

Volunteer Policy

**Policy reviewed: January 2021**

**Next Review date: January 2023**

**Policy Owner: Ignite CEO**

This policy has been implemented and reviewed:

Date: 31st January 2021

By: Luisa Golob, Ignite CEO

**Aims of the policy**

* Volunteers at Ignite Imaginations know what to expect
* All staff know why and how volunteers are involved
* Volunteers are treated in accordance with the organisation’s policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
* There is a clear policy for dealing with questions or issues.

Introduction

* Volunteers are essential to the delivery of our services and are encouraged to take positions of responsibility backed-up by appropriate levels of supervision
* We value the skills and time that volunteers bring to the organisation and aim to provide a fun and supportive environment to work and share skills.
* Volunteers gain valuable experience by being given the chance to try new roles and develop new skills.
* By encouraging volunteers from all the communities we serve, we can increase the participation of these communities and contribute to understanding between different groups.

# Principles

Ignite Imaginations;

* Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation’s structure and that mechanisms will be in place for them to contribute to our work.
* Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and will actively seek to involve them in their work.
* Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal and professional development and will seek to help volunteers meet their needs e.g. through training, networking and social opportunities.
* Recognises volunteers support the work of paid staff to enhance what Ignite Imaginations delivers. Volunteers do not replace paid staff.

## Practicalities

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of the involvement of volunteers.

Reach;

* Ignite will publicise any specific or general volunteering opportunities via our website and communications channels, local volunteering services such as Voluntary Action Sheffield and University volunteering, or via partners. We aim to reach as widely as possible to reach as diverse a group of prospective volunteers as possible.
* Volunteers will be required to fill in a Personal Profile, an Equal Opportunities monitoring form, and provide us with two references. A discussion with the volunteer will always take place before any decision will be made regarding any information that is disclosed.
* All prospective volunteers will be invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss: what they would like to do; their skills; potential for development; and, whether they are suitable for the roles we offer.
* At the end of this meeting a decision will be made as to whether a volunteering role can be offered.
* We employ an Equality and Diversity Policy and are keen to reach a diverse range of volunteers from across the city.
* We welcome applications from volunteers with additional needs and will make reasonable accommodations to support the additional needs of volunteers wherever possible.
* If we do not have a suitable volunteering role available for any applicant, we will discuss with them other ways they might get involved with the organisation or signpost them to other agencies that might be able to help

Induction and Training

Ignite Imaginations aims to contribute positively to the personal and professional development of all its volunteers through training, networking and social opportunities.

All volunteers will receive an induction into Ignite Imaginations, which covers Safeguarding, Health and Safety, how to claim expenses and what expectations both parties have. The volunteers will complete a checklist at the end of the training, confirming that they will abide by these guidelines.

## Volunteer Agreement and Website

Each volunteer will sign the Volunteer Agreement outlining what they can expect from Ignite and what they agree to (this document is not a contract). Each volunteer will also be given access to the volunteer area of the website where they can access information about opportunities and policies relevant to volunteering with us.

## Younger Volunteers (Volunteers under 18)

We encourage younger people to volunteer with Ignite Imaginations. Recognising that people under 18 may need extra support in their role, we will offer younger volunteers extra support where needed e.g. a more experienced volunteer as a mentor. We will always obtain parent/carer consent for volunteers under age 18, and the volunteer will also fall under the guidance of our safeguarding policy.

Support

The Administrator will be the main point of contact for all volunteers

Volunteers will be offered a supervision every 3 months where they will be encouraged to discuss their individual progress, personal and professional development and air any concerns.

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage using our Problem-Solving Procedure.

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Ignite Imaginations and its work, at event briefings and debriefings, supervisions and one-to-one discussions

Expenses

All volunteers will be encouraged to claim out of pocket expenses and will have their travel and other expenses reimbursed, upon completion of a claim form and production of receipts.

Volunteer travel and materials expenses will be covered from a dedicated budget. Food costs will be reimbursed if volunteering for 4 or more hours.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Ignite Imaginations’ insurance policy whilst they are engaged in activities on our behalf.

Health and Safety

Volunteers are covered by Ignite Imaginations’ Health and Safety Policy; a copy is available on the volunteer’s area of the website. Volunteers will be made aware of health and safety issues during their induction.

Equality and Diversity

Ignite Imaginations operates an Equality and Diversity Policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. A copy is available on the volunteer area of the website.Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of, and commitment to, equality and diversity, and Ignite’s policy.

Safeguarding Children

No volunteers may have substantial access to children and will always be supervised by a suitably approved adult in any case where this might happen.

Ignite Imaginations operates a Safeguarding Policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. A copy is available on the website. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our Safeguarding Policy, based upon the training they are all given in their induction.

**DBS**

We will not routinely require our volunteers to complete a DBS as volunteers will never be left alone with a child. However, we may ask them to if a partner requests it, or we feel a project merits one.

## Communications

All volunteers’ details will be stored on our volunteer database for use only in conjunction with Ignite Imaginations activities. Volunteers will receive regular communication from the Administrator via email or telephone. Annually, we will contact all volunteers and ask them to respond to confirm whether they’d like to remain on the database or not. If no reply is received within 14 days, or the volunteer wishes to discontinue their involvement, Ignite Imaginations will remove the volunteer from the database and offer an exit interview. No further contact will then be attempted with the volunteer after this time.

## Exit Interview

All volunteers will be offered an exit interview at the point they leave Ignite Imaginations.

The exit interview will be an informal discussion of the volunteer’s time with Ignite Imaginations. Any points raised that are relevant to broader organisational processes will feed into the organisation’s ongoing evaluation and development. In the event that an interview is not possible, an exit questionnaire will be sent to the volunteer.

**Appendix 1: Volunteer Agreement**

**Volunteer agreement**

Ignite Imaginations will:

* Provide training necessary in respect of the volunteer role/s undertaken.
* Treat volunteers as equally valued members of the staff team.
* Treat volunteers with respect and dignity.
* Reimburse expenses for travel and food where there are receipts or similar evidence of cost incurred.
* Provide relevant references for volunteers in respect of the volunteer work undertaken.
* Treat all volunteers in line with Ignite Imaginations’ equal opportunities and diversity policy.
* Aim to resolve any problems or difficulties volunteers may have while volunteering with us and deal with any unresolved problems through our problem solving procedure.
* Provide appropriate insurance cover for volunteers.
* Implement good health and safety practice.
* Undertake a standard DBS check only if an event or project requires it.
* Offer regular opportunity to engage with other volunteers through socials, skill share events, one-to-ones etc.

You agree to:

* Be an ambassador for Ignite Imaginations and carry out the voluntary role to the best of your ability.
* Follow the letter and spirit of all Ignite Imaginations policies and procedures.
* Give reasonable notice if you are unable to meet the time commitments that have been agreed.
* Attend volunteer socials, skill shares, training activities and one-to-ones where possible.
* Treat all Ignite Imaginations staff, participants, partners and those they come into contact with, with respect and dignity at all times.
* Not to disclose confidential information about Ignite Imaginations, our partners, staff, volunteers or project participants.
* **N.B.**
* *As a volunteer you cannot be required to volunteer, equally Ignite Imaginations does not at any time guarantee opportunities to volunteer. You are free to leave at any time and for any reason.*
* *This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between yourself and Ignite Imaginations and as such may be cancelled at any time by either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or in the future.*

Signed ………………………………

Print name …………………………………………. Date …………………………………