**Sample Code of Conduct for Volunteers**

**Introduction**

The most essential resource of any charity is its people. Volunteers play a particularly important part in executing the work of a charity. Charity trustees are responsible for providing leadership to volunteers. This includes supporting and valuing the contribution volunteers make to the aims and objectives of the charity as well as promoting standards of behaviour as outlined in this document.

Charity trustees should support volunteers in carrying out their duties and always, in terms of their conduct, serve as an example of how everyone in the charity should conduct themselves in order to reflect the values of the charity.

This document is intended to assist the board of charity trustees in developing a code of conduct for volunteers which provides guidelines on the standards of behaviour expected of them. It should be read in conjunction with:

* [Sample Code of Conduct for Employees;](https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1799/sample-code-of-conduct-for-employees.docx)
* [Sample Volunteer Recruitment Policy.](https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1802/sample-volunteer-recruitment-policy.docx)

This document does not contain an exhaustive description of matters (legal requirements or otherwise) which need to be addressed in the context of the relationship between a charitable organisation and its volunteers.

**What is a Code of Conduct for volunteers?**

A code of conduct for volunteers defines the **standards of behaviour** expected of volunteers in order to ensure that:

* the charity is effective, open and accountable;
* volunteers have productive and supportive relationships with each other and employees and other persons who interact with the charity.

The Code of Conduct for Volunteers should apply to all volunteers within the charity and should be shared with new volunteers as soon as they agree to take on a volunteering role in the organisation.

The board of charity trustees should review the Code of Conduct for Volunteers at 3-year intervals or as appropriate.

**Sample Code of Conduct for Volunteers**

This sample code of conduct for volunteers should be adapted for your charity by filling in the name of your charity where appropriate and customising as relevant. This sample code of conduct may need to be adapted in order to align with your charity’s other policies and procedures as appropriate. Likewise, your charity’s other policies and procedures may need to be aligned as appropriate with this sample code of conduct.

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| **[CHARITY NAME]**  **Code of Conduct for Volunteers** |

The purpose of the Code of Conduct for Volunteers is to set out standards of behaviour expected from volunteers of [insert Charity name]. All volunteers should ensure that they have read and comply with this Code of Conduct.

Volunteers should maintain the highest standards of behaviour in the performance of their duties by:

* Fulfilling their role as outlined in their written **volunteer role description** to a satisfactory standard;
* Performing their volunteer role to the best of their ability in a safe, efficient and competent way;
* Following the charity’s policies and procedures as well as any instructions or directions reasonably given to them;
* Acting honestly, responsibly and with integrity;
* Treating others with fairness, equality, dignity and respect;
* Raising concerns about possible wrongdoing witnessed by the volunteer in the course of the volunteer’s role with [insert Charity name] with [insert details/title of appropriate member of personnel];
* Meeting time and task commitments and providing sufficient notice when they will not be available so that alternative arrangements can be made;
* Acting in a way that is in line with the purpose and values of the charity and that enhances the work of the charity;
* Communicating respectfully and honestly at all times;
* Observing safety procedures, including any obligations concerning the safety, health and welfare of other people in line with training provided to volunteers;
* Reporting any health and safety concerns;
* Directing any questions regarding [insert Charity name]’s policies, procedures, support or supervision to the volunteer’s supervisor;
* Addressing any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their role or how they are managed in line with [insert Charity name]’s grievance procedures;
* Declaring any interests that may conflict with their role or the work of the charity (e.g. business interests or employment). If any doubt arises as to what constitutes a conflict of interest, volunteers may seek guidance from [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel];
* Keeping confidential matters confidential;
* Exercising caution and care with any documents, material or devices, containing confidential information and at the end of their involvement with [insert Charity name] returning any such documents, material in their possession;
* Seeking authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of [insert Charity name];
* Maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene;
* Disclosing the fact that they have been charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence by prosecuting authorities (or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended) to [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel].[[1]](#footnote-1) For the avoidance of doubt, volunteers are not required to disclose the fact or details of ‘spent convictions’ under the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended) to [insert Charity name].

Volunteers are expected NOT to:

* Bring the charity into disrepute (including through the use of email, social media and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.);
* Seek or accept any gifts, rewards, benefits or hospitality in the course of their role;
* Engage in any activity that may cause physical or mental harm or distress to another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, bullying, or discrimination or harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community);
* Be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medication which will affect their abilities to carry out their duties and responsibilities while volunteering;
* Provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, document, record or claim in respect of [insert Charity name], its volunteers, employees or charity trustees;
* Engage in any activity that may damage property;
* Take unauthorised possession of property that does not belong to them.
* Engage in illegal activity while carrying out their role.
* Improperly disclose, during or after their involvement with [charity name] ends, confidential information gained in the course of their role with [charity name].

Where a volunteer is found to be in breach of the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct or any of [insert Charity name]’s other policies and procedures this may result in the volunteer’s position being terminated. Notwithstanding the foregoing, volunteers should note that [insert Charity’s name] may terminate a volunteer’s position without cause.

Volunteers acknowledge that no employment relationship is created in the context of their role with [insert Charity name].

The board of charity trustees will review the Code of Conduct for Volunteers at [3]-year intervals or as appropriate. The [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel] is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively. All other staff and volunteers, including charity trustees, are expected to facilitate this process.

Signed . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Name . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Date . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

**Legal Disclaimer:**

This document is issued by the Charities Regulator under section 14(1)(i) of the Charities Act 2009, to encourage and facilitate the better administration and management of charitable organisations. It is published as part of a suite of guidance, intended to provide support to charity trustees to meet their legal duties, by putting in place systems, processes and policies which ensure charities are managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way.

This document is not, nor is it intended to be, a definitive statement of the law and it does not constitute legal advice. This document is not a substitute for professional advice from an appropriately qualified source. The Charities Regulator recommends that charity trustees consult their governing document or obtain their own independent legal advice where necessary. The Charities Regulator accepts no responsibility or liability for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions in this document.

1. In seeking information from volunteers about criminal convictions (or the fact that they have been charged with an offence or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 (as amended)) charities should comply with data protection law and be aware of the limitations on the circumstances in which it is possible to process such information (e.g. see section 55 of the Data Protection Act 2018).  It is also important that charities have due regard to the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended). If a charity has any doubt about its rights and responsibilities in this regard, it should obtain legal advice. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)