



Volunteer Policy

Policy Name:	Volunteer Policy	Date Reviewed:	Written 12/07/2023
Written By (Name & Role):	Charlie Berrow	Next Review Date:	12/07/2024
Version:	VP001.0	Reasons for update:	New Policy

Revision History

Revision No	Effective Date	Notes
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Associated Policies

Policy Name	Association Type
Aims & Ethos	5
Equality Policy	1
Privacy Policy	3
Whistleblowing Policy	1
Safeguarding Policy	3

Notes

An associated policy is defined as meeting one or more of the following criteria:

1. It is referred to by this policy
2. It refers to this policy
3. It covers a specific topic referred to by this policy
4. It covers a topic/procedural area that may be relevant to aspects of this policy
5. It has aspects that overlap and/or should be considered in conjunction with a topic/procedural area covered by this policy

Each criterion that this policy satisfies is shown in the table above.

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1 - Introduction to HARE

HARE Forest School CIC is a Community Interest Company with the purpose of improving the mental and emotional well-being of children and families in and around the Forest of Dean, through connection with the natural world and building community. We run Forest School sessions incorporating traditional crafts, bushcraft, yoga and mindfulness.

2 - Working at HARE

HARE aims to create a caring and collaborative work environment where employees, volunteers and participants feel safe, fully supported and not judged. Our values are based on improving emotional well-being and creating and restoring community as well as nurturing individuals. This extends to those working and volunteering with us.

3 - Why we involve volunteers

- To increase our engagement with the local community we serve.
- To benefit from the skills and perspectives volunteers bring with them.
- To offer our volunteers an environment where they can gain new skills and experiences, while feeling they are making a difference within a supportive team.
- To ensure that our services meet the needs of the children and families we aim to support.

We consider a volunteer to be somebody who gives their services, time, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm willingly and without pay; at times and fulfilling roles of their own choosing.

HARE Forest School undertakes to observe the following principles in relation to its own volunteers:

4 - Recruitment

- Volunteers will be asked to complete a Volunteer Registration Form.
- HARE will provide clear and accurate information regarding the nature of the volunteering opportunity.
- HARE will aim to support all prospective volunteers to overcome barriers that may make it difficult for them to volunteer with us
- HARE will aim to identify worthwhile and satisfying opportunities for volunteers and will adapt any opportunity to embrace the needs or skills of a particular volunteer wherever possible.
- HARE will operate its Equality Policy at all times in relation to both recruitment and ongoing support of volunteers.
- HARE volunteers will not be introduced to replace paid staff.
- HARE take up references where appropriate.
- For volunteers under the age of 18 we will undertake a detailed risk assessment and put suitable procedures in place to manage the risks identified and to ensure a positive and enjoyable volunteering experience is achieved.

5 - Induction and Agreements

- All volunteers will be made welcome by HARE staff.
- All volunteers will receive a structured induction period to familiarise them with HARE's work in general and their own area of work in particular. Training will be offered where it helps them fulfil their role more effectively and as funds permit.
- HARE will provide all volunteers with a Volunteer Agreement. This will be signed by the volunteer and the HARE team member with designated responsibility for them. The agreement will include a Statement of Mutual Understanding on the principles, policies and practice of the organisation, a task description outlining the tasks the volunteer will be undertaking and a confidentiality clause confirming the importance of maintaining confidentiality.
- Copies of appropriate policies and procedures will be made available to the volunteer and clear explanations on each aspect of the Volunteer Agreement will be given.
- Government guidelines will be followed to ensure DBS Checks are carried out for Volunteers where necessary. The need for a DBS Check will be determined by DBS Eligibility Guidelines (to be found at www.gov.uk). Volunteers would need a DBS Check to be carried out when working on a regular basis with Children. DBS is not generally deemed necessary for 'one off' activity.

6- Expenses

- Volunteers' approved out-of-pocket expenses will be met by HARE. Travel expenses will be met either by reimbursement of public transport fares or by a mileage allowance (payable at an agreed rate).

7 - Support and Supervision

- All volunteers will receive regular support and supervision from a named member of staff who will listen and respond to the individual volunteer's comments and needs and aim to help them overcome any obstacles they may encounter. Formal supervision should occur no later than every 6 months.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to participate in training where it will help them fulfil their role more effectively and will support their personal development.
- HARE will ensure that volunteers are made aware of health and safety procedures and requirements, and will, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide a safe environment for all volunteers.
- HARE will ensure that it has insurance cover for volunteers while they are on the premises or engaged in HARE's work.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to express their views on matters concerning the organisation. Their opinion will be sought concerning any changes or developments which may affect them.
- Where a volunteer has an allegation about another volunteer or member of staff, they should do so in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.
- Should a volunteer have a complaint about a service that HARE provides, they should report this in accordance with our complaints policy.
- HARE will supply a reference for any volunteer seeking other voluntary work or paid employment.
- All volunteers will be introduced to staff members and to visitors to HARE, made to feel welcome, valued for what they offer and thanked for the contribution they make to the organisation.

8 - Confidentiality

- HARE will respect the confidentiality of any volunteers who help provide its services and will not release any information about them without their agreement.

This policy was adopted by: HARE Forest School CIC	Date: 12/07/2023
To be reviewed: 12/07/2024	Signed: C.Berrow