

## **Pocket Guide to Working with Young Volunteers.**

Welcome to the Spark Pocket Guide to Working with Young Volunteers. Young people can bring a wealth of energy and new ideas to an organisation. While you may need to prepare for inviting them to volunteer in your organisation, the benefits can be huge.

When inviting young people into your organisation, think about what they might be able to do. While tasks should be simple, young people get bored easily. Most relish the opportunity to be change makers. Maybe they could redesign a system or carry out a survey for you? With a little bit of training and support the sky's the limit.

If your organisation can take more than one young volunteer, you will be very popular. Most young people would rather volunteer alongside a friend.

Please shout if you need help. We know you're very busy and some of this may seem complicated. Spark staff are here for you!

Our checklist (attached) provides details of what you need at a glance.

Here goes.....

### **First some specific information about the Duke of Edinburgh award:**

There are three Award levels:

**Bronze** - for those in Year 9 or above (aged 13+ years)

**Silver** - for those in Year 10 or above

**Gold** - for those aged 16+ years

Activities for each DofE section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period. All awards have 4 sections (and Gold participants also need to complete a residential):

- Volunteering section
- Physical section
- Skills section
- Expedition

For the Bronze Award each section should be undertaken for 3 months (and 1 section for 6 months); silver sections for 6 months (and 1 section for 9 months); Gold sections for 12 months (and one section for 18 months). These timescales are slightly shorter if young people have already completed another level of the Award.

The organisation supporting the young person (such as their school, scouts group or college) and the young person should ensure the volunteer placements meets the criteria of the scheme before they start volunteering. Key criteria include being in a charity or not-for-profit organisation. You can choose to be a DofE Authorised Activities Provider (AAP) through a licencing system, and this allows you to advertise on their website (but incurs a small one-off cost), you do not need to do this to provide volunteer opportunities.

You can also advertise opportunities on the Spark Somerset. Be sure to include Duke of Edinburgh in the title, so it's easy for young people to find:

<http://volunteer.sparksomerset.org.uk/opportunities>

There are more resources on DofE volunteering at: <https://www.dofe.org/resource-zone/dofe-managers/volunteering/>

The main thing you will be asked to do at the end of a volunteer experience is write a brief Assessor's Report. DofE ask that these are specific to the young person, give some details of what the young person has done, and gives start and finish dates. You can do this in the young person's DofE book or online. More information is available at [https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Writing\\_Assessor\\_Reports\\_AAPs.pdf](https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Writing_Assessor_Reports_AAPs.pdf)

## **Insurance**

Volunteers under 18 (especially those under 16) may not automatically be covered by your insurance. You will need to double check whether this is case.

## **DBS Checks**

In some, but not all, situations it will be necessary for adults working with young volunteers to have DBS checks. For more information, this comprehensive guide is helpful:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/789061/ENGLISH - CCS156 CCS0219642870-001 Charity Roles Children Web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789061/ENGLISH_-_CCS156_CCS0219642870-001_Charity_Roles_Children_Web.pdf)

Or contact Spark's DBS Officer, who knows her stuff: Denise Timmins (M: 07792 237774, E: [denise.timmins@sparksomerset.org.uk](mailto:denise.timmins@sparksomerset.org.uk) )

## **Policies and Procedures**

You probably already have a shelf sagging with policies and procedures. Make sure that staff or volunteers supervising young volunteers are familiar with the following:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection.
- Health and Safety.
- Equality and Diversity.

## **Risk Assessments**

A young volunteer probably won't have experience of the tasks involved in volunteering for you and may not be used to assessing risk for themselves. To keep them and other volunteers safe, it may be necessary to carry out a risk assessment.

If a significant risk of harm remains after you have taken reasonable steps to avoid it, the young person shouldn't carry out the activity in question.

Parents should be made aware of the risk assessment.

More detailed guidance available here:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg364.pdf>

## **Communicating with parents.**

If a volunteer is under 16 years old, you should get parental consent for them to volunteer (sample form attached). It can be harder to get consent for 16-18 year olds, but you should encourage them to tell their parents what they're doing and when.

Parents may also like to see a written role description and some information about what your organisation does. If the volunteer will be working away from the place where they usually volunteer, it is worth seeking additional permission.

Make sure you have emergency contact details. These can also come in handy if a young volunteer fails to turn up.

When using photos of young volunteers for publicity purposes you need to obtain their permission and, if they are under 16, the permission of their parent/ guardian to use them.

If a young person is living independently of parents or social services, they may provide their own consent.

## **Data Protection**

Young people have the same rights as adults over their personal data. However, those under thirteen will need their parent's consent for holding and using their personal information. We advise that both young person and parent sign a volunteering agreement that includes a statement about personal data.

Privacy notices should be clear and written in plain English

If you need help with GDPR please get in touch. We're happy to help.

## **Expenses**

If young people are relying on public transport to reach a volunteering opportunity, it can be very expensive for them. If your organisation can afford to do so, it is worth considering reimbursing young volunteers for travel costs. Make sure that a record is kept of any money that you give to them.

## **Induction**

When your young volunteer starts, bear in mind that they may not have any experience of the workplace and may not feel confident enough to ask questions. Your induction could include:

- What the organisation does
- Practical Information:
  - Where are the toilets?
  - What time do I need to be here?
  - What happens if I have an accident?
  - Where do I make a drink?
  - Who do I contact if I can't come in?
- People:
  - Your volunteer will need to know not just who will be responsible for supervising them, but who else is in the organisation and what they do. Think about who your volunteer will come in to contact with whilst they are volunteering and make introductions as appropriate.

- **Expectations:**  
Behaviour and conduct, including confidentiality where appropriate.  
Use of phones and social media.
- **A Volunteer Pack:**  
It is a good idea for young volunteers to be given a small volunteer information pack but bear in mind that paper often gets lost. Encourage them to put any important names and contact numbers straight into their mobile.

### **Supporting your volunteer in their role:**

Make sure that you plan regular catch ups to check on how the young person is getting on. They may not feel confident enough to ask for help and voice concerns while they are actually volunteering.

You can also use these chats to encourage volunteers to think about the skills that they are developing and how they might record them on their CV. A young person may not see this as valuable at the time, but they will when it comes to applying for jobs and further education!

### **Exit strategy:**

Sadly, it's unlikely that your young volunteer will stay forever. Make it easy for them to leave as they progress on to other things. If possible, plan for them leaving and take time to thank them for their contributions. Offer to act as a referee.

### **Please get in touch if you're not sure about anything:**

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