



Blossom Seeds

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# Volunteer Management Policy

*This policy provides the general volunteer management procedures for the volunteers of activities organized by Blossom Seeds Limited “BSL”. It laid out the rules, procedures, roles and responsibilities between the volunteers, the seniors and BSL. In order to remain relevant, this policy will be reviewed and updated regularly.*

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# 1. Overview of Volunteering

## A. Roles of Volunteering

Volunteers play an active role in caring and enriching the lives and complementing the care and services we provide for the seniors that we serve.

## B. Volunteering Opportunities

We offer volunteers the opportunity to serve in different programmes and services. The various volunteering opportunities are outlined below.

- Centre activities which includes the following:
  - Conduct activities
  - Prepare materials and refreshments for the activities
  - Set up and clean up venue
  - Advertise and raise awareness of activities conducted
  - Befriend and engage seniors in activities
  - Other logistics and facilities requirements
- Community outreach and home visits which includes the following:
  - Conduct home visits, distribute goodie bags and other items
  - Befriend seniors at their homes
  - Escort seniors to medical appointments
  - Provide home cleaning, groceries shopping and other services to seniors
- Organising outings/events which includes the following:-
  - Organise outings/events
  - Escort and accompany seniors during the outings/events
- Other opportunities such as IT, publicity, administrative and support functions as required from time to time.

The detailed job descriptions of various volunteer positions are listed in Annex A.

### **C. Volunteers Recruitment**

Recruiting volunteers is very much like hiring staff, and we seek to ensure the best possible match between interested volunteers and organizational needs. In our recruitment practices, we adhere to the following policies and disclose them to potential and new volunteers:

#### **I. Volunteer/Staff Relationship Policy**

Volunteers are critical to our success, and are essential to the organization's day-to-day operations. Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of the organization, each with complementary roles to play.

#### **II. Equal Opportunity Policy**

We maintain a strong policy of equal opportunity for everyone. We recruit, accept, train, promote and dismiss volunteers on the basis of personal competence and position performance, without regard to race, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

In recruiting volunteers, we refrain from asking questions that would require the volunteer to reveal sensitive information that are not relevant to the roles/job. The interview should focus more on criteria that assesses the volunteer's ability and suitability to perform a task on behalf of the organization.

#### **Targeted Avenues/Venues for Recruitment**

- Blossom Seeds' Website
- Referrals from staff/volunteers
- Road shows - at least semi-annually (can coincide with government agencies organised road shows such as Senior Volunteerism Road shows by C3A)
- Collaborations with educational institutions, corporates and other organizations

All applicants are to fill in a Volunteer Application Form attached in Annex B.

### **D. Volunteers screening and selection**

The purpose of a screening process is to ensure volunteers of like interests are engaged and to enable a better match between the capabilities of a volunteer and the tasks to be assigned. This ensures effective utilization of manpower resources.

The Volunteer Manager should review the application forms to do the first screening of applicants. The review should focus on the following:-

- a) Qualifications and prior experience fit the job role
- b) Medical conditions
- c) Proficiency in languages
- d) Availability and commitment

After the initial screening, telephone or face-to-face interviews are carried out with shortlisted applicants by the recruiting department and/or the volunteer manager to assess suitability.

### **E. Volunteer Training**

Because we see volunteers as representatives of our organization, we orient and train using methods similar to the orientation and training of our highly qualified staff. To prepare for their volunteer assignment, all individuals volunteering for BSL engage in orientation and training in the following areas:

- I) A general orientation on the mission, values, nature and purpose of the agency;
- II) A specific orientation on the nature and operation of the program or activity for which they will serve and on the purposes and requirements of the job which they are accepting.

#### **General Orientation**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organization, all pertinent policies and procedures. The volunteers will also receive a volunteer handbook which covers an overview of the organization, their dos and don'ts and other things to note in their orientation. The volunteer is to sign an acknowledgement of all the terms and conditions covered in the handbook during the orientation as attached in Annex C.

#### **Job Specific Orientation**

On top of detailed job requirements, all volunteers will be given a brief on the centres/events/activities they would be involved in. Centre-based volunteers will be brought around the centre for a tour and brief on the centre's dos and don'ts and also the broad roles and responsibilities of different areas of staff/volunteers. Activity-based volunteers such as befriending and medical escort volunteers will be briefed on the overall objective of the activity, areas and beneficiaries they will cover etc.

All volunteers will have a description for the work they perform on behalf of the organisation. The volunteer coordinator in the respective areas will check each volunteer's required training checklist and arrange for the volunteers to undergo these training within the timeframe stated in the checklist. Required training listed on the checklist are specific training to provide the volunteers with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment including but not limited to safety training, first aid course, on the job training (such as shadowing a mentor) etc.

## **F. Volunteers Monitoring and Management**

1. To hold in strict confidence all personal and confidential information of volunteers and to share only upon informed consent by the volunteers.
2. To ensure volunteers read and understand the contents of the Volunteer Handbook, and to ensure signed acknowledgements are obtained.
3. To keep abreast of the interests of volunteers.
4. Use effective communication skills and keep communication lines open.
5. Treat all volunteers with respect.
6. To ensure roles of volunteers and staff are complementary with each other to prevent unnecessary conflicts from arising.
7. Provide regular, formal and informal feedback and be encouraging and generous with praises.
8. When any volunteer fail to deliver or have disciplinary problem(s), take time out to cool off and mitigate the gaps.

## **2. Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Duties and Responsibilities of Volunteers**

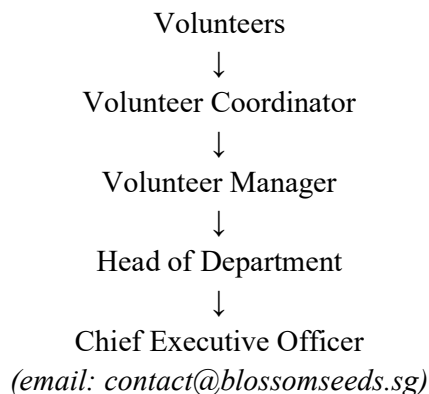
The volunteers are to adhere to the following duties and responsibilities when carrying out the activities.

1. To be a representative of BSL, acting only in the capacity of a volunteer and should not act or make any statement which might affect or obligate BSL, directly to the media without prior consent from the management representative of BSL.
2. To work in partnership with the staff to implement any activities or programmes so as to achieve the objectives for the respective activities and-or programmes
3. To actively perform the duties and adhere to the goals and procedures set forth by BSL.
4. To observe confidentiality at all times.
5. To be mindful of sensitivity of the needs of various cultural groups, gender and religious practices of all seniors.
6. To ensure communication are positive and of a balanced portrayal of cultural minorities at all times.

7. The rights to safety, when engaging in activities with the elderly, either at their residences or designated venues.
8. To refuse assignments or withdraw services
9. Ability to document interactions with elderly and highlight any concerns and issues such as deterioration of physical and mental state conditions, abuse, missing medication and needs.
10. Not to sexually harass the elderly whether in conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that might reasonably cause offense, embarrassment or humiliation.
11. A good level of health and fitness (particularly for manual labour).
12. Approved out-of-pocket expenditures will be reimbursed.
13. No money handling or involvement in any personal or financial matter with the elderly without prior notification or approval of the organization.
14. No evangelizing or religious imposition.

## **B. Volunteers grievance procedures**

Volunteers should approach their coordinators about any grievances and in the event that the grievance is against their coordinators, the volunteers should approach the next in the line as shown below.



## **C. Service Acceptance**

BSL accepts the service of all volunteers on the understanding that services provided are at the sole discretion of BSL. Volunteers agree that BSL may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteering relationship with BSL. Volunteers should have the opportunity to discuss the reasons for the termination.

The volunteers may also at any time for whatever reason terminate the relationship with BSL.

All notice to volunteer or by volunteer manager should be communicated at least 2 weeks in advance.

## **Code of Conduct & Ethics**

All volunteers should abide by the following code of conduct and ethics when providing services under the organization.

### **- Commitment to seniors**

Volunteers' primary responsibility is to promote the social, psycho-emotional and physical well-being of seniors by regarding all seniors as individuals with their own feelings and emotions and not to be prejudiced and judgmental towards them.

### **- Informed consent**

Volunteers should respect and promote seniors' rights to make their own choices and decisions and refrain from imposing their views on them or making decisions on their behalf. However, with the exception when the senior has limited capacity to comprehend or grant informed consent due to medically certified diseases or mental or intellectual disabilities or psychological stress or intended decision will bear foreseeable undesirable consequences to the seniors and/or others. Any action and decision made on behalf of seniors has to be made known to the volunteer coordinator or manager and to ensure that there is proper documentation to record this.

### **- Appropriate Conduct or Physical Contact**

Volunteers should not engage in inappropriate physical contact with any senior; especially when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the senior as a result of the contact. Volunteers who engage in appropriate physical contact with seniors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

### **- Derogatory Language**

Volunteers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about seniors and to use accurate and respectful language at all times.

### **- Payment for Services & Monetary Transactions**

Volunteers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to the seniors. As a general rule, the volunteer should not be handling any monetary transaction for the seniors.

### **- Conflict of Interest**

Volunteers should understand the need to discuss any potential conflict and to commit to being truthful in all matters to do with the volunteering relationship at BSL. Volunteers



should not make use of their position to solicit business or engagement which might affect the objectivity of volunteering.

### **Performance Review**

The volunteer manager and coordinators need to perform on-going supervision of volunteers. When a volunteer is not performing up to the standard required or is in violation of any code of conduct or guidelines, the coordinator and/or shall engage in a feedback session with the volunteer. All parties involved are to abstain from unnecessary criticism and avoid engaging each other in a confrontational manner.

Effective supervision or performance review session can facilitate volunteer development through providing opportunities for both staff and volunteers to clarify work assignments and expectations and enable staff to identify each volunteer's potential.

### **Discontinuation of Service**

If a volunteer wish to leave their volunteer service for any reason, they have to contact the Volunteer Manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made. To ensure smooth operations, we would appreciate it the volunteer can endeavour to give as much advance notice (preferably at least 2 weeks in advance) to BSL. As a volunteer, you have the right to terminate your volunteer service for any reason. BSL reserves the same right.

Volunteers who are not in compliance with our Standards of Conduct or Confidentiality requirement, who engage in unsafe or unseemly behaviour, or who violate our practices or policies as detailed in this Handbook, may be subject to dismissal. BSL may request a volunteer to leave immediately if warranted by the circumstance.

## **Volunteers' Rights & Benefits**

### **A. Reward and Recognition**

In order to retain and recognize the efforts of the volunteers and to value them as part of BSL, the following rewards or appreciations are designed to give due recognition and recommendation should be given with due considerations by the volunteer manager.

1. Volunteers' Appreciation Event – held once a year (usually in December)
2. Insurance Coverage – volunteers doing work for BSL in the centre and/or other appointed venues are covered for Group Personal Accident Insurance.

3. Approved Courses – volunteers who are committed to serve the organization are eligible for sponsorship to attend training courses that are relevant to their volunteer work.
4. Letter of Reference – Volunteers may apply for letters of reference after 1 year of continuous service or at least 12 volunteering activities within a year.
5. Volunteer ‘Career Path’ – to identify suitable volunteers to be groomed for leadership roles such as -
  - a. Appointment as Volunteer Group Leader
  - b. Trainer to train volunteers
  - c. Appointed as project in-charge (e.g. Event Chief Organiser)
6. National Awards  
Deserving individuals are nominated for awards in recognition of their performance and contributions for national recognition.

## **B. Claims**

In general, claims relating to transport and purchase of materials for activities validly incurred on behalf of the organization for purposes of carrying out their volunteer services are allowable. All volunteers are entitled to make claims for expenses up to a maximum of S\$100 (or its equivalent) validly incurred with prior approval from the coordinator. All claims should be filed within 30 days from incurrence using the Claims Form attached in Annex D.

## **C. Volunteers’ Rights**

All volunteers have the following rights:-

- Work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunities and no discrimination.
- Be adequately covered by insurance.
- Be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are working for.
- Be given a copy of the organisation’s volunteer policy that affects your work.
- Not to do the work of a paid staff during industrial dispute.
- Have a job description and agreed volunteering hours.

- Have access to a grievance procedure.
- Be provided with orientation to the organisation.
- Provided with sufficient and relevant trainings to do your job.
- Have your confidential and personal information respected as per what is outlined in the Volunteer Handbook (see section on PDPA).

## **Version update:**

This policy has been revised and updated as follows.

s/n	Update details	By who:	Date:
1	Home Help Volunteer Manual	Vina Toh	25 June 2016
2	BSL Volunteer Management Policy	Sherry Yeo	14 October 2018