WESTON ARK CHARITY - VOLUNTEER POLICY AND AGREEMENT

TRUSTEE-APPROVED POLICY

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Our Mission and Values

Weston Ark Charity is a Christian organisation demonstrating God's love through practical support for low-income families and individuals. Operating from the Hughenden Centre, we provide community services including the Ark Café and venue hires. We have adopted the Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith.

While our ethos is Christian, our services welcome all people regardless of background, beliefs, or circumstances. We create a non-judgmental, safe space for everyone we serve and our volunteers. We do not impose our faith but aim for our actions to reflect our values of care, respect, and community.

This policy is non-contractual. Volunteers offer their time freely and are distinct from paid staff. Any reimbursement is limited to approved out-of-pocket expenses only. Volunteers are not employees and do not use the Disciplinary or Grievance procedures. Volunteers must follow the Conflicts of Interest policy including Annex A: Gifts and Hospitality, the Safeguarding policy, the Health and Safety policy, and the Data Protection policy.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Some volunteer leadership roles may carry a genuine occupational requirement, under Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010, for the post holder to be a practising Christian in agreement with Weston Ark's ethos (Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith). We apply this only where it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, having regard to the nature and context of the role. Any such requirement will be stated clearly in the role description and recruitment materials.

Non-leadership volunteer roles are open to people of all faiths and none. Where an OR applies and an applicant does not meet it, we will, where possible, signpost alternative volunteer roles without an OR.

Application Process:

- Provide contact information and availability
- Informal discussion with Centre Manager or trustee
- Reference checks for team leader roles or unsupervised positions
- DBS checks where required for regulated activities

Eligibility:

- Minimum age 16 (parental consent required for 16-17 year olds)
- Enhanced DBS with barred list checks required for roles involving regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults
- All new volunteers begin with an introductory trial period

Key Volunteer Roles

Food & Hospitality:

- *The Ark Café Welcome Host/Server*: Welcoming customers, taking orders, serving food and drinks, handling payments, creating friendly atmosphere
- *Cook Support*: Assisting with food preparation, following recipes, maintaining hygiene standards, cleaning equipment
- *Foodbank Support*: The Foodbank is operated by its own dedicated volunteers. Weston Ark volunteers may interact with Foodbank users in shared spaces like the Ark Café

Client Support & Advice:

- *Debt Management Coach*: Delivering money management courses and one-to-one support (Enhanced DBS required)

- *Community Support Listener*: Providing listening support to individuals experiencing loneliness or distress (Enhanced DBS required)

Centre Operations:

- *Centre Maintenance*: General upkeep, minor repairs, health and safety checks, room setup
- *Admin Support*: Office tasks, data entry, phone calls, record-keeping
- *Tech Support*: IT support, website updates, social media assistance

Induction and Training

All volunteers receive comprehensive induction covering:

- Welcome and charity ethos
- Centre familiarisation and safety procedures
- Key policies: Health and Safety; Safeguarding; Data Protection; Conflicts of Interest (with Annex A: Gifts and Hospitality).
- Role-specific briefing and responsibilities
- Practical procedures including sign-in/out, absence reporting, expense claims

Mandatory Training:

- Safeguarding Essentials (annual refresh required)
- Health and Safety Induction
- Food Safety Level 2 for regular food preparation roles
- Role-specific training as appropriate

Code of Conduct and Responsibilities

All Volunteers Must:

- Perform duties to the best of their abilities aligned with charity values
- Comply with all policies and procedures
- Maintain professional boundaries with clients
- Always respect confidentiality
- Provide reasonable notice if unable to attend shifts
- Not work under influence of alcohol or drugs
- Follow Annex A: Gifts and Hospitality, and record any gift or hospitality given or received in the SharePoint Gifts [request form link from Technology & Systems Lead] and Hospitality Register within 10 working days. Use charity resources responsibly.
- Raise concerns through appropriate channels
- Comply with all policies and procedures, having due regard to our Equal Opportunities Policy principles

Health, Safety, and Safeguarding

Health and Safety Responsibilities:

- Familiarise yourself with fire exits, assembly points, and first aid locations
- Report hazards, accidents, and near-misses immediately to Centre Manager
- Follow food safety procedures including the "4 Cs": Cleaning, Cooking, Chilling, Cross-contamination prevention
- Only use equipment for which you have received training

Safeguarding Commitment: All volunteers have a duty to protect children and vulnerable adults. If you have concerns:

1. Do not investigate yourself or promise secrecy
2. Listen carefully and make immediate written record
3. Report immediately to the appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead listed in the controlled contact register.
4. If unavailable, report to the appointed safeguarding trustee or deputy.
5. Follow the reporting flow in the Safeguarding policy. If someone is at immediate risk, call 999.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers must maintain strict confidentiality regarding all client information. Under UK GDPR:

- Only collect minimum necessary personal data
- Keep all personal data secure (locked filing, password protection)
- Use data only for intended charity purposes
- Report suspected data breaches immediately to the Data Protection Lead or the Centre Manager.
- Never discuss client information outside your specific role

Website and Tickets: Use only authorised charity accounts and access needed for your role. Do not share passwords, private ticket links or attendee lists. Tech support does not automatically grant CMS or finance permissions. Send website content through the Technology and Systems Lead; obtain recorded media permissions under the Safeguarding Policy.

Volunteer Expenses

We reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred during approved volunteering duties:

- *Public Transport*: Standard return fare with original receipts
- *Private Vehicle*: 45p per mile (HMRC rate) with advance supervisor approval
- *Meals*: Maximum £6.00 for shifts over 4 hours with receipt
- *Childcare/Carer Costs*: Available in special circumstances with advance approval
- *Pre-approved Materials*: With supervisor authorization and receipts

Claims Process: Submit completed Volunteer Expenses Claim Form with original receipts to Centre Manager within one month. Payment via BACS within 14 working days.

Support and Recognition

Supervision and Support:

- Regular informal check-ins during shifts
- One-to-one support meetings available on request
- Centre Manager is primary supervisor and contact point
- Prayer support available for those who desire it

Communication and Recognition:

- Regular team meetings and volunteer email updates
- Annual thank-you event
- Written references provided after three months of service

Problem Resolution

Equality-related concerns can be raised directly with the Centre Manager or Chair of Trustees if the concern involves the Centre Manager.

Informal Resolution: First step involves private discussion with supervisor to address issues collaboratively.

Formal Process (if informal resolution unsuccessful):

1. Formal Meeting: With supervisor and/or trustee, volunteer may bring support person

2. Action Plan**:** Clear improvement plan with review timescale, and a written note of concerns where appropriate.
3. Final Decision**:** Role may be ended after review period or for gross misconduct

*Appeal Rights***:** Written appeal to Chair of Trustees within 10 working days. Appeal panel decision is final.

*Raising Concerns***:** Volunteers can raise concerns with supervisor informally or formally in writing to Chair of Trustees.

Equality and Inclusion

While our formal Equal Opportunities Policy applies to employed staff, all volunteers must uphold the same principles. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation based on any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. All volunteers have the right to dignity and respect and responsibility to treat others equally.

Ending Volunteering Relationship

Volunteers may leave at any time with reasonable notice to assist with planning. We offer exit interviews to gather feedback for improvement. Factual references available for volunteers with three months or more service.

Volunteer Agreement

I agree to**:**

- Perform my role to the best of my abilities, aligning with Weston Ark values
- Attend required induction and training
- Have due regard to the principles in the Equal Opportunities Policy and treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Respect confidentiality and personal data and follow Data Protection guidance
- Follow Safeguarding and Health and Safety instructions
- Record any gift or hospitality in the SharePoint Gifts and Hospitality Register within 10 working days
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest and follow instructions to avoid participation in related decisions
- Notify my supervisor if I am unable to attend shifts and act as a positive ambassador for the charity

Weston Ark agrees to**:**

- Provide comprehensive support, training, and safe environment
- Reimburse approved out-of-pocket expenses
- Value and recognise volunteer contributions
- Handle any concerns fairly and promptly

Volunteer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Centre Manager/Trustee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Key Contacts:

- Centre Manager: For day-to-day matters and health and safety, via centre.manager@westonark.org.uk.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy: Use the current trustee-confirmed contact register available at the Centre. Trustees must confirm the handover before a post holder leaves.
- Designated Data Protection Lead**:** Use the current trustee-confirmed contact register at the Centre for the appointed lead and contact details.

- Governance matters and formal concerns: trustees@westonark.org.uk. Trustees confirm who handles any responsibilities assigned to the Chair in this policy.
- Technology and Systems Lead: Website, HallMaster and Microsoft 365. Contact details are in the current trustee-confirmed contact register at the Centre.

Emergency**:** Call 999. Non-emergency Police: 101. Local Authority Safeguarding: Contact Centre Manager for appropriate local numbers.

This policy reflects our commitment to creating a positive, safe, and rewarding experience for all volunteers while maintaining the highest standards of service to our community.

Related documents

Related documents: Equal Opportunities Policy; Safeguarding policy; Health and Safety policy; Data Protection policy; Conflicts of Interest policy; Annex A: Gifts and Hospitality; Volunteer Expenses Claim Form [Seek Form from Technology & Systems Lead]