POLICY COVERSHEET

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Volunteering is at the heart of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI). We firmly believe in the ethos and value of volunteering, and believe that volunteers make a vital contribution to society as a whole, and to the aims and mission of the DAI. We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation, and within all appropriate activities.

It is vital that the DAI present a model of good practice in volunteer management. We aim to train, support and supervise volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise. We are committed to equality of opportunity for all volunteers. The DAI aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers. It is the DAI's intention that volunteers will benefit and prosper from their experience with the organisation.

Definition of Volunteering

"*Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, and individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment*."
The White Paper Supporting Voluntary Activity (2000)

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide all staff and volunteers with clear guidelines on involving volunteers; to outline expectations; and to explain management / supervision systems and operating standards. It supplements other DAI policies and procedures. This policy does not constitute a binding contract and is subject to change. Volunteers and staff are expected to act in accordance with all DAI policies and procedures.

1.2 Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary Board members) are expected to facilitate this process.

1.3 Eligibility

The DAI will consider involving anyone who wishes to volunteer with the organisation. Individuals must however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and may only be placed if their skills match the needs of the organisation. Volunteer applicants should disclose if they have any real or perceived conflict of interest or conflict of loyalty with any aspect of the organisation.

1.4 Relationship with paid staff

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of paid staff (including employment scheme workers), not as a substitute for them. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.

1.5 Working conditions

Volunteers are treated as full members of the DAI team. They are treated as equally and fairly as paid staff, and are included in the organisation's functions and decision-making processes wherever practical. Volunteers are provided with appropriate work sites and have access to the space, equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.

1.6 Working times

Working times are negotiated between the relevant line-manager and the volunteer and 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 organisational problems. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform their supervisor as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

1.7 Volunteer Roles

The DAI engages volunteers across the organisation with day-to-day administration, specific project plans, fundraising, event planning and coordination, communications and social media and training. The Board of Directors are also volunteers. On occasion the DAI is approached by individuals wishing to offer their skills, experience and support in a particular area and in these instances a volunteer role can be designed to facilitate all of this and in line with DAI's work.

1.8 Expectations

DAI expects volunteers to:

- Treat all DAI staff, fellow volunteers, clients and the general public with respect and dignity
- Maintain and respect the confidentiality of the services that the DAI provides
- follow and adhere to all DAI policy and best practice guidelines
- only share information on dyslexia with the general public that is evidence-based and approved by the DAI
- be committed, reliable and punctual
- ask for help and support when needed

1.9 Volunteer Induction

It is important to the DAI that volunteers feel confident in their volunteer role. As such the DAI is committed to ensuring that all volunteers are given an induction and training

period of a duration deemed suitable for their role. In light of this, volunteers are required to attend all such training and inductions offered to them.

2. RECRUITMENT

2.1 Recruitment and Selection

Volunteer positions are advertised on www.dyslexia.ie , through various social media platforms and where appropriate through volunteer recruitment channels (e.g. boardmatch.ie). All applications are sent to the DAI along with a CV, cover letter and or application form, as outlined in the advertised role. Applicants are then shortlisted and asked to attend an informal interview with one~~1~~ or two~~2~~ members of DAI staff. For certain roles, group interviews may be conducted. Volunteers are selected based on requirements of the role, experience, skills, availability and interest.

2.2 Appointment and Probation

Successful volunteers will be notified via telephone and/or email. References are required and depending on the role, volunteers may be required to complete the online Garda Vetting process. All placements are subject to an initial agreed trial period. The volunteer's trial or probation period is dependent on the nature and hours of the volunteer role, and is communicated via the volunteer agreement. Most trial periods are short, no more than a number of weeks, but can be extended if deemed necessary by DAI.

2.3 Role Descriptions

To ensure that programmes and services are provided efficiently and effectively, DAI will provide each volunteer with a specific written role description prior to beginning their role. The role description lays out the specific tasks involved in the position, the qualities and skills required to fill the position and any other relevant details of the role.

2.4 Induction

On a volunteer's first day, they can expect to receive a planned induction with their line manager. This induction involves, but is not limited to, an introduction to all staff/volunteers, general housekeeping, volunteer policy, terms and nature of the role, DAI operations, DAI services and, as appropriate, further policies and procedures.

2.5 Training

Role specific internal training will be provided to assist volunteers with their position and its tasks where applicable.

2.6 Supervision of Volunteers

It is vital that lines of communication operate openly between the DAI and volunteers. In light of this, volunteers will have access to all of the information that the DAI deem necessary for them to carry out their role effectively. This places a high level of trust on a volunteer and, as such, volunteers are expected to carry out their activities with discretion,

high regard for confidentiality and in a professional manner. Breach of these principles will result in the immediate dissolution of the relationship between the DAI and the volunteer in question.

Every volunteer will be made aware of their contact person/ line manager in the DAI, and they will have direct access to this person. This direct access may happen via email, phone or in person

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 Appropriate behaviour
The DAI is committed to managing volunteers in a manner that meets the needs of both the individual and the organisation.

3.2 Confidentiality
The DAI respects a volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with DAI.

3.3 Intellectual Property
All written material, whether held on paper or digitally, which was made or acquired by volunteers during the course of their involvement with DAI is our property and our copyright and therefore should not be disclosed to any person without our written consent.
Volunteers are expected to exercise caution and care with any documents or other material containing confidential information and at the end of your involvement with the organisation, return any such material in your possession.

3.4 Representation of DAI
Volunteers must seek prior approval from DAI before undertaking any representation on behalf of the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the media, joint initiatives with other organisations and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

4. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

4.1 Management of Volunteers
The DAI is committed to managing volunteers in a manner that meets the needs of both the organisation and the volunteer. Each line manager is responsible for the management of their assigned volunteers, including answering questions regarding policies, delivering induction, arranging training, providing support and supervision and dealing with any complaints or grievances involving volunteers.

Volunteers are managed by a staff member/line manager who has the skills and experience in a particular role, and has responsibility for implementing the strategic goals of a particular area.

4.2 Support and Supervision

All volunteers are allocated a designated supervisor/line manager. It is the role of the designated supervisor to provide advice and guidance relating to the work, provide support and supervision for the duration of the volunteer role and encourage training opportunities where possible.

DAI commits to supporting all volunteers to develop personally and professionally within their role.

The DAI adheres to all Health and Safety legislation in pursuit of a safe working environment, as far as is practicable, and in line with the DAI Health and Safety Policy that is available upon request from the DAI. Volunteers and DAI staff have responsibility for their own safety and should be aware of this.

Volunteers who are taking on significant/regular volunteering with the DAI may be entitled to request reimbursement of reasonable expenses where appropriate. These expenses may include travel via public transport to and from the place of volunteering, lunch or additional costs in some circumstances

4.3 Corrective Action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following support and supervision sessions. Examples include extending a probation period, additional training and/or reassignment.

4.4 Time and Duty commitments

DAI staff are expected to meet time and duty commitments for volunteers, to provide appropriate time at induction, training and on a day-to-day basis.

DAI will aim to provide volunteers with notice regarding upcoming scheduled events or training where their attendance is required.

If a volunteer is sick or unable to commit to their role for personal reasons, they should notify their designated supervisor/line manager by phone as soon as possible. In addition, if a volunteer wishes to take a holiday, they are requested to notify their designated supervisor/line manager and provide at least one week’s notice so that workloads can be managed effectively.

4.5 Ending the volunteer relationship

Volunteer roles have a natural end where the individual will often move on to further opportunities or paid work. In this instance DAI would conduct an exit interview with the volunteer as a way to capture feedback on their role, experience within the organisation and future learning opportunities.

In the instance of a volunteer breaching DAI policies, grievance and disciplinary procedures are outlined below.

4.6 Grievance and Disciplinary Difficulties

All volunteers have access to a process to address any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their work or how they are managed. If a volunteer is unhappy in their role, or have a grievance they wish to discuss, they may approach their designated line manager, or escalate their grievance to the CEO. The matter will be dealt with in a private and confidential manner and in line with DAI's HR standards/Grievance Policy.

Volunteers who do not adhere to DAI's policies and procedures, or who fail to perform their volunteer tasks satisfactorily may be asked to leave. Volunteer involvement will not be ended until the individual has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for being asked to leave with the supervisor. Grounds for being asked to leave include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gross misconduct
- Being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol)
- Theft
- Misuse of equipment and materials
- Abuse of clients and co-workers
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Failure to abide by policies and procedures
- Failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard

When a volunteer is asked to leave this will be communicated both in person and in writing to the individual. If a volunteer is deemed to have behaved with extreme detriment to DAI and its reputation, and to the health and safety of others involved in the organisation, DAI reserves the right to end its relationship with the individual with immediate effect.

5. GENERAL INFORMATION

5.1 Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to DAI, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. DAI staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation.

5.2 Insurance

Insurance is provided by DAI to cover all volunteers while working on behalf of, and at the direction of, DAI. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover. See DAI Safe Driving policy.

5.3 Personal Information and Confidentiality

All information is dealt with in accordance with the DAI Data Protection Policy and GDPR/Data Protection Acts. A folder and database is maintained on all volunteers, to include their initial application, role description along with any relevant information on scheduling and notes. All personal data held on file will be shredded or safely destroyed in line with GDPR guidelines. Volunteers are able to access their personal information freely upon request as per the DAI Data Protection Policy and GDPR regulations. Responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with their line manager.

5.4 References

Where appropriate, and upon request, volunteers may be furnished with a reference that states the role, days and hours the volunteer worked only.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Volunteer Involvement

The DAI monitors and evaluates volunteer involvement in the organisation on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements.

6.2 Feedback

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the CEO who will ensure that it is considered fully.

6.3 Review

This document will be reviewed by the Governance sub-committee as required, and ratified by the Directors when amendments are presented to them for agreement.