



Frankston City Council Youth Resource Centre Volunteer Policy

Preamble

Frankston City Council recognises the significant contribution volunteers make in assisting in the provision of many of Council's services. This can only be achieved by utilising the support, skills and expertise of volunteers in our community.

Frankston City Council is committed to providing volunteer opportunities that are meaningful, enhance skill and provide opportunities for active citizenship and community involvement.

Council's Volunteer Program

Frankston City Council currently provides volunteer opportunities in Council's Library Service, Meals on Wheels, Social Support Program, Community Transport and Children's and Youth Services. There are also other organisations that have links to Council such as the Frankston Community Information and Support Centre, Community/Neighborhood Houses, and Preschools, Environmental and Friends Groups that provide volunteer opportunities. **However, the Frankston City Council Volunteer Policy relates to those volunteers who are part of programs and services that are directly managed by Council.**

There are no restrictions on who can volunteer, although **volunteers must be aged over 16 years**. Council reserves the right of refusal and only those volunteers considered most suitable to take on the role available at the time will be placed. Consideration of particular skills/interest/capabilities need to be considered when placing volunteers.

Definition of formal volunteering (with acknowledgement to Volunteering Victoria)

Formal volunteering is an activity, which takes place in a not-for-profit organisation or project and is undertaken;

- To be of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- Of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- For no financial payment
- In designated volunteer positions only.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a volunteer of Frankston City Council I understand that I am not to:

- Carry out nursing duties or similar duties
- Interfere in family situations, or press my own view, religious or otherwise
- Accept any testamentary bequests
- Accept or give gifts, other than gifts of nominal value (ie. flowers, chocolates)
- Become involved in the management of handling of clients financial affairs
- Involve myself in any legal matters with a client ie. act as power of attorney/enduring power of attorney, executor of will etc.
- In the course of my volunteer role I will not drive under the influence of any drug which may impair my ability to drive
- In the course of my volunteer role I will not consume alcohol prior to or whilst driving vehicle
- Lift or assist with lifting passenger into or out of vehicles or venues
- Have clients come and stay at volunteers place of residence.

As a volunteer of Frankston City Council I will:

- Agree to Frankston City Councils policy on volunteering
- Respect clients, other volunteers and staff members privacy and information concerning individuals will be treated as confidential, unless there are child abuse or safety issues for the client or the volunteer, when I will report issues to my co-coordinator/supervisor as a matter of urgency
- Have a non-judgmental approach
- Be reliable and committed to the program
- Be responsible for payment of parking or traffic infringement penalties incurred whilst driving as part of my volunteer role

As we are a youth centre, we are not required to dress in corporate attire. Although we are seen as role models to young people and are trying to set an example to them, we have a responsibility to dress appropriately for work. There are still standards we need to follow as to how we should dress:

- Knee length skirts
- Full length pants (no shorts).
- Fully enclosed shoes; no thongs
- Nothing exposing i.e very low cut tops
- Make-up should be kept to a minimum
- Hair kept neat

Frankston City Council, as a Volunteer Agency will;

- Provide volunteers with opportunities for personal growth and skill development
- Whenever possible, offer volunteers work opportunities appropriate to their skills, experience and aspirations
- Provide volunteers with clear duty statements and orientation for their roles
- Offer training and support for volunteers to achieve both personal and work related goals
- Where possible, offer reimbursement or other types of compensation to cover out of pocket expenses
- Ensure that all Occupational Health and Safety requirements are met in regard to all volunteer positions
- Recognise that volunteers are valuable members of the Council team
- Provide opportunities to acknowledge the contributions made by volunteers in supporting Council services to the community
- Ensure that volunteers will not be used to replace existing paid staff

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer with Frankston City Council, you have a right to;

- Information about the organisation for which you are volunteering
- A plainly written job description
- Know who you are accountable to, ie; who is your supervisor
- Be supported and supervised in your volunteer role
- Be acknowledged as a valued member of the Council team
- Have a working environment that meets all OH&S requirements
- Be covered by appropriate insurance
- Wherever possible be compensated for out-of-pocket expenses
- Be informed and consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect you and your work
- Be made aware of the grievance procedure within Council

Frankston City Council volunteer you have the responsibility to;

- Be reliable
- Respect confidentiality at all times
- Be accountable
- Carry out duties that are specified in your agreed job description
- Undertake training when requested and when necessary to carry out your volunteer duties
- Ask for support when you need it
- Value and support other members of your team
- Notify their supervisor if they are unable to attend.
- Undertake training which will enhance the performance of their task.
- Wear the name badge issued by Council at all times when engaged in Council activities.
- Comply with Council's occupational health and safety policies and practices to protect themselves, other volunteers, staff and clients
- Comply with Councils policies, protocols and procedures particularly in regard to dangerous and emergency situations.

The Benefits of Volunteering

In addition to the value provided by volunteers in direct service provision there are a number of other less tangible benefits. In fostering active and vibrant groups of volunteers in various parts of the community, a tapestry of personal and social connections is established between a broad range of people. This in turn improves the well being of the whole community.

As the philosopher Kahlil Gibran once stated;

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

In this sense volunteers are not only an important part of service delivery, but play an absolutely vital role in the creation of a viable and sustainable local community. Volunteering provides benefits and outcomes to Council, the community and to the volunteers themselves.

These benefits include:

- Increased community participation in decision-making
- Social interaction for both the volunteer and the clients of Councils services

- The creation of a sense of community ownership
- A significant cost saving to Council
- More services to clients and the community and value adding to current services
- Enhanced community resilience ie. enhanced community connections, capacity, strength and networks
- Improved understanding of the local community and of Council services
- Increased social capital within the community
- Reduced social costs of ill health, depression, and anti-social behaviour
- Volunteers gain the opportunity of personal growth and skill development
- Volunteers benefit from increased self worth, social connection and belonging

Safety

Safety of clients and volunteers is of paramount importance hence the need for police checks if volunteers are having direct contact with children, young people or the elderly.

Volunteers need to be made aware that in Home and Community Care areas such as delivering meals on wheels, or social support that the client and the client's home have already been assessed for health and safety status before you have been sent to a person's home.

Volunteers need to respect the privacy of clients, staff and other volunteers and Council expects that matters concerning individuals be treated as confidential except in the following situations:

- Any action/issue which could endanger the safety of the client/volunteer or those around them
- Child abuse or any form of violence

In these situations the volunteer is required to pass on the relevant information to their supervisor as a matter of urgency.

Volunteers should never give out their home phone number. Volunteers should give the organisation's phone number as a contact and referral point for further requests.

Volunteers should always refer any unusual circumstances or difficulties incurred during the volunteer duties to their coordinator/supervisor, in order that they may be investigated

Problems are far easier to sort out in the early stages than if they are neglected. Staff supervising volunteers should encourage volunteers to come to them with any issue they feel uncomfortable about.

Police Checks and Working With Children Checks

- All volunteers who have direct contact with clients at the Youth Resource Centre will be required to have a Police Check and a Working with Children Check.
- Volunteers who do not have direct contact with clients are not required to have a police check. The manager in whose department the volunteer will be working is responsible for applying for the police check before the volunteer starts unpaid work. Date of birth needs to be verified through a driver's license etc. as police checks rely on the correct date of birth.
- Frankston City Council will pay for police checks and the volunteer coordinator or departmental manager will hold a copy.

Liability Coverage

Public Liability Insurance

Volunteers are covered under Council's Public Liability insurance policy while they are acting within the scope of their duties for and on behalf of Council. The policy covers the legal liability of volunteers to third parties resulting from personal injury and/or property damage claims subject to the policy terms, conditions and exclusions. Volunteers working on Council property but under the direction/control of community groups are not covered under liability policy. This is because they are performing work for and on behalf of their particular group, and not Frankston City Council.

Personal Accident Insurance

Work Cover does not cover volunteers, however, volunteers (over 16 years of age) are covered under Council's Personal Accident insurance policy whilst they are acting within the scope of their duties for and on behalf of Council. Cover is provided against accidental bodily injury or death (excluding any condition that is also a sickness) according to a Schedule of Capital Benefits and subject to the policy terms, conditions and exclusions.

Car Insurance

Council does NOT provide insurance cover for volunteers' private motor vehicles, so in the instance of any accident the volunteer's private motor vehicle will not be covered by Council or the third party's motor vehicle insurance. In the instance of any accident, Council will not pay any expenses.

In regards to Council owned motor vehicles, volunteers are covered whilst driving a Council owned vehicle provided it is being driven with Council's authority on Council business and the volunteer holds a current Driver's License. Council must sight and take a copy of the volunteer's Driver's License.

Dealing with Clients and the Public

When dealing with clients and or the public, volunteers need to be aware that they are representing Council and that any contact with the media is to be made at a

Management level or through the public relations officer at Council. If volunteers are unsure of a situation they should always speak to their coordinator.

Volunteers working with clients should be aware of their personal boundaries as a volunteer. What support and services they provide to clients within their role as a volunteer and what is not within their role. Volunteers need to feel it is O.K. to say no.

Volunteers should wear their name badge to identify themselves, when entering client's homes.

Confidentiality

Volunteers need to be made aware that the privacy of clients, other volunteers and staff is of paramount importance.

Identification

Identification of volunteers is important for client safety therefore a Council name badge (that clearly state volunteer) needs to be provided should be worn when entering client's homes. Name badges are only to be worn while volunteering on behalf of Council.

Out of Pocket Expenses

Council philosophy is that volunteers should not be out of pocket in order to perform their volunteer duties. The petrol costs to and from the client's residence and other out of pocket expenses in most cases will be covered by Council. However these costs and the reimbursement of same will be negotiated with the volunteer prior to any duties taking place. Petrol cost to place of work (where council service is performed) and home will not be covered by Council, as these costs are part of volunteering.

Petrol vouchers are available for meals on wheels delivery volunteers. Procedure for claiming out of pocket expenses may vary depending on where within Council the volunteer is performing his/her duties. Check with your coordinator regarding procedure.

Use of vehicle

In some cases, volunteers may have access to the council car pool if authorised by the departmental manager. Procedures may vary depending on the area of service.

In the instance of any accident, volunteers are covered whilst driving a Council owned motor vehicle provided it is being driven with Council's authority on Council business and the volunteer holds a current Driver's License. Council must sight and take a copy of the volunteer's Driver's License.

Grievance Procedures

Principles:

- Any volunteer has the right to make a complaint or raise any issues of legitimate concern.
- All issues/complaints will be dealt with according to the type and degree of complaint.
- There is fair and prompt response to issues/complaints raised.
- Volunteers will be provided with information of the procedure to raise complaints
- Issues/complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner
- Grievances and outcomes will be recorded. Where appropriate copies of written outcomes will be forward to relevant individuals

Responsibilities of volunteers in the grievance procedure:

- Ensure that the issue/complaint is legitimate and is not based on personal bias or personal value judgments
- The volunteer must raise issues as they arise with the appropriate co-coordinator. The co-coordinator will endeavor to resolve the conflict
- The complaint/issue should not be discussed with other volunteers or staff
- The volunteer must be prepared to enter into discussion/mediation/negotiation to ensure a satisfactory outcome for the client and themselves.

Grievance Procedure

1. Initially, the volunteer should discuss the situation with their co-coordinator, clearly outlining the grievance and the proposed action(s) required to alleviate the situation.
2. The volunteer co-coordinator will then need to talk to the third party involved in the dispute to get his or her views.
3. The volunteer co-coordinator may then call a meeting between the parties to discuss/mediate a solution to the dispute.
4. If the grievance/dispute is of major consequence to councils reputation or has legal ramifications the volunteer co-coordinator should pass this information on to their immediate supervisor or Manager.
5. If no settlement has been reached and/or there is no change in the offending behavior or the situation within (twenty) 20 working days following the initial discussion, the volunteer should raise the issue with the Manager of the service area.

Disciplinary Counseling

Disciplinary Counseling is to identify and rectify inappropriate or unsatisfactory behaviour in dealing with clients and or/staff, or other volunteers.

There are three stages of disciplinary counselling:

First stage: Counselling should be undertaken if a co-coordinator notices minor lapses in attitude, performance or behaviour by a volunteer working under their direction. First stage counselling is a form of action over and above normal co-coordinator/volunteer communication.

Formal Counselling: focuses on more serious instances of inappropriate or unsatisfactory behaviour e.g. the volunteer's refusal to carry out an instructions, verbal abuse of staff members, other volunteers, members of the public, or clients.

Warning Counselling: may be undertaken in cases of serious inappropriate behaviour or behaviour which could result in breaches of duty of care. (Duty of care simply refers to the amount of care that could reasonably be expected from a volunteer in the performance of their duties) Volunteers should be warned that further inappropriate behaviour could lead to revocation of their appointment.

Dismissal may occur where a volunteer has grossly misused or taken advantage of their role as a volunteer. This would include any instance of using an I.D. card, or authority as a volunteer to achieve any benefit, privilege or participation in any activity outside authorised duties with Council, any may also include unauthorised advise or instruction to clients.

Any breach in confidentiality or any other improper practice ie. stealing from a client would also be grounds for dismissal.