



Galway Community Circus

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Mission Statement

Galway Community Circus is a charitable organisation built on fun, innovation and a commitment to inspiring and empowering people through circus arts. Galway Community Circus uses circus arts as an educational tool for personal, social and community development.

Policy Statement

We recognize that in order to achieve our goals we involve volunteers in our work. We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities. We aim to support volunteers to the best of our abilities and to act quickly and fairly if any difficulties arise.

Galway Community Circus involves volunteers in the running of the organisation and in programmes as it values and understands the unique and invaluable role that volunteers play and the experience and expertise they bring to the work. This document lays out a set of guidelines for those engaged in volunteering on a day-to-day basis within the organisation as well as those involved in the governance and running of the organisation. A separate Board Induction document also exists and clearly outlines the role and responsibilities of individual Board members.

Procedural Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering within Galway Community Circus. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other Galway Community Circus policies and procedures, as well as our mission statement and our Volunteer Handbook.

Appropriate behaviour

Volunteers are expected to follow the policies and procedures of Galway Community Circus, including our Child Protection Policy, and adhere to its ethos.

Responsibility

The Galway Community Circus Director is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including the voluntary Board of Directors) are expected to facilitate this process.

Relationship with Paid Staff

Volunteers are involved to enhance the capacity of paid staff. Clear roles are established between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.

Volunteers are included in the organisations functions and decision-making processes wherever practical. Volunteers are provided with appropriate information and facilities necessary to fulfil their volunteer role effectively and comfortably.

Eligibility

Galway Community Circus welcomes interest from anyone as a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and will only join the team if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organisation.

Recruitment and Selection of volunteers

Each volunteer applicant must fill in a volunteer application form. For specific roles and projects, volunteers may be recruited and asked to submit applications. Applications will be short-listed where appropriate and selected candidates will be asked to attend an informal chat to assess their interest and suitability. All unsuccessful applicants are to be thanked for applying.

Checks for suitability

References are always contacted and Garda Vetting is carried out for all volunteers in contact with young people. This will be made clear at application stage. If an applicant refuses permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be considered.

Role descriptions

Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role description must be developed for each volunteer opportunity. This must include a title of the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place where the volunteering takes place, name of the volunteer manager and tasks to be undertaken. If appropriate, a brief person specification may also be drawn up. A copy of this should be given to the volunteer prior to commencement of the volunteering and should be used in any review and evaluation.

Volunteer times are agreed between Galway Community Circus and the volunteer and are as flexible as the tasks allow. Volunteers are expected to follow the agreed times. When expecting to be absent, a volunteer should inform Galway Community Circus as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Induction

All volunteers receive induction when they begin voluntary work with Galway Community Circus. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation as well as specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the volunteering role.

Lines of Communication

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate materials and information relevant to their task and role. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions as appropriate.

Volunteer Support and Management

Galway Community Circus endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work.

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified Volunteer Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer. The volunteer manager provides task-related support for the volunteer, an induction and checks in with the volunteer within two weeks after the volunteer has started in their role. Volunteers are involved in weekly team meetings and production meetings as appropriate to their role.

EVS volunteers have specific support procedures in place including a designated EVS Mentor.

Expenses

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge so it is essential that Galway Community Circus offers to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses, such as material costs, they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. Any expenses must be agreed with Circus Director beforehand.

Insurance

Insurance is provided by Galway Community Circus to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation.

Representation of Galway Community Circus

Volunteers must seek prior approval from Galway Community Circus before undertaking anything that might affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies and agreements involving financial or contractual obligations.

Confidentiality

Galway Community Circus respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of privileged information to which they are exposed to while volunteering within Galway Community Circus.

Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to Galway Community Circus, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognized and rewarded. Volunteers are acknowledged in annual reports, show programmes, website and social media sites as appropriate. Each volunteer is also thanked personally for their valuable contribution.

Ending Involvement

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of Galway Community Circus. The organisation may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate a volunteer's relationships with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time and for any reason, decide to terminate their relationship with Galway Community Circus. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.

When Things Don't Work Out

Involvement of volunteers who do not adhere to the organisations procedures or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be terminated. Grounds for termination of volunteer's involvement include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct,

being under the influence of drugs/alcohol, theft, misuse of materials and/or equipment, breaches of confidentiality, failure to comply with Galway Community Circus policies and procedures and failure to complete duties satisfactorily.

No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible termination with Galway Community Circus.

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the Board