

## Camara's Volunteer Policy

### Camara Volunteers:

Camara recognises that in order to achieve our goals we need to involve volunteers. We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities. We aim to train, support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

### Camara Volunteers can expect:

- To be valued as an individual
- To be respected and valued for their individual knowledge and skills
- To have support, feedback, encouragement and appreciation
- To have opportunities to develop skills
- To work in a safe environment
- To have opportunities for training
- To have access to information about the organisation policies and ethos
- Camara to deal with disciplinary and grievance matters
- To volunteer in a friendly atmosphere

Conduct of all staff and volunteers shall be guided by integrity, discretion and dignity, and they shall expect and encourage such conduct by others.

### Camara expects Volunteers:

- To treat volunteers and staff with respect
- To carry out the tasks, as outlined in their placement description, to the best of their abilities.
- To be committed, reliable and punctual
- To ask for help or support when needed
- Follow and adhere to procedures and guidelines
- To refrain from public criticism of Camara, its work or its policies.

## Procedural guidelines

### 1. General Principals

**1.1** The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on volunteering with Camara. It can be used in conjunction and is supported by other Camara policies and documents.

These procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of Camara.

### 1.2 Responsibility

The Camara Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the policy and that the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers are expected to aid this process.

### **1.3 Recruitment**

Camara will consider all applications from those wishing to volunteer. Individuals must demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and will only be placed if their skills as volunteers match the needs of the organization and position they are applying for. No person with a conflict of interest will be accepted as a volunteer.

### **1.4 Relationship with paid staff**

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the ability of paid staff, not as a substitute for them. Equally, Camara will not accept the services of its paid staff as volunteers. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to create a complementary relationship.

### **1.5 Working conditions**

Volunteers are treated as members of the Camara Team. They are treated equally with paid staff and are included in the organisations functions and decision-making process wherever practical. Volunteers work alongside paid staff in appropriate work sites and have access to the space, equipment and facilities available to volunteer effectively.

Conditions in the workshop can be cold and dusty and workshop volunteers will need to dress appropriately, they are also asked to wear steel toe-cap shoes for health and safety purpose. Volunteers must not take bags into the workshop, but keep valuables on their person at all times. Camara cannot take responsibility for valuables lost or stolen. Volunteers are asked to complete an incident form should they cut or injure themselves in any way.

### **1.6 Working times**

Working times are negotiated at the start of the placement between the supervisor and the volunteer. They are as flexible as the tasks allow. As unscheduled absences can create organisational problems, volunteers should inform their supervisor as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

### **1.7 Confidentiality**

When individuals ask for assistance with given matters, we will first inform them before sharing their name or information about them with others.

Discussion of a volunteer or staff member's personal information will be conducted only when necessary and appropriate with other staff, and only on a strict need-to-know basis, and in utmost privacy. Information we have received of a personal nature will be disclosed to other parties or colleagues only when it is legally required or essential to the operation of Camara, and then on a strict need-to-know basis.

### **1.8 Database**

A database system is maintained on all volunteers. Information includes first and last name, home contact details and emergency contact details. Volunteer records are held in confidence but volunteers may request to see their own personal information file at any time. Personal information about staff, volunteers or any member of the Camara community including information in databases and hard copy files shall be kept secured and shall not be readily accessible to others.

### **1.9 Representation of Camara**

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Camara Education, Chapelizod Industrial Estate, Dublin 20, [www.camara.ie](http://www.camara.ie)

As representatives of the organisation, volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive image of Camara to the outside world. Volunteers must seek prior approval from Camara before undertaking anything that might affect the organisation.

### **1.10 Service at discretion of Camara**

All voluntary service is at the discretion of Camara. Camara may, at any time and for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteers relationship with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at anytime and for whatever reason decide to terminate their relationship with Camara. Notice should be communicated where possible and at the earliest occasion.

## **2. Recruitment**

### **2.1 Role descriptions and person specifications**

Volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake. A role description is available for each voluntary opportunity and is shared with volunteers before they start their placement. This will be used in subsequent management and evaluation processes. All voluntary roles should be reviewed and amended as appropriate by the Volunteer and Camara.

### **2.2 Applications**

Volunteers are continually recruited by the organisation using appropriate publicity. They may also come via volunteer placement services such as Volunteering Ireland. All volunteers are required to submit a CV and cover letter. Volunteer placements are made by interview and discussion with appropriate staff members, to match the applicant's skills, talents and interests with the needs of Camara. The interview should also be used as an opportunity to answer any questions the volunteer might have about the role.

### **2.3 Checks for suitability**

References may be contacted by a Camara representative either by phone or email. If the role requires it, Garda vetting checks may also be made. Volunteers will always be warned in advance of the intention to make these checks. If a volunteer refuses permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason they will not be placed.

### **2.4 Appointment**

In determining suitable placements for volunteers, equal attention must be given to the interests and goals of the volunteer and to the requirements of Camara and the position(s) in question. Appointment will be formalised after necessary checks have been established.

### **2.5 Probation**

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of one month. At the end of this period, the assigned Supervisor will meet with the volunteer to discuss the volunteer's suitability for their role. At this point, volunteers may continue in their current role, be reassigned to a more suitable role or be asked to leave.

## **3. Training**

### **3.1 Induction**

All volunteers receive an induction when they begin voluntary work with Camara. This

consists of general introductions to staff and other volunteers, a tour of the premises and health and safety orientation.

### **3.2 On the job training**

Volunteers are assigned a supervisor for the duration of their placement. The supervisor will provide them with the necessary information and skills they will need to carry out their role.

### **3.3 Additional training**

Volunteers are encouraged to identify training courses, seminars and conferences which would help them perform their roles and aid their personal development. Approval to undertake such training free of charge must be approved by Camara CEO and will only be done if funds are available. Priority will be given to long standing volunteers.

## **4. Supervision**

### **4.1 Line of communication**

Lines of communication should operate between Camara and Volunteers equally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information and will be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.

### **4.2 Supervisors**

Every volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for day-to-day support and direction and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. The supervisor is assigned at time of recruitment.

### **4.3 Dismissal**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the organisation's rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. Any volunteer will be given the chance to discuss the reasons for dismissal with appropriate Camara staff. Grounds for dismissal include but are not limited to, gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, theft, misuse or unsafe use of equipment, abuse of co-volunteers and staff, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide to Camara policies, failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

### **4.4 Concerns and grievances**

If volunteers are not satisfied with issues relating to their volunteering, they are entitled to present these concerns to management. These issues will be discussed and appropriate action will be taken, the Camara Directors have the ultimate decision.

### **4.5 Exit**

Where possible informal exit interviews will be held with any volunteer leaving the organisation. The interview is an opportunity to explore why the volunteer is leaving, their experience and any suggestions they can offer to improve the running of the organisation. Each volunteer is entitled to a personal reference when requested. Online feedback forms are sent out to volunteers on completion of a placement and constructive feedback is always welcome from Volunteers.

## **5. Support and recognition**

### **5.1 Support**

Camara endeavors to provide the necessary support to each Volunteer. Support is provided by supervisors to encourage, empower and allow the Volunteer be able to gain benefits from their voluntary work.

### **5.2 Recognition**

Volunteers contribute to an invaluable amount of the work being done in Camara, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Camara staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, such as International Volunteer Day and Christmas.

### **5.3 Breaks**

All volunteers are entitled to coffee and tea available to all staff and volunteers in the staff room.

### **5.4 Expenses.**

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, Camara will reimburse any out of pocket expenses they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. Procedures for claiming expenses are accomplished through the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **5.4 Insurance**

Insurance is provided by Camara, covering all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation. Further details of the policy are available upon request.

## **6. Health and Safety**

Camara adhere to all health and safety legislation to provide a healthy work environment, as far as is practicable, and in line with the company Health and Safety Statement which can be found on the Camara website. Employees and volunteers have responsibilities for their own safety and should be aware of these.