



YMCA Volunteer Policy

Introduction:

Thank you for volunteering for the Milton Keynes YMCA.

The YMCA is a Christian Charity that offers young people opportunities to develop in mind, body and spirit. Our vision is of an inclusive Christian Movement, transforming communities so that all young people truly belong, contribute and thrive.

Volunteers are very important to us as they help to fulfil our aim of creating opportunities for young people to develop and build bridges between ourselves and the local community. The YMCA recognises the immense advantage that volunteers bring as they uniquely contribute with their wide range of skills and fresh perspectives which add to those of staff. Furthermore, individuals who are motivated and willing to spend their free time for the benefit of other people boost morale and significantly increase the work capacity of the Organisation.

In return, the YMCA hopes to give its volunteers a chance to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences. The YMCA tries to offer a range of volunteering possibilities and, in accordance with our equal opportunities and diversity policies, to ensure that the opportunity to volunteer is widely available.

Diversity and Equality

Our Organisation is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We believe that we have a great deal to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives. We are dedicated to expanding and upholding an organisation wherein different ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are cultivated and encouraged to enable people with diverse backgrounds and experiences to participate and contribute. We will regularly assess and monitor our progress towards diversity.

The YMCA is committed to a policy of treating all volunteers and volunteer applicants equally and fairly. No volunteer or potential volunteer will receive less favourable treatment or consideration on the grounds of race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability, marital status or age. Nor will they be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. The YMCA will accept a volunteer for a particular role on the basis of merit, the only selection criterion being the individual's suitability to do the specified task subject to the needs of the Charity and the restrictions of the location.

Volunteer Status

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the Organisation. Volunteers will not be used by the Organisation to replace paid staff.

A role will be agreed between yourself (the volunteer) and the Organisation with the expectation that you will meet the role's requirements and that the Organisation will provide work. However, you are free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Organisation is not bound to provide the work.

Time Commitment

You may give as much or as little time as you wish. When you start, please let us know how much time you can give per week or month, on which days and, if known, the length of time you intend to volunteer for. In addition, please inform your supervisor, of holidays as soon as possible, so that cover can be arranged if required. Knowing when you are available will enable your supervisor to plan your tasks effectively.

You may cease your involvement at any time. If you are unable to continue volunteering, please let us know, and provide us with as much warning as you can. Similarly, we will tell you as soon as possible if we can no longer make good use of your skills and time.

Pre-Volunteering Requirements

You will be required to provide references and undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before your volunteering commences.

You will be asked for the name, address and phone number of a friend or relative who can be contacted in the unlikely event of an accident or illness. Please ensure that your emergency contact has given you permission for their details to be kept on record for this purpose for the duration of your volunteering.

Induction

You will be introduced to the members of the team on your first day and assigned a supervisor who will be responsible for overseeing the activities and projects you are involved in. In the first meeting with your supervisor you will have the chance to talk over this policy and ask any questions about the content if necessary. You will also be shown the location of the toilets, fire exits, first aid box and refreshment/lunch area.

A settling-in period is recommended to ensure you are comfortable volunteering with us and happy with the tasks you are doing as part of your role within the Organisation. If for any reason you are unhappy whilst you are volunteering, please draw this to the attention of your supervisor.

Supervision and Support

Your supervisor is your first point of contact if you have any problems or require any advice. You will be given full instructions on how to carry out all tasks so that you know what is expected of you. Specific training will be offered where the Organisation deems it to be appropriate.

You will be required to meet with your supervisor for regular meetings, [on a weekly basis] during which you will have the opportunity to discuss any issues or ask any questions concerning your volunteering. Your activities will also be reviewed and altered if necessary. It is important that you feel that your time is being used properly and effectively and we want you to feel part of the team.

Grievance and Disciplinary problems

Your supervisor will normally try to solve any problems informally, but if this is not possible the formal complaints system will come into operation.

If you wish to make a formal complaint you should put the complaint in writing to your supervisor. If it is not possible to reach a solution you may then raise the matter with your supervisor's manager.

If a complaint is made about you, you will be notified in writing and your supervisor will decide whether any action should be taken. If you are dissatisfied with the decision you may raise it with your supervisor's manager.

Expenses

The Organisation recognises that volunteers often acquire expenses and, in order that this does not prevent or discourage involvement in any way, you are entitled to be reimbursed for the actual costs that you incur during your time volunteering. Reimbursement will only be awarded if a valid receipt is supplied as proof of purchase and is restricted to a reasonable amount, [maximum of £5.00] in accordance with the Organisation's expenses policy. All claims should be approved by your supervisor. Volunteers can have their expenses reimbursed in cash.

Expenses that you can claim for include travel to and from YMCA and meals taken whilst volunteering (e.g. lunch). [also see Volunteer Agreement]

If required, the cost of petrol should be claimed at the current agreed rate, whilst public transport costs and car parking fees should be met in full. It should be noted that should you incur any fines for driving offences during the time that you volunteer for us, that the Organisation will refuse to accept any liability and that you will be responsible for settling such fines yourself.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality during their time with the Organisation. Confidentiality protects the disclosure of personal details concerning members of the YMCA. This applies whether the information is received directly or indirectly, deliberately or accidentally, verbally or in writing.

Confidentiality Policy should be signed.

Data Protection Act

Any information we keep is based on what you supply when you first become a YMCA volunteer. Please inform your supervisor if there are any changes to your own or your emergency contact's details. The Organisation is registered under data protection legislation and guarantee that your personal details will be treated confidentially. If you require a copy of the information that we hold, your supervisor will be able to arrange this.

Health and Safety

The same Health and Safety regulations apply to volunteers when on YMCA premises as apply to staff. Copies of the YMCA's Health and Safety policy can be requested from your supervisor if you so wish.

YMCA's general duty is to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment and to provide appropriate instruction, training and supervision for your health and safety.

As a volunteer, you also have a general duty of care.

You should always:

- ensure that your own actions do not jeopardise the safety of yourself or others
- report to your supervisor anything that could be detrimental to the safety or health of yourself or others
- co-operate with your supervisor
- report any defects which you find

Insurance

YMCA volunteers are covered by Public Liability Insurance. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

Please speak to your supervisor if you have any queries regarding insurance protection.

Your Partnership with YMCA

YMCA endeavours to:

- value and support volunteers
- provide an appropriate induction process
- offer training and development opportunities
- meet with health and safety requirements
- provide rewarding and meaningful volunteer activities
- reimburse agreed expenses
- give regular feedback on performance
- ensure volunteers are kept informed
- encourage employee volunteering

Your contribution as a volunteer is to:

- make a genuine commitment
- be reliable and trustworthy
- meet the YMCA's standards
- promote the aims and values of the charity
- respect confidentiality
- uphold health and safety requirements
- inform your supervisor if you are unable to attend
- be a team player
- undertake appropriate training if required

The YMCA will:

- set standards for the task to be done
- seek commitment and reliability
- set up systems that allow you to voice any concerns you have about your role and for us to do the same
- require tasks and activities to be done in a consistent manner
- decline offers from volunteers who would not be appropriate or do not match YMCA's current needs
- review arrangements where problems occur
- expect the aims and values of the YMCA to be supported

As a YMCA volunteer, you can expect to:

- be thanked and appreciated for your efforts
- have the information you need to carry out your role
- know what is expected and the standards required of you
- receive appropriate training
- have a safe working environment
- feel able to voice any concerns you may have
- be part of the Organisation
- know who to go to with a problem
- be free from discrimination
- have agreed expenses met without problems