



# Volunteer Policy

Document number: PO2021-049

## Approval

|               |  |             |            |
|---------------|--|-------------|------------|
| Policy owner  | Executive Director, Membership, Volunteers & Regional Operations |             |            |
| Approved by   | Executive Leadership Team<br>State Council                       |             |            |
| Date approved | 30.06.2021<br>30.10.2021   | Review date | 30.10.2023 |

## Purpose

1. Volunteers are core to the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (the Society), numbering more than 9,000 across the state at the time of the creation of this policy. Vinnies volunteers work alongside our members to help to drive our mission, offering a 'hand up' to people in need and ensuring the continued smooth running of the Society and its good works. The Society seeks to ensure that the volunteers feel supported and find their experience with us fulfilling and meaningful.
2. This policy defines:
  - the Society's responsibilities and accountabilities to volunteers, including student placements
  - the rights and responsibilities of our volunteers; and
  - reimbursements for volunteers.

## Scope

3. This policy applies to all volunteers who volunteer their services to the Society, and Society members and employees who manage and supervise volunteers.
4. A volunteer is a person who gives their time and energy, without financial benefit, to assist the Society to support those in need. Our volunteers include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - corporate volunteers
  - high school students
  - community fundraisers
  - volunteers in administration
  - youth program volunteers
  - Vinnies shops and warehouse volunteers
  - Vinnies Services volunteers
  - court order volunteers (Community Service Orders and Work Development Orders)
  - Mutual Obligation and Work for the Dole volunteers
  - Volunteers in Vinnies support centres
  - student placements or work experience volunteers through high school or an educational institution such as TAFE NSW.
5. This policy does not apply to member and employee roles. However, there are times that Society members and employees do undertake specific volunteer roles and this policy does apply in those instances.<sup>1</sup>

## Related policies and procedures

6. Related Policies and procedures include:
  - Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
  - Code of Conduct

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<sup>1</sup> The policy applies when members and/or staff undertake a clearly defined and pre-agreed volunteer role, with a position or role description and a volunteer manager or supervisor assigning the role for a set amount of time. For example, staff volunteering at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout or members volunteering in a Vinnies Shop.

- Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Internal Grievance Policy
- Police Check and Working with Children Check Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Travel Policy
- Vinnies Shop Operational Manual
- Work Health and Safety Policy.

## Policy principles

7. The Society values the contributions of volunteers to enhancing its Mission and Vision in providing services and activities to the people we assist as well as helping the Society to raise much needed funds.

### Recruitment

8. The Society will recruit and select volunteers who are suitable, motivated, and appropriately skilled for the volunteer role, relevant event, or activity.
9. Volunteers will be over 18 years of age. In certain activities and student placements, volunteers under 18 may be accepted but will require parental or carer written consent before they can volunteer, and appropriate supervision must be provided.
10. New volunteers in ongoing roles will be subject to a probationary period of six months.
11. Volunteers are expected to declare any conflict of interest regarding their engagement with the Society, their role or work undertaken.

### Background checks

12. All volunteers 18 years and over are required to have a Working with Children Check and complete a Police Check in accordance with the Police Check and Working with Children Check Policy. An exemption from a Working with Children Check can be sought prior to commencement, in limited circumstances, and only in roles where a Working with Children Check is not required under legislation. For more information, see the Police Check and Working with Children Check Policy.
13. Volunteers are required to provide two referees who can provide them with a verbal reference, if required, and fill out a Health Declaration form, prior to commencing with the Society.

### Engagement

14. All volunteers will be engaged and carry out duties assigned to them, in line with the advertised role, position description and at the discretion of the Society.
15. Volunteer contributions of time will vary depending on the duties. Best practice indicates that volunteers should not exceed 16 hours per week, unless they are completing a student placement. Volunteers at The St Vincent de Paul Society may undertake more than 16 hours per week with the understanding and approval of their volunteer manager.
16. Volunteers are expected to give a minimum of two weeks' notice when they propose to cease their volunteer activities with the Society.

17. The Society may end a placement due to a breach of the agreement, unexplained absence, or breach of the Society's Code of Conduct or at their discretion.

### Adherence to Society Policies and Procedures

18. Volunteers are afforded support and protection under the Society's organisational policies which apply to them and will be provided with access to these policies.
19. Volunteers will comply with all organisation policies and procedures which apply to them, including the Code of Conduct.
20. Volunteers will complete induction training and other relevant training required for their role, including Code of Conduct and Child Safe Familiarisation.
21. Volunteers under 18 years of age are required to obtain parent or guardian consent to complete the training.

### Student placements

22. Volunteers on student placements will be provided with a documented workplan that supports the organisation and the course learning requirements. Students must not be placed in situations with unsupervised contact with the people we assist, and student groups will not be provided with tours of services or facilities within a service that provides accommodation to the people we assist irrespective of whether they are in use.

### Assigning duties

23. In assigning duties, the Society will, as far as practicable, consider a volunteer's skills, experience, and interests. The Society will wherever possible, provide meaningful work and well-defined tasks and timeframes for completion.
24. Volunteers will be assigned to a Manager or Supervisor who will be responsible for inducting the volunteer to the Society and to their specific role, regular supervision, and support.
25. Volunteers will be supported to become members if they so wish.
26. As a lay Catholic organisation, the Society will provide opportunities for the spiritual development of our volunteers.

### Insurance

27. Volunteers are covered by the Society's public liability and personal accident insurance whilst undertaking Society duties under the direction of a volunteer Manager or Supervisor.

### Grievance and complaints handling

28. Where there is a conflict involving volunteers in the workplace, or a volunteer has a grievance and it cannot be resolved directly with the parties involved, the Society will attempt to resolve the issue informally in the first instance. When it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally, refer to the Society's Internal Grievance Policy. Where a volunteer is under the age of 18 a parent/guardian must be present to support the student while the grievance is discussed.
29. Where a volunteer is the subject of a complaint made by a person or organisation that is external to the Society, the Society will attempt to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance. When it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, refer to the Society's Feedback and Complaints Policy.
30. The Society will maintain the personal details of its volunteers in a secure central database (e.g., Society People).

31. Volunteers may request a written statement of service or to act as a referee however, this will be at the discretion of the Manager or Supervisor.
32. Volunteers should not be placed into roles identified as being a paid employee position. A volunteer may be considered for a paid position in the Society by going through a formal recruitment process.
33. Where a volunteer's performance does not meet the Society's expectations, the supervisor or manager will advise the volunteer of what is expected in the role, and what measures or steps are to be taken to assist in meeting the expectations. Where the volunteer is unable to fulfill the requirements of the role, the Society will seek to find a more suitable role. Where a suitable role cannot be found, the volunteer may be released from their role.
34. A volunteer who breaches the Society's Code of Conduct and relevant policies and procedures to their role, may be subject to disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the breach, this may range from performance counselling, formal warnings, or performance management. Serious breaches may result in suspension, demotion or dismissal.
35. The Society reserves the right to end a volunteer's involvement at any time. This may include actions and behaviours related to bullying, discrimination, theft, or inappropriate relationships or a regular or sustained failure to meet performance expectations in the role.

### Volunteer reimbursement

36. Where the Supervisor or Manager has provided approval in advance, the Society will may reimburse out-of-pocket expenses incurred directly as a result of undertaking volunteer work.
37. The following out-of-pocket expenses may be approved:
  - vehicle kilometres for use of a private vehicle for Society work. The Society standard rate per kilometre will apply (refer to the Travel Policy for Society standard rate)
  - road toll charges incurred while undertaking Society work
  - public transport fares to and from the volunteer location
  - Society work telephone calls
  - meal expenses when away from home on Society work (equivalent to rates set out in the Travel Policy)
  - other expenses incurred as part of Society work.
38. Claims will be processed in accordance with the Travel Policy and the Expense Reimbursement Claim Form. The form can be found as an attachment to the Travel Policy and must be completed.

### Roles and responsibilities

39. The Executive Director or delegated Director is responsible for:
  - the development and maintenance of an annual workforce plan specifying the roles available for volunteers and the use of volunteer programs such as work for the dole, community service orders or intensive correction orders, work experience (school aged children), work placements (TAFE and University students) and internships
  - ensuring that volunteer Manager/ Supervisors are sufficiently skilled and resourced to meet their obligations and responsibilities to volunteers assigned to them and to manage and engage volunteers.
40. The Manager/Supervisor is responsible for:

- the day-to-day supervision and support of volunteers in their team
- recruitment, compulsory compliance checking, onsite induction, and training
- the retention and development of volunteers through variation in duties in current roles, informed of Good Works opportunities throughout the Society, including pathways to membership
- approve claims from volunteers for reimbursement of expenses on a pre-approval basis subject to their delegated authority.

41. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for:

- support for volunteer Managers/Supervisors in their engagement with volunteers
- support in recruiting, onboarding or rostering as appropriate.

42. The volunteer is responsible for:

- following the directions of the volunteer manager or their delegate
- meeting the expectations of the Society in carrying out the duties assigned to them and as outlined in their position description
- complying with the Society's Code of Conduct and other policies relevant to their work
- undertaking compulsory training as directed.

## Review

43. This Policy and its implementation will be reviewed every two years, as required to align with legislative or practice changes.

## Further assistance

44. Society Personnel should speak with their manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this Policy.

45. Feedback regarding the implementation of this Policy can be provided to the Executive Director, Membership, Volunteers and Regional Operations.

## References

46. List all relevant legislation, regulations or other instruments implemented by this policy.
- The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, Volunteering Australia 2015
  - The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2102 (Cth)

## Approval and amendment history

| Version                 | Approval authority   | Date                               | Amendment summary   |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Doc #                   | State Council        | 21 August 2014                     | NA  |
| Doc #<br>PO2021-<br>049 | ELT<br>State Council | 30 June 2021<br>30 October<br>2021 | Policy redrafted to align with related policies and include volunteer reimbursement<br><br>Replaces Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Reimbursement Policy |

## Appendix 1: Definitions

47. Relevant definitions include:

| Term in Bold                        | Definition  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Volunteer</b>                    | <p>A volunteer is a person who gives their time and energy, without financial benefit, to assist the Society to support those in need. A list of the most common volunteer roles/types across the Society is available at point 4 in this document.</p> <p>This policy does not apply to member and employee roles. However, there are times that Society members and employees do undertake specific volunteer roles and this policy does apply in those instances (see footnote 1).</p> |
| <b>Member</b>                       | <p>A person who belongs to a Conference and performs vocational unpaid work for the Society. The term Member includes Conference and Associate members per The Rule. Members are also known as Vincentians.</p>   |
| <b>Volunteer Manager/Supervisor</b> | <p>A person that a volunteer reports to, and who provides guidance, instruction, and support on the role of and performance of duties by the volunteer. This could be a team leader, supervisor, coordinator, manager, or president.</p>  |
| <b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>        | <p>Provides support and coordination to the volunteer managers with recruitment and onboarding and where appropriate rostering for volunteers.</p>  |