

Victoria READ Society
Volunteer Management
Policies and Procedures

December 16, 2008

Volunteer Management

Vision, mandate, values and working principles

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Victoria READ Society
Volunteer Management Policies and Procedures

Vision

Everyone in society has the literacy skills to contribute to their full potential.

Mandate

As a vibrant, community-based organization we help children, youth and adults gain literacy and basic skills, including reading, writing and mathematics.

We respond to the emerging needs of our communities and collaborate to make literacy and basic skills accessible to all.

Our business is learning

At READ we...

- assess individual and community needs
- collaborate to effectively meet learner needs
- inform programs by using best practices
- develop literacy and basic skills programs and curriculum
- teach individuals and groups
- advocate for our students
- facilitate community awareness and understanding about literacy and basic skills
- build confidence and capability in individuals

Values

READ believes...

Literacy is essential for children, youth and adults.

Learning occurs most effectively in a safe, caring environment that honours and addresses individual learning styles and needs.

Professional teachers are critical to the development of effective literacy and basic skills solutions.

Healthy organizations promote diversity, humour and creativity.

Sustainable organizations must meet client needs with excellent services and products and must be supported by effective financial management.

Relationships founded on honesty and integrity provide a foundation for effective solutions.

Working principles

Respect: All individuals—students, families, donors and funders, volunteers, community partners and staff—must be treated with respect.

Collaboration: Communities are best served when diverse, committed partners engage in creating sustainable solutions.

Inclusion: We must ensure that those who experience the issue are part of the solution.

Celebration: Literacy successes should be shared and recognized through stories and celebrations.

Accountability: We measure results and hold ourselves accountable for the effectiveness of our work.

Purpose

These policies and procedures have been developed to:

- have volunteers play a key role in supporting the Victoria READ Society in achieving its mandate by providing non-teaching services including, but not limited to, reception, teaching assistance, accounting assistance, clerical support and special projects
- ensure the Society provides its services and programs in compliance with the legal and regulatory requirements in British Columbia and Canada, and
- establish fair and workable practices for volunteers whatever their particular role at the Victoria READ Society

Background

Volunteers are individuals who, without expectation of payment, contribute time and service to READ in the belief that their activity will be both beneficial to the community and satisfying to themselves. They are considered to be team members working alongside paid staff and other volunteers in fulfilling READ's mandate.

Volunteers bring to READ particular talents, skills and knowledge of the community. These skills and abilities enrich the services offered by the salaried staff and enable the Society to develop new or to enhance existing programs and services.

Although the final responsibility for policy and program adoption lies with the Board of Director, volunteers are welcome to make suggestions, through the Executive Director, for review, change or further development of any guidelines contained in this document.

The Board of Directors, its staff and volunteers subscribe to the principles of the BC Human Rights Code.

In accordance with this Code, READ adheres in all its practices to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation or age of that person or that group or class of persons, and expects its volunteers to do the same.

1. Basic volunteer requirements

Policy Statement

All volunteers of the Victoria READ Society must have an up-to-date Criminal Record Check. Volunteers may not begin their assignment until the criminal record check has been completed and returned to the Executive Director.

Guidelines/Procedures

- The Society supports the volunteer in obtaining a free Criminal Record Check from the local police department.
- Once a volunteer is interviewed and selected for a position, the Executive Director will provide them with a letter indicating their volunteer status.
- The volunteer must take this to their local police station and have the criminal record check completed.
- The Society covers the cost of a site-specific Criminal Record Check.

2. Becoming a volunteer

Policy Statement

The Victoria READ Society welcomes responses to volunteer postings and ensures that all volunteers are treated professionally and in accordance with the BC Human Rights Code.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Job positions are posted on the Victoria READ Society web site as well as other locations where the Society is likely to find appropriate volunteers.
- Interviews are conducted by the Executive Director or Volunteer Coordinator and staff supervisor using the volunteer job description.
- References are requested and checked.
- Assuming a positive outcome of the interview, reference checks and Criminal Record Check process, volunteers are placed in the position for a three- month trial period.
- At the end of the three-month period, the staff supervisor and the volunteer evaluate the position to ensure that the goals of the job and the expectations of the volunteer are being satisfied.

3. Relationship to paid staff

Policy Statement

Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of the Society. Volunteers and staff have complementary roles in achieving the Society's goals and objectives.

Guidelines/Procedures

- It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.
- The Society will provide each of the partners with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

- Economic conditions may dictate that volunteers will be asked to fill what may previously have been considered a paid position.

4. Volunteer job description

Policy Statement

All volunteers are entitled to receive a clear and comprehensive job description at the outset of their placement.

Guidelines/Procedures

- The Executive Director and senior staff review volunteer job descriptions annually.
- The Human Resources Committee is asked for input during the review process.
- The Executive Director informs the Board of Directors of changes to job descriptions.
- Supervising staff review the job description with the volunteer at the beginning of the placement and at the three-month review period.
- Volunteers are encouraged to make suggestions regarding job design or changes to the volunteer positions.
- New job descriptions are developed based on organizational need.

Job descriptions specify the following

- Position general responsibilities and reporting relationships
- Hours of work
- Qualifications
- Working conditions

5. Confidentiality

Policy Statement

All volunteers of the Victoria READ Society are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to beginning their assignment.

Background

The Society works with confidential information on a regular basis. The confidentiality of this information is essential to organizational continuance.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Volunteers are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement at their orientation.
- Breach of confidentiality is regarded as a very serious matter and may result in the termination of the volunteer's services.

6. Privacy

Policy Statement

Volunteer records are considered confidential and are kept in a secure location. Personal information is considered confidential and is treated in a manner that complies with the *BC Personal Information Protection Act*. (PIPA).

Guidelines/Procedures

- Volunteers may ask to examine their own files.
- All requests of this nature will be passed to the Executive Director or Volunteer Coordinator.
- The Executive Director has up to 48 hours to provide the volunteer with his/her personal file.
- The volunteer may not remove the file from the Society premises but may copy information from the file.
- Inactive files are maintained for a minimum of one year after which they are destroyed in a secure manner.

7. Volunteer orientation

Policy Statement

All volunteers are given an introduction to the Society's policies and procedures, orientation to the overall organization, training related to emergency procedures and training specific to the program area in which they will work.

Guidelines/Procedures

The Executive Director or Volunteer Coordinator and staff to whom the volunteer reports provide the volunteer with an orientation session on their first day in the position.

This session:

- provides background on READ
- outlines READ's vision, mandate, values and working principles
- reviews and discusses READ programs, services and locations
- outlines READ's volunteer and general policies
- reviews the position and clarifies reporting relationships
- presents the Confidentiality Agreement for signature
- briefs the volunteer on volunteer record-keeping and time-logs
- introduces the volunteer to staff and board (when possible)

8. Volunteer training

Policy Statement

All volunteers receive in-house training to ensure that they are fully informed to perform their assigned duties.

Ongoing training will be provided in new technologies or when a volunteer undertakes new tasks or increased responsibilities.

Guidelines/Procedures

- A training program will be put in place for each volunteer position.
- Staff, to whom the volunteer reports, provide approved training.
- Staff, who may work closely with the volunteer, provide additional training where required.

9. Volunteer development

Policy Statement

The Victoria READ Society recognizes the importance of ongoing training and development for volunteers.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Volunteers are expected to attend in-house workshops and conferences relevant both to their job assignment and to the general goals of READ.
- Volunteers are welcome to attend other READ on-site training opportunities if there is sufficient space.

10. Evaluation

Policy Statement

READ is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of volunteer work performance. Volunteers are entitled to receive constructive feedback on the performance of their work.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Informal evaluations are conducted for all volunteers once they have completed three-months (3) in a specific role.
- Evaluation procedures are to be constructive, supportive and flexible.
- Evaluations are intended to help the volunteer achieve his/her own goals and to support the Society in maintaining its high standards of service to the community.
- Formal evaluations are conducted on an annual basis following the first three-month review.

11. Recognition

Policy Statement

The Executive Director and Board will make every effort to ensure that enabling funds are available to provide concrete recognition of the value of volunteer services.

Guidelines/Procedures

Special events take place from time to time expressly to acknowledge volunteers or their efforts on behalf of READ.

12. Discipline

Policy Statement

Volunteers deserve the same respect and treatment as paid staff, including the right to be protected from wrongful dismissal.

Guidelines/Procedures

In the event that a volunteer does not adhere to the principles, policies and procedures of READ or fails to perform his/her volunteer assignment he/she may be subject to the same disciplinary action as a staff member.

This will take the form of progressive discipline and will include the following steps.

- A verbal warning i.e. the Staff supervisor will discuss the situation with the volunteer and offer suitable help in correcting it (e.g. training, re-assignment, a probationary period etc.).
- A written warning. A copy of this document will be placed in the volunteer's confidential file.
- Staff will brief the Executive Director on the situation and will ensure the he/she is made aware of additional recommended action
- Termination of volunteer's services. This is regarded as a last resort and applied only when other appropriate and available approaches have been tried and failed.
- Immediate Dismissal. A volunteer may be dismissed without warning for just cause. Grounds for this may include but are not limited to: gross misconduct, theft, abuse of clients or co-workers, breach of confidentiality, etc.

The volunteer is required to surrender any equipment, property, keys or records belonging to READ and is required to leave the building.

At all times the volunteer has the right of appeal to the Executive Director and thence to the Board of Directors.

13. Harassment and discrimination

Policy Statement

The Society is committed to providing a working environment that is safe and welcoming.

The Victoria READ Society does not tolerate behavior defined as harassment or discrimination by the BC Human Rights Code.

Background

Harassment

Harassment means unwelcome behavior that is directed at and is offensive to another person. This behaviour includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the following grounds of discrimination: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin,

religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation or age of that person or that group or class of persons.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Any volunteer who considers that he/she is the victim of harassment has the right to discuss the situation with the Staff supervisor.
- If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the volunteer may lodge a formal written complaint to the Executive Director.
- If the Executive Director does not address the situation, the volunteer may lodge a formal complaint with the Board of Directors.
- Volunteers who continue to violate this policy following these interventions are subject to disciplinary actions including immediate dismissal.

Background

Discrimination

Discrimination is based on the definitions under the BC Human Rights Code. Should any discriminatory incident take place involving a client and a volunteer immediate action will be taken using the following procedure:

Guidelines/Procedures

- Immediate action is taken when an alleged incident of discrimination occurs.
- Staff will make the offended individual aware that the incident was observed
- Staff outline the Society policies to the offended party and state that the alleged matter will be taken to the offending individual.
- Staff supervisor is apprised of the incident and informs the Executive Director.
- The witness to the incident will discuss the matter privately with the volunteer and the client, if he/she wishes, to resolve the situation. If both parties are not satisfied, the matter will go to the Executive Director and, if necessary, to the Board of Directors.
- Written documentation of the incident will be kept by the Staff supervisor in a secure location.

Any volunteer whose behaviour is found, after due consideration by all the parties concerned, to still be in violation of these policies will be subject to disciplinary action including immediate dismissal as in Section 12 above.

14. Insurance

Policy Statement

All volunteers are covered by the Society's Third Party Insurance in the event of injury in the workplace.

15. Travel allowance

Policy Statements

All volunteers are reimbursed an amount equal to bus fare for their regular shift.

Volunteers whose position requires them to travel to other locations in the community will be reimbursed for mileage at the current rate paid to staff.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Prior to their first shift, volunteers are informed that bus tickets are available.
- Bus fare is calculated using the time log completed by the volunteer.
- Volunteers who require mileage must submit their travel claims to the staff supervisor on a monthly basis, prior to the 15th of each month.
- Volunteers who do not use transportation to access the READ office or who do not wish to receive travel allowance for whatever reason may, if they choose, sign the allowance cheque over to READ in return for a donation receipt of the same amount.

16. Volunteer expenses

Volunteers are reimbursed for pre-approved, program-specific expenses.

Guidelines/Procedures

- Staff supervisor and coordinator must pre-approve volunteer expenses.
- Volunteers must retain receipts for **all** pre-approved expenditures.
- In cases where the Society provides a cash advance for pre-approved expenses, receipts and an expense report will be submitted to the appropriate coordinator within 15 days of the approved expenditure.
- In all other cases, receipts and an expense report are to be submitted to the appropriate coordinator within 15 days of the approved expenditure.
- Volunteers are reimbursed for expenses within 30 days of submitting receipts and an expense report.

17. Volunteer representation in the media or the community

Policy Statement

The Chair and/or the Executive Director are the spokespersons for the Victoria READ Society. Unless specifically requested, volunteers are not permitted to represent the Society to the media or to speak on behalf of the Society in an official capacity.

Volunteer agreement

Policy Statement

All volunteers will be asked to acknowledge, in writing, that they have read this document and will comply with the policies contained in it.

Guidelines/Procedures

This Manual and the Volunteer Agreement will form part of the orientation session.

18. Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Policy Statement

Volunteers are entitled to be given clearly defined, meaningful assignments that permit them to work cooperatively with paid staff, to participate in the association activities and to receive effective supervision, feedback and recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers agree to perform their assigned duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of Victoria READ Society.

Guidelines/Procedures

Please refer to the attached sheet for a detailed list of expectations.

19. Interpretation of items in this document

Policy Statement

Should any of the items in these policies conflict with any federal or provincial legislation, the provision of the legislation will supersede the items.

Staff Supervisor

Volunteer

Executive Director

Policy development date:

Policy Approval date:

Policy Review date:

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Rights – What you can expect from the organization

You have the right to:

- know what your job is – be given a detailed job description
- know what is expected of you
- be introduced to relevant staff
- be informed as to how you fit into the organization
- be properly supervised
- expect recognition for work well done
- be informed of any changes in condition surrounding your job
- be given a chance to assume more responsibility as you obtain more experience and expertise (where the opportunity permits)
- be treated with respect and dignity
- be provided with feedback on your job performance

Responsibilities – What the organization can expect from you

You have the responsibility to:

- be reliable and punctual
- show interest in the job
- show interest in the organization
- respect confidentiality of information
- provide the organization with adequate notice of your intentions regarding leaving, or not being able to complete the job
- respect the formal channels in the organization
- carry out, to the best of your ability, what is expected of you
- be honest
- call for help when you need it