PHOENIX THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE

1. VOLUNTEER POLICY

Registered Charity Number: 1166858

Policy approved by: Board of Trustees

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Policy owner: Chief Executive Officer / Board Volunteer Coordinator

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1. Purpose of this Policy

The Phoenix Theatre & Arts Centre recognises and values the important contribution that volunteers make to the life, work and success of the charity.

As a small arts charity, we rely on the enthusiasm, skills, experience, time and commitment of volunteers to help us deliver our charitable objectives and provide opportunities for the local community to engage with arts and culture.

Volunteers help us create a welcoming, inclusive and creative environment for artists, audiences, visitors, participants and the wider community.

This policy sets out how we recruit, welcome, support and involve volunteers. It also explains what volunteers can expect from the organisation and the standards of behaviour we hope volunteers will follow.

We are committed to ensuring that volunteering is a positive, rewarding and inclusive experience for everyone involved.

2. Our Commitment to Volunteers

We aim to:

- Value and respect all volunteers and recognise their contribution.
- Provide a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment.

- Treat volunteers fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Provide appropriate information, induction, training and support.
- Match volunteering opportunities to individuals' interests, skills and abilities wherever possible.
- Provide clear information about volunteer roles and expectations.
- Reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with our expenses arrangements.
- Ensure volunteers are appropriately insured for their activities.
- Provide a safe environment and take reasonable steps to protect volunteers from harm.
- Listen to volunteers' views, suggestions and concerns.
- Recognise the contribution volunteers make to the charity and its community.

We want volunteering at The Phoenix Theatre & Arts Centre to be enjoyable, meaningful and accessible.

3. Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who freely gives their time, skills and experience to support the work of the arts centre without receiving payment for their time.

Volunteers are not employees or workers of the charity and volunteering is undertaken on a voluntary basis.

Volunteers may contribute regularly, occasionally, for individual events, exhibitions or projects, or on an informal and flexible basis.

There is no obligation on volunteers to commit to a minimum number of hours or a particular length of service.

Volunteers are free to stop volunteering at any time, although we would appreciate notice where possible so that we can make alternative arrangements.

The charity is equally free to bring a volunteering arrangement to an end where this is considered necessary.

A volunteer role is not a substitute for a paid position. Volunteers will not normally be asked to undertake responsibilities that should properly be carried out by paid employees.

4. Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities will reflect the activities and needs of the arts centre.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- **Events and performances:** Front-of-house support, welcoming audiences, ticket checking, refreshments and assisting with event preparation.
- **Workshops and activities:** Supporting artists, workshop leaders and community activities.
- **Reception and administration:** Answering general enquiries, helping with correspondence and administrative tasks.
- **Fundraising and promotion:** Supporting fundraising activities, distributing publicity and assisting with community engagement.
- **Building and facilities:** Helping with appropriate gardening, maintenance and general presentation tasks.
- **Creative and specialist support:** Offering artistic, technical, professional or practical skills to support the work of the charity.

Each volunteer should receive a clear description of their role, including the nature of the activities, any relevant skills or experience, and the name of the person responsible for their support.

Volunteers will only be asked to undertake activities for which they have received appropriate information, instruction and training.

5. Recruitment and Selection

We welcome interest from people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities, experiences and communities.

Volunteer opportunities may be advertised through the arts centre, its website, social media, community networks and other appropriate channels.

The recruitment process will be proportionate to the nature and responsibilities of the role.

This may include:

- An informal conversation about the individual's interests and availability.
- Discussing the volunteer opportunity and expectations.
- Considering relevant skills, experience and support requirements.
- References or other checks where appropriate.
- Safeguarding checks where the role is legally eligible for them.

We aim to make recruitment straightforward, welcoming and accessible.

We reserve the right to decline an application where we consider that a particular role is unsuitable for an applicant or where appropriate safeguards cannot be put in place.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Phoenix Theatre & Arts Centre is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We welcome volunteers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

We will seek to remove unnecessary barriers to volunteering and consider reasonable adjustments and additional support where appropriate.

We recognise that people bring different skills, experiences and perspectives, all of which can enrich the work of the arts centre.

Volunteers are expected to treat colleagues, other volunteers, artists, visitors and members of the public with courtesy, fairness and respect.

Discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated.

7. Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive an appropriate induction before starting their role.

The induction will normally cover:

- An introduction to the arts centre, its charitable purpose and activities.
- The volunteer's role and responsibilities.
- Relevant policies and procedures.
- Health and safety arrangements, including fire safety and emergency procedures.
- Safeguarding responsibilities and how to report concerns.
- Confidentiality and data protection.
- Who to contact for help, advice or support.
- Any specific training required for the role.

Additional training will be provided where necessary, particularly for roles involving specialist equipment, technical activities, public events, safeguarding or other identified risks.

Volunteers should not undertake activities for which they have not received appropriate instruction or authorisation.

8. Support and Supervision

Every volunteer will have an identified member of staff or an appropriate designated person as their main point of contact.

We will endeavour to provide regular opportunities for volunteers to discuss their experiences, ask questions, raise concerns and suggest improvements.

Support may take the form of informal conversations, briefings, meetings or individual check-ins, depending on the nature and frequency of the volunteering role.

We recognise that volunteers have different levels of experience and availability. Our approach will be flexible and proportionate.

Volunteers are encouraged to let us know if they need additional support, adjustments or guidance to carry out their role comfortably and safely.

9. Volunteer Expenses

We do not pay volunteers for their time. However, we do not want people to be financially disadvantaged by volunteering.

The arts centre will reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a direct result of volunteering, subject to the charity's available resources and agreed expenses arrangements.

Eligible expenses may include:

- Reasonable travel costs to and from the arts centre or an agreed volunteering activity.
- Necessary materials or equipment purchased with prior approval.
- Other reasonable expenses agreed in advance with the appropriate member of staff.

All claims should be supported by receipts or other appropriate evidence wherever possible.

Expenses must represent actual expenditure and must not be used as a means of providing payment or reward for volunteering.

Volunteers should discuss any anticipated expenses with their named contact before incurring them.

Further details are set out in the charity's Volunteer Expenses Procedure.

10. Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of everyone who comes into contact with the arts centre is a priority.

Volunteers must follow the charity's Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.

This is particularly important where volunteers may come into contact with children, young people or adults at risk through exhibitions, workshops, educational activities, community events or other programmes.

Volunteers must:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Never engage in abusive, threatening, discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour.
- Report any safeguarding concern, disclosure or allegation promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Follow guidance on appropriate communication, photography, supervision and contact with participants.
- Never promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret.

Where a volunteer role involves regulated activity or other work eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, the charity will undertake the appropriate checks in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

DBS checks will be based on the actual responsibilities of the role and its legal eligibility.

Volunteers must not begin any activities requiring specific safeguarding clearance until the appropriate arrangements have been completed.

11. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The arts centre is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for volunteers, staff, visitors, artists and members of the public.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Follow health and safety instructions and procedures.
- Take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others.
- Report accidents, incidents, hazards and near misses promptly.
- Use equipment only when authorised and appropriately trained.
- Follow fire safety and emergency procedures.
- Wear any protective clothing or equipment required for their role.
- Avoid undertaking tasks that they believe to be unsafe or beyond their capabilities.

The charity will consider the risks associated with each volunteer role and provide appropriate information, supervision and protective equipment where necessary.

Particular care will be taken with activities involving exhibition installation, manual handling, electrical equipment, tools, ladders, public events and building maintenance.

Volunteers must not undertake work at height, electrical work, heavy lifting or other potentially hazardous activities unless specifically authorised, appropriately trained and covered by the relevant risk assessment and insurance arrangements.

Volunteers should not work alone in circumstances where this would create an unacceptable risk.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers may come into contact with confidential or personal information relating to the charity, its staff, artists, trustees, visitors, donors, participants and other volunteers.

Volunteers are expected to respect confidentiality and handle personal information responsibly.

In particular, volunteers must:

- Only access information necessary for their role.
- Not disclose confidential information to unauthorised people.
- Keep personal information secure.

- Follow the charity's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.
- Not take photographs, share information or publish material about individuals without appropriate permission.
- Refer requests for personal or confidential information to an authorised member of staff.

These responsibilities continue after the volunteering arrangement has ended.

13. Conduct and Behaviour

We expect all volunteers to behave in a way that reflects the values and reputation of the arts centre.

Volunteers should:

- Be welcoming, friendly and respectful towards everyone.
- Act honestly and responsibly.
- Respect the charity's premises, equipment, resources and artwork.
- Follow reasonable instructions relating to their role and safety.
- Respect the diversity of the people who use and visit the arts centre.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with visitors, artists, staff and participants.
- Avoid behaviour that could damage the reputation of the charity.
- Raise concerns through the appropriate channels.

Volunteers must not:

- Discriminate against, bully, intimidate or harass anyone.
- Attend volunteering activities under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Use charity property or resources without permission.
- Share confidential information or personal data inappropriately.
- Use their volunteer position for personal financial gain or improper advantage.
- Make commitments, financial agreements or public statements on behalf of the charity without authorisation.

The charity's Code of Conduct and other relevant policies apply to volunteers as appropriate.

14. Use of Social Media and Public Communications

Volunteers should exercise care when using social media or communicating publicly about the arts centre.

Volunteers must not:

- Present personal opinions as official statements on behalf of the charity.
- Share confidential information or personal details about visitors, artists, staff or other volunteers.
- Publish photographs or recordings of people without the necessary permission.
- Make inappropriate or derogatory comments about the charity or people associated with it.

Volunteers are welcome to support and promote the arts centre through their own networks, provided they do so respectfully and in accordance with the charity's communications and privacy arrangements.

Only authorised individuals may issue official statements on behalf of the charity.

15. Insurance

The charity will ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place for volunteers undertaking agreed activities.

The charity will periodically review its insurance cover to ensure that volunteers and the activities they undertake are appropriately covered.

Volunteers should inform their named contact if they intend to undertake any activity that may fall outside their agreed role.

Volunteers must not assume that personal possessions, vehicles or equipment are automatically covered by the charity's insurance.

16. Volunteer Concerns and Complaints

We want volunteers to feel able to raise questions, concerns or complaints without fear of being treated unfairly.

Where a volunteer has a concern, they should normally raise it with their named contact or the Centre Manager.

If the concern relates to that person, or cannot be resolved informally, it may be raised with the Chair of Trustees or another appropriate trustee.

All concerns will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and investigated fairly and proportionately.

Volunteers will not be penalised for raising genuine concerns in good faith.

Safeguarding concerns, serious health and safety matters, allegations of misconduct and whistleblowing concerns should be dealt with under the relevant charity policies and procedures.

17. Resolving Difficulties and Ending a Volunteer Arrangement

We hope that volunteering will be a positive experience for everyone.

Occasionally, difficulties or disagreements may arise. Where possible, these will be addressed through an informal conversation and an opportunity to clarify expectations or agree improvements.

Where concerns are more serious, the Centre Manager or an appropriate trustee may need to review the situation.

The charity reserves the right to suspend or end a volunteering arrangement where necessary, particularly where there are concerns about safeguarding, safety, conduct, confidentiality or the effective operation of the charity.

Where appropriate, volunteers will be given an opportunity to explain their perspective before a decision is made.

Volunteers are also free to end their involvement at any time. We would appreciate notice where possible.

18. Young Volunteers

The arts centre may welcome young volunteers, subject to appropriate arrangements for their age, experience, welfare and safety.

Any volunteering opportunity for someone under the age of 18 will be assessed individually.

We will consider:

- The nature and risks of the proposed activities.
- Appropriate parental or guardian consent where required.
- Suitable supervision and safeguarding arrangements.
- Any relevant restrictions on working hours or activities.
- The young person's wellbeing, maturity and ability to undertake the role safely.

Young volunteers will not be asked to undertake activities that are inappropriate for their age or experience.

19. Recognition and Appreciation

We recognise that volunteers give their time freely and make a valuable contribution to the arts centre.

We will seek opportunities to thank and recognise volunteers, whether through informal appreciation, volunteer gatherings, events, acknowledgements or other appropriate means.

We welcome feedback from volunteers and recognise the value of their ideas and experiences in helping the charity develop.

20. Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed biennually by the CEO and the Board Volunteer Co-ordinator and approved by the Board of Trustees.

It may also be reviewed earlier if there are significant changes to legislation, charity activities, safeguarding requirements or organisational arrangements.

All volunteers will be made aware of this policy and any significant changes to it.

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside the charity's other relevant policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

- Data Protection and Privacy Policy.
- Confidentiality Policy.
- Code of Conduct.
- Complaints Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Volunteer Expenses Procedure.
- Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures.