



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

As a volunteer you offer your time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain, helping to achieve EO's objectives or with the aim of providing a benefit to EO. The role of volunteers is very different from that of employees. There is no contract of employment or services between Education Otherwise and its volunteers. A person might decide to become a volunteer to gain new skills and experience, to put existing skills to use and to work for the benefit of Education Otherwise and the home education community. This policy provides EO with a framework of best practice and procedures for the appointment, management and support of volunteers. A copy of this document is available on the internet and will be provided to all volunteers during the induction process.

1. Purpose of the policy

This policy:

- demonstrates our commitment to volunteers;
- ensures fairness and consistency;
- ensures that decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis, and that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly;
- clarifies the relationship between volunteers and Education Otherwise at all levels;
- ensures that volunteers have a clear role and a list of responsibilities and tasks to work to, and that they receive appropriate support, supervision, training and development to help them carry out their tasks; and
- ensures non-exploitative use of volunteers in a supportive environment.

As a volunteer you bring substantial benefits to EO by bringing skills to the organisation and through the provision of additional human resources to particular services. EO recognises and appreciates the major contribution that you can make to our work. In return, EO can offer you a rewarding experience by providing opportunities to:

- meet new challenges;
- make a significant contribution to helping home educators; and
- develop skills and experience.

Volunteering should be a worthwhile and rewarding experience for you.

2. The status of volunteers

- There is a six-month trial period at the start of your work with EO. At the end of this period, EO and you will discuss whether you both wish to proceed with the volunteering arrangement;

- EO would hope that the arrangement of volunteering carries on as long as it is mutually agreeable for you and EO but there are no time limits set on this relationship;
- Contribution towards expenses does not constitute any form of contract;
- We acknowledge that personal circumstances change and so you may resign at any time. We appreciate as much notice as possible;
- EO reserves the right to end your volunteer contribution. The reason for this will be given to you in writing stating options available to you and helping you in identifying and resolving any problems or offering you alternative volunteer roles. EO has the right to end the volunteer relationship without notice at any time without prejudice;
- You do not have the legal obligations or the employment rights of employees;
- The terms and conditions of employment relating to salaried staff will not apply to you.

3. Principles

- EO will make information available for you to help you to claim any reasonable expenses;
- EO will consult and involve you on issues concerning your volunteering activity;
- EO will offer training and support for you, in relation to your tasks;
- There is an expectation that Education Otherwise volunteers will not bring the organisation into disrepute. If volunteers are not able to act responsibly, Education Otherwise will cease the volunteer agreement;
- We expect you to adhere to our policies and Code of Conduct and to support EO's aims and objectives;
- Applicants for volunteer posts within Education Otherwise must declare current membership of any other national home education organisation or association, involvement with any Local Authority, or other conflict of interest, at the time of applying for the post. This is in order that the Trustees may determine any potential conflict of interest. After their appointment or election, EO postholders have an ongoing duty to report any potential conflict of interest to the Trustees as appropriate;
- Applicants for volunteer posts with Education Otherwise need to be over the age of 18.

4. Volunteer management and support

In due course, you will have a named line manager who shall be responsible for:

- providing you with a written description of your role, outlining responsibilities and who you report to;
- organising a planned induction to the organisation, including explaining relevant policies and procedures and agreed duties and tasks;
- facilitating ongoing, open, two-way communication between you and helping you in identifying and resolving any obstacles you may encounter;
- providing regular support and review of your role and activities.

In order to ensure that you are adequately supported at all times, you are generally expected to be contactable by your EO line manager or a person to whom s/he has temporarily delegated the role. Your line manager is responsible for ensuring that unreasonable requests are not made of you and there is no pressure to extend your role beyond the terms of your role description. Your line manager should be your main contact for all volunteer related matters, and will keep you informed of any changes or prospective changes to EO's policy and procedures that will affect your voluntary role.

5. Role Description and Volunteer agreement

- We will record the arrangements for your volunteering activities in a job description;
- The volunteer agreement is not a contract of employment. We do however require that you sign the agreement as indication of your acceptance of the policies and procedures you are subject to at EO.

6. Conduct and performance

- You are subject to EO's Code of Conduct and should therefore familiarise yourself with it;
- You should raise any complaints or concerns with a trustee. If this is not appropriate or any complaint is not dealt with sufficiently, you should take your complaint to the Complaints Group.

7. Leaving

- If you wish to withdraw from your voluntary role you are asked to give as much notice as possible to a trustee or the Administrator. EO would appreciate at least four weeks' notice of you leaving your role but recognises your right to withdraw at any time without prejudice. You will be offered an opportunity to discuss your reasons for leaving your voluntary role at EO;

8. Training

EO aims to provide training to enable you to effectively carry out your activities on behalf of EO. This training will directly relate to the activity for which you volunteer. The training provision generally available to you will be in the nature of on-the-job instruction, and support from the trustees or your line manager or other volunteers. EO may, on occasion, require you to attend training considered necessary for your voluntary role.

9. Disclosure of convictions

Having a criminal record will not be a bar to volunteering with EO unless the Trustees consider that a conviction means that the applicant is unsuitable for the volunteering role. Under the requirements of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and any other relevant legislation we may need to ask volunteers to disclose any 'unspent' convictions.

10.Expenses

Education Otherwise refunds reasonable out-of-pocket expenses to volunteers. If you wish to claim expenses you must complete an Expenses Claim Form, have it authorised by the trustees or your line manager and attach corresponding receipts and/or travel ticket or other evidence of expenditure. You are not eligible for a loan for any purpose from EO.

11.Copyright

All records in any medium (whether written, computer readable or otherwise) including emails, letters, accounts, documents, drawings, photos, videos, any equipment and services, such as filing cabinets, storage boxes, passwords etc and any data about Education Otherwise, trustees, beneficiaries, postholders, members and its activities. All backups, copies and extracts of them made or acquired by you from EO in the course of your volunteering activity shall be:

- EO's property;
- used for EO purposes only;
- returned to EO on demand at any time;
- returned to EO without demand if you cease for more than one month to be actively involved with EO's work.

12.Monitoring and Review

It will be the responsibility of the EO trustees or a person appointed by them to regularly review the operation of this Volunteer Policy and to make sure that it is always in accordance with current volunteering best practice.