
What out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed?

» **Media and Communications**
Media interviews and use of social media

» **Use of Private Motor Vehicle**
Is comprehensive car insurance needed? Cover for any accidents?

» **Records Management**
Are volunteers reporting or archiving? How are personal records stored?

Best practice

Australian best practices in volunteer management have developed over time. This is exemplified in the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, a best practice framework to guide volunteer involvement. The National Standards can be used flexibly, recognising that volunteering takes place in highly diverse settings and ways.

Further information

As Victoria's peak body for volunteering, you can always come to us for reliable resources and advice.

Below are some helpful links and resources to continue your understanding of *Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures*.

» The Volunteering Victoria website is your go-to resource for all things volunteering, with timely and reliable support, training, resources, and expert advice.

Can't find what you're looking for?

Contact the Volunteering Victoria team at info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au anytime with your questions.

Volunteering Victoria website

Guides for
Leading Volunteers

National Standards for
Volunteer Involvement

Training & Workshops
*(Some offered **free of charge**)*

National Knowledge Base for
Volunteer Managers

National Knowledge Base:
Developing Policies and
Procedures

Governance Journeys
(Volunteering Queensland)