

Chester Beatty Library Volunteer Policy

Mission Statement

The Chester Beatty Library seeks to maintain and preserve the collections of the Library and make them available in the most appropriate ways for the use and enjoyment of the public in order to promote a wider appreciation and understanding of the international cultural heritage embodied in the collections and foster relations between Ireland and the peoples whose cultures are represented in the collections.

Intention

We seek to involve volunteers in our mission to ensure that the goals of the Library are met, to provide assistance in bringing the services of the Library to the general public and to enhance our contact with the local community we serve.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering at the Chester Beatty Library (CBL), it does not constitute a contract of any kind. The procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of and under the direction of the CBL. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures in this document are properly implemented, all staff and volunteers are expected to facilitate this process. Changes to this policy are subject to ratification by the Board of Trustees, which has final responsibility for the policy, and reserves the right to amend this policy in any way and at any time. Matters in areas not specifically covered by the policy shall be decided by the Volunteer Co-ordinator in consultation with the Library management.

All policies and practices pertaining to volunteers will be fully documented and clearly communicated to volunteers and staff. Any questions volunteers may have regarding policies or their interpretation should be directed to the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Principles

The Volunteer Policy is organised by the following principles; the CBL will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation. The CBL does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff but rather to complement and enhance their work. The CBL expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers.

Volunteer Advisory Committee

The CBL seeks to appoint a Volunteer Advisory Committee to consist of all interested CBL volunteers. We hope that the development of the volunteer programme will benefit directly from the experience of these committed volunteers. Responsibilities of the committee are to include: to meet twice a year to discuss the development of the volunteer programme, general issues and concerns. The ideas and input of the committee will be important in shaping the programme, in meeting the needs of the Library and the needs of our volunteers. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will disseminate information and present proposals to the committee. The committee responds and discusses these proposals, acting as a sounding board for new ideas. As the voice of the volunteers, the committee may also bring concerns of the volunteers to the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Definition of a 'Volunteer'

A volunteer is an individual who, beyond the confines of paid employment and normal responsibilities, contributes time and service to assist the CBL in the accomplishment of its mission.

Eligibility

The CBL accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the Library's discretion and those individuals must demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the Library. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the Library will be accepted as a volunteer. Volunteers agree that the CBL may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the Library.

Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers shall have the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, to adhere to all Library policies and practices where applicable and to remain loyal to the mission of the Library.

Health & Safety

All volunteers are responsible for taking all reasonable care for their own health and safety in the Library and that of any others who may be affected by their actions or omissions during the course of their work. All volunteers are covered by the Library's Employer's Liability insurance policy, which covers claims for personal injury resulting from accidents happening in the course of or arising out of their engagement with the Library.

Child Protection

In order to ensure mutual protection, volunteers working with the Library will be made familiar with the Library's Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety guidelines in relation to participation in children's and young people's activities.

Representation of the Library

The Director of the CBL is the only person authorised to perform any action or give any statement, which might significantly affect or obligate the Library. These actions may include, but are not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations. Volunteers are authorised to act as representatives of the Library as specifically indicated within their job descriptions and only to such an extent.

Confidentiality

The Library respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. Volunteers are in turn responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single member of staff, volunteer, or other person or involves the overall work of the Library.

Maintenance of Records

A system of records is maintained on all volunteers, including dates and times of service, duties performed, evaluation of work, etc. Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as staff records.

Working Times

Working times are negotiated between the Volunteer Co-ordinator or the Education Officer and the volunteer. They are as flexible as the tasks allow. Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of full-time paid staff, but unscheduled absences can create organizational problems. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform their supervisor as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made. Volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion of time sheets for monitoring purposes.

Strikes

In the event of closure due to industrial action, volunteers will not be expected to continue their duties for the duration of the strike.

Worksite

An appropriate worksite shall be established prior to the enrolment of any volunteer. This worksite shall contain the necessary facilities, equipment and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

Dress Code

As representatives of the Library, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Identification

Volunteers will wear volunteer identification badges while engaged in the business of the Library and on the Library premises.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Role Descriptions

A role description will be developed for each voluntary opportunity. An outline of these roles and functions will be drawn up by the Volunteer Co-ordinator with the assistance of appropriate staff members. The description will be given to each accepted volunteer in advance of their assignment and used in subsequent management and evaluation processes. Paid staff and volunteers are invited to offer suggestions regarding volunteer role design or changes to current volunteer positions. Volunteer role descriptions will be reviewed at least annually by the Volunteer Co-ordinator and updated as necessary.

Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited by the Library on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited in accordance with the CBL's equal opportunities policy. All volunteers are required to complete an application form and/or provide a CV.

Interviews

Volunteer placements are made by interview and discussion with appropriate staff members, to match the applicant's skills, talents and interests with the needs of the Library. The interview should also be used as an opportunity to answer any questions the volunteer might have about the job. Unsuccessful candidates are thanked for

applying and encouraged to reapply for other volunteer opportunities, either currently or in the future.

Checks for Suitability

All volunteers are required to submit a personal and/or professional reference prior to acceptance as a volunteer with the Library. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request may not be accepted as a volunteer.

Placement

In determining suitable placements for volunteers, equal attention must be given to the interests and goals of the volunteer, and to the requirements of the Library and of the position(s) in question. Volunteers must be made to feel comfortable in declining a suggested placement or requesting changes to the position expectations at any point in their involvement with the Library. No position should be considered too tedious or unskilled as long as volunteers are given a clear understanding of the nature and importance of the work to be performed.

Appointment

Formal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and all necessary checks have proved acceptable. At this point the volunteer will be asked to sign a certificate indicating that they have read, understand and will comply with all volunteer policies.

Probation

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of one month. At the end of this period, the Volunteer Co-ordinator will meet with the volunteer to discuss the volunteer's suitability for their role. At this point, volunteers may continue in their current role, be reassigned to a more suitable role, or ask/be asked to leave.

Volunteer Training

Induction

All volunteers shall receive an induction to the Library and its mission, all pertinent safety procedures and policies and to the work that the volunteer has been assigned.

On-the-Job Training

In addition to the orientation, volunteers receive initial and ongoing training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their assigned duties well. The training will be appropriate for the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator, with the assistance of other appropriate staff members, has responsibility for designing and delivering the orientation and on-the-job training.

In addition to training provided for particular assignments, ongoing continuing education sessions are planned to provide volunteers with a broad knowledge of the Library.

Volunteer Supervision

Supervisor

Every volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for day-to-day support and direction and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. The supervisor's role will normally be taken on by the Volunteer Co-

ordinator, but all staff shall receive training and guidance on how to involve volunteers effectively in the work of the Library

Lines of Communication

Volunteers should have access to all appropriate information, memos, material and meetings relevant to their work assignments. Volunteers shall be included on all relevant distribution schedules and shall be given a notice board/in-box for information circulated in their absence. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions, which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

Supervision Sessions

Evaluation sessions shall take place regularly between the volunteer and his/her supervisor. These review the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes in work style, seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the Library, convey appreciation to the volunteer, and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving his or her role. The sessions also serve as an opportunity to plan future tasks.

Corrective Action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation sessions. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or dismissal of a volunteer.

Dismissal & Resignation

Volunteers who do not adhere to the Library's rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their supervisor. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to; gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of visitors and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by the Library's policies and procedures, and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

Volunteers are free to resign from their post at any time. However, where possible, two week's notice is required.

Concerns and Grievances

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to convey their complaint or grievance to their supervisor. Appropriate action will be determined by the supervisor. If the complaint involves the supervisor, the volunteer may speak with the manager next in command. The manager will determine appropriate action. As the voice of the volunteers, the Volunteer Advisory Committee may also bring concerns of the volunteers to the Volunteer Coordinator, concerns will be discussed and a consensus reached.

Exit Interviews

Where possible, informal exit interviews are held with any volunteers who are leaving the Library. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position; how they found the volunteering experience and suggestions they may have for improving how the volunteer programme operates. The offer of a personal reference for future employment etc. is made to each volunteer.

Support and Recognition

Support

The Library endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work. Support forms part of the regular supervision sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, and discuss how they feel about volunteering. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas that are affecting their performance.

Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to the Library, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. The CBL staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, such as International Volunteer Day (December 5th) and Christmas.

Breaks

All volunteers are entitled to coffee and tea available to all staff and volunteers in the staff room.

Expenses

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of pre-approved expenses incurred while fulfilling assigned duties. The following items may be reimbursable, when approved in advance by the Volunteer Co-ordinator;

- The Library shall offer to reimburse lunch expenses for volunteers working more than four hours per day. Expenses shall be to the cost of €10 from the CBL Restaurant in the Main Hall. Please ask the restaurant to put the charge on our volunteer account, so you don't have to pay cash.
- Mileage at the rate of €0.6294 per mile for engines up to 1200cc and rate of €0.7442 per mile for engines 1201cc to 1500cc or alternatively kilometre at rate of €0.3912 per km for engines up to 1200cc and rate of Rate of €0.4625 per km for engines 1201cc to 1500cc, or the cost of public transportation for travel to/from assignment.
- Parking Expenses

Personal Development

Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with the Library and are assisted in assuming additional and greater responsibilities over time if they desire this.