

Volunteer Policy for Skerries Community Association and its Committees

What is a Volunteer Policy?

The Governance Code www.governancecode.ie defines best practices for community-based organizations like SCA. It describes a volunteer policy as:

A policy dealing with the recruitment, induction, support and supervision of volunteers and setting out the procedures for implementing the policy and dealing with problems, if they arise.

About Skerries Community Association (SCA)

SCA is an organization composed almost entirely of volunteers. It comprises a Board of Directors, multiple committees, and Skerries Community Centre. The Community Centre is the only entity within SCA that employs staff. It has its own management board, and the chairperson of that board is a member of the Board of Directors of SCA, but all other Directors and all members of SCA committees are volunteers.

SCA is a community-based organization, operating as a company limited by guarantee. Having a volunteer policy in place helps ensure that SCA runs effectively and is compliant with the Governance Code.

SCA Board members are elected periodically and are typically also members of SCA committees. Given the flow of volunteers between committees and the Board of Directors, this volunteer policy applies to all event/project volunteers recruited for the events and projects under the control of the SCA Board or its Committees, as well as to the Board members and Committee members.

In the Volunteer Policy below, the term SCA refers to the Board of Directors or any of the SCA Committees.

Subject to the guidelines below, the Board and each committee manages its own volunteers.

Volunteer Policy

General

Volunteers are a valuable resource. SCA recognises that:

- SCA exists through voluntary effort, and its most important asset is the willingness of people to contribute time and energy to the work of the organisation;
- to continue developing as a viable organisation, it needs to have a policy for attracting, recruiting and retaining volunteers;

- at different life stages, people have varying capacity and free time to give to community effort. Acknowledging this, our volunteer policy will encourage and support the creation of volunteer roles that have various levels of involvement and time spans.

SCA endeavours to implement good practice in volunteer management. We aim to train, support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

Recruitment

SCA invites and encourages people to volunteer through word of mouth, via online channels and other communications.

In its communications with the residents of Skerries, SCA informs them about what it does, why it needs volunteers and the roles and responsibilities it is offering to volunteers.

Where volunteers are being recruited for, or assigned to roles involving children or vulnerable adults they will be made aware of SCA's policies and procedures for the protection of such persons.

Induction

This consists of a general introduction to the work of the SCA, its Board and Committees as well as a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the volunteering role and its responsibilities.

Board Members

Each new Board member, on their election, is supplied with the **Guide to the Roles, Duties and Powers of the Board of Directors** to help them in understanding their new position.

Board members, in addition to reporting on the activities of any SCA committee of which they are a member, are assigned responsibilities for policy areas as a board member. These policy areas are discussed with any prospective board members at election time and afterwards. Experienced board members can expect to be offered opportunities to serve as an officer (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) of the Board.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are made aware of relevant SCA policies in particular those in place to ensure health and safety, and where appropriate, the protection of young persons and vulnerable persons and the procedures for Garda Vetting. Volunteers are required to maintain the confidentiality of any privileged information to which they are exposed.

Support and Training

All volunteers are briefed on their roles and are encouraged to avail of further training and development opportunities where feasible. Volunteers are encouraged to identify training courses, seminars, conferences, and so on, which would help them to perform their roles better and which would aid their personal development.

Supervision

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their assignments. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering roles.

When a problem arises

When a problem or issue arises, either through:

- A complaint by a volunteer
- A complaint about a volunteer
- Where the volunteer doesn't suit the role/organisation

SCA responds promptly and deals with the issue in a manner that takes account of the scale of the problem and the sensitivities of those directly involved.

Dismissal

Volunteers who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with a member of the Board. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct; being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol); theft; misuse of equipment and materials; abusive behaviour towards others while acting as a volunteer; breaches of confidentiality; failure to abide by SCA policies and procedures; and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

This volunteer policy was approved by the Board of Directors of SCA at the meeting held on [] following consultation with all Committees.

Note: The policy will be included in the key policy documents published on the SCA website and should be referred to in all future Terms of Reference (TORs) drafted for approval by SCA Board.