

Introduction

Darjeeling Children's Trust (DCT) does not operate commercially as a volunteering organisation. Its scope is limited to facilitating volunteering opportunities.

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in DCT. It is of relevance to trustees who facilitate volunteering in Darjeeling and for volunteers.

This policy is endorsed by DCT and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of DCT and its volunteers.

Commitment

DCT acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit DCT, those it serves, and the volunteers themselves. DCT values the contribution made by volunteers in appropriate positions and projects and in ways which develop the aims of DCT and the volunteers.

DCT recognises its responsibility to facilitate its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteers are people who are unpaid and, of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community. In this case, the community is that of Darjeeling children.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported by DCT and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff and trustees are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, the organisation cannot be compelled to provide regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Volunteer Coordination

All volunteers will have a nominated trustee to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of whom to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated trustee with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is Sharan Patel. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

In Darjeeling, the nominated contact is Major P. Wangdi, DCT Trustee. He can be contacted by email via the Trust's website.

Support

Volunteers will be offered accommodation and meals, at an agreed rate, by the local Darjeeling DCT trustee. It is not compulsory to take up this offer.

Volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies and local knowledge of Darjeeling will be shared with them.

Support will be provided to volunteers to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure they understand the purpose of the DCT and its priorities, all of which are available on its website.

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support. This will enable both the volunteer and the DCT to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the organisation's volunteers (e.g. articles in newspapers and newsletters, thank you letters, invitations to DCT events etc.)

Expenses

DCT is unable to reimburse expenses incurred in travelling to and from Darjeeling or for living expenses.

The organisation's volunteers are not expected to claim expenses. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

The organisation has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, trustees, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

Insurance

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Volunteers are requested to arrange their own travel and health insurance and copy this to the designated person prior to arriving in Darjeeling. They are also expected to provide contact details for their next of kin.

Safeguarding

Volunteers will undertake mandatory safeguarding training before they arrive in Darjeeling. This will be conducted by Jennifer Owen, the Trustee with overall responsibility for safeguarding. In addition, they will have a safeguarding briefing on their arrival in Darjeeling carried out by Aashwin Pradhan the Designated Safeguarding lead. An enhanced DBS and signed Code of Conduct will be required for all volunteers who will be interacting with children and young people in Darjeeling.

Confidentiality

DCT will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information concerning the volunteer held by the organisation.

Settling Differences

DCT has never encountered problems to date. If there was an issue, it would seek to ensure that volunteers' views were heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution.

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they will be asked to leave the organisation.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering

- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive appropriate induction
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be ambassadors for DCT
- be reliable and honest
- treat everyone they meet with utmost respect
- respect confidentiality of the organisation and its clients
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- undergo safeguarding training
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies
- dress in clean, culturally appropriate clothes
- not take drugs while on a volunteering placement
- not be alone with a child or vulnerable adult

Reviewed July 2024



Volunteer agreement

Volunteers are a valued part of the Darjeeling Children's Trust. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team.

This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best.

We, the Darjeeling Children's Trust, will do our best to:

- introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it and to provide any information you need.
- provide regular contact with your named trustee so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your work is organised and get feedback from us. Your trustee's name is [].
- respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem.

I [*name of volunteer*], agree to do my best to:

- work reliably to the best of my ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot volunteer as expected.
- follow the DCT's values and guidelines.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment

S Signed: _____

Date: _____