Volunteer Policy
CSWBL

Updated by the Management Committee: January 2025

This policy is intended to ensure consistency and good practice in managing volunteers.

The Czech School Without Borders, London (CSWBL) recognises the value of volunteers and believes that volunteers should be given clear guidelines about their rights, roles and responsibilities.

This document sets out CSWBL's responsibility to its volunteers and outlines what expectations CSWBL has of volunteers.

It sets out the general minimum standard for the involvement of volunteers and should be read alongside other specific policies and procedures that apply to volunteers (such as the Child Protection Policy, the Equality and Diversity Policy, Health and Safety Policy, etc.), as well as the standard form Volunteer Agreement. CSWBL will ensure volunteers have adequate knowledge about their role, responsibilities and rights and the policies and procedures of the organisation. Volunteers must exercise reasonable care when carrying out their duties.

Key Values

- We believe that all volunteers should be valued and recognised for the contribution they make to the objectives and work of the CSWBL.

- We believe that the principles of fairness should underline all policies and practices of CSWBL in relation to volunteers

- CSWBL requires its management committee members, staff, members and volunteers to be committed to the principles described in this statement of volunteer policy.

Volunteer task identification

Before a new voluntary position is created, it must be approved by the management committee, who are required to consider the following:

- The post must allow for job satisfaction on the part of the volunteer.

- The Director must be consulted, as well as any existing volunteers, where the creation of the new voluntary position will affect their role.

- A role description outlining the role title, duties and responsibilities, skills and/or personal qualities required, and additional training or support offered, where relevant, must be prepared and made available.

- Together with a Volunteer Agreement setting out the non-legally binding terms and conditions of the arrangement with the volunteer.

- Benefits to the volunteers must also be specified.

Recruitment

The Director will be responsible for the selection of volunteers that work for CSWBL. Volunteers will be recruited from the widest possible base and selected according to their ability to perform the required task.

Volunteering opportunities should be advertised in places likely to attract interest, eg. Czech Centre, CSWBL website, CSWBL social media.

Prospective volunteers will normally be expected to be interviewed and provide references in order to meet safer recruitment standards laid down by regulators.

A non-legally binding volunteer agreement, together with a volunteer role description will be drawn up for each volunteer role, which will make clear CSWBL's expectations of the volunteer and what CSWBL offers the volunteer.

The Director will respond as soon as possible to any query (and, in any event, by no later than a week after receipt of the query) from a volunteer concerning the volunteer's inability to perform his or her role, for example, due to holiday or sickness.

Volunteers will be required to obtain Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks. If the check reveals that the volunteer has a criminal record, the relevance of the offence to the volunteer's role will be assessed.

In line with the DBS Code of Practice, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to volunteering at CSWBL. All DBS information will be treated as confidential information and processed in line with the Data Protection Act.

If unable to involve a particular volunteer, the Director must make the reasons clear to the volunteer.

In summary, recruitment of volunteers by the CSWBL must involve:

- An open and fair recruitment procedure

- An interview based on the principles of equality and diversity

- A clearly written volunteer role description and a non-legally binding volunteer agreement between CSWBL and each volunteer

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Expenses

Volunteers should not be out of pocket for any cost related to their volunteering.

All reasonable out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed including travel to and from the CSWBL's location. The procedures for reimbursement will be explained to volunteers.

Health and safety procedure

It is CSWBL's responsibility to ensure that there are defined health and safety procedures and adequate insurance cover for the task that volunteers are asked to undertake.

Volunteers are covered by CSWBL's Child Protection and Health and Safety policies and it is mandatory that they read and sign them.

All volunteers will be made aware of the above rights and conditions without having to ask.

Details of current rates for expenses, CSWBL's Volunteer, Child Safety, Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity policies must be readily available.

Equality and diversity

The recruitment of all volunteers will be undertaken consistently with the principles of CSWBL's equality and diversity policy.

CSWBL believes that volunteers should not be discriminated against either by the association or its members or users and will ensure that it does not unfairly exclude or discourage the involvement of a potential volunteer on the basis of race, colour, sexuality, gender, religion, age, disability or economic status.

Each volunteer task description must make clear the volunteer's duty to adhere to the equality and diversity policy. It should be made clear to the volunteers that behaviour or language that is inconsistent with the equality and diversity policy is not tolerated.

CSWBL will make every effort to accommodate volunteers with extra support needs or disabilities. If this does not prove possible, CSWBL will give the individual in question a full explanation.

Insurance

All CSWBL staff and volunteers are protected by an employers' liability insurance whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any voluntary work on CSWBL's behalf.

A written copy of the insurance will be given to volunteers on request.

Induction and training

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All volunteers will be given an introduction to CSWBL. Requirements of the volunteer's role, responsibilities and rights must be explained. The Director or Assistant Director will go through the induction with any new volunteer. Volunteers will be taken round and introduced to all staff and other volunteers where appropriate. Any training required, to enable volunteers to perform their roles, will be arranged and paid for by CSWBL.

Volunteer support

CSWBL recognises the need for on-going support and supervision. Provision will be made for regular supervision of individuals or groups.

CSWBL will provide a reference on completion of an agreed probationary period of 3 months. Reference requests should be sent to and dealt with by the Director.

Roles in decision making

Volunteers should be consulted on any major policy or operational changes in CSWBL that might affect them.

Volunteers will be encouraged to express their opinion on the work of CSWBL and develop their role within CSWBL.

Resolving Problems

If a volunteer has a concern or a complaint is received about a volunteer, CSWBL will endeavour to resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

The volunteer should speak in the first instance to the Director to see if the concern can be resolved.

Where the issue is not resolved to the volunteer's satisfaction, he or she should speak to a member of the management committee, i.e. the Chair, about any concerns he or she may have.

The management committee will organise a meeting to provide the volunteer with an opportunity to be heard in relation to any concern he or she may have or any complaint received about him or her. The management committee will aim to respond speedily.

If it becomes apparent that the relationship between CSWBL and a volunteer is not working out, it may be necessary to end the arrangement without notice.

Date Agreed by the Management Committee: 18th January 2025

Date for Next Review: November 2025