

Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society

Volunteer Policy - May 2021

Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (DNHAS) relies on the generosity its volunteers who give thousands of hours of their time to the DNHAS and the Dorset Museum each year. They are involved in a wide range of activities, from documenting, curating and conserving collections to staging exhibitions, working on the Welcome Desk and in the Museum Shop, or helping with events, gallery stewarding or events and fundraising.

The DNHAS archaeology, geology, textiles, art, literary and photographic collections are all looked after by The Curatorial team and supported by volunteer curators and their team of volunteers.

For many people volunteering is a way of taking their hobbies and interests on to a new level, learning new skills or passing on knowledge. It is also a great way to meet people and a very satisfying way to spend free time. The DNHAS and its Museum simply could not care for its collections adequately or put on such a wide range of exhibitions and activities without the help of its volunteers. This policy gives guidance on the management of volunteers, and for volunteers themselves who are undertaking work, programmes or projects for or on behalf of the DNHAS and its Museum.

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The DNHAS recognises the important contribution made by volunteers in helping to fulfill the aims and objectives of the DNHAS and its Museum and the overall experience of our members and visitors.

1.2 The DNHAS encourages active volunteer involvement within these guidelines regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, nationality, religious/political belief, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

1.3 This policy also applies to school work placements or scholarly and academic internships subject to additional terms and conditions contained within the DNHAS Safeguarding Policy.

2. What is a Volunteer?

2.1 A volunteer is anyone who without reward or expectation of reward performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the DNHAS and its Museum.

3. Benefits of Volunteering

3.1 Volunteers will gain a wider knowledge of their particular areas of interest through access to reference materials, training sessions and working with experienced people.

3.2 Opportunities will be made available to volunteers who wish to develop their skills within the roles on offer if appropriate.

3.3 Volunteer involvement in the work of the museum will be recognised by all staff and the Volunteer Co-ordinator will provide information, support and thanks to the volunteer through the volunteer newsletter and bespoke events.

4. Recruitment

- 4.1** Opportunities will be promoted in widely accessible formats and the way in which potential volunteers can make contact with the DNHAS will be regularly reviewed.
- 4.2** Potential Volunteers will be required to complete a registration form and will be required to attend an interview.
- 4.3** A full induction to the Museum and required training needs to be completed before undertaking volunteering (bespoke training to each area will be provided by the Head of Department)
- 4.3** Volunteers will be appointed on their individual skill set and the individual's ability to carry out specified task.
- 4.4** References will be requested for all volunteers.
- 4.5** Criminal Record Bureau checks will be required for those working with children or vulnerable groups where necessary.
- 4.6** Volunteers will be required to agree to the Volunteering Policy and carry out their agreed upon role
- 4.7** After a period of three months your Head of Department will review your volunteering role with you to make sure the volunteering placement is suitable and any further support that may be needed for you to carry out your role, or other opportunities within the Museum if you want to expand your experience.
- 4.8** Either side can terminate the Volunteer Agreement at any time.

5. Induction, Training and Review

- 5.1** A full briefing will be given during the induction covering all aspects of the museum structure, customer care, signing in and out procedures.
- 5.2** All Health and Safety and Emergency procedures will be covered in the induction including a tour of the relevant buildings.
- 5.3** The volunteer should sign the Induction Checklist and Health and Safety Policy as confirmation that they have received and is satisfied with the induction provided.
- 5.4** When placing the volunteer the DNHAS will endeavour to match their skills, talents and interests with the work required to be carried out.
- 5.5** Volunteers will be assigned an Head of Department with knowledge of the work to be undertaken and working with volunteers.

6. Code of conduct

- 6.1** In engaging volunteers, the DNHAS recognises the rights of volunteers to:
 - a)** know what is expected of them and to be given an induction into the organisation.
 - b)** have clearly specified lines of support and supervision.
 - c)** be shown respect and appreciation.
 - d)** have safe working conditions and be fully aware of Health and Safety issues.
 - e)** be insured with DNHAS Public, Product and Employers Liability.
 - f)** know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong or a complaint is made and have an understanding of grievance and disciplinary procedures.
 - g)** be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development.
 - h)** be free from discrimination.

- i) experience personal development through their participation as volunteers.
- j) ask for a reference.
- k) be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do.
- l) withdraw from voluntary work.

6.2 The DNHAS expects that volunteers will:

- a) attend the induction and training before commencing the appointment.
- b) carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the DNHAS and its Museum.
- c) work within agreed guidelines and remits and to agreed standards.
- d) treat staff, other volunteers, members and visitors with respect regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background.
- e) be appropriately addressed for the duties you are carrying out and wear an identity badge. (Please speak to your Head of Department for guidance)
- f) be punctual, reliable and adhere to arranged working hours.
- g) respect confidentiality.
- h) attend training and support sessions where agreed.
- i) recognise that the DNHAS and its Museum has the right to terminate a volunteer's placement if their services are no longer needed for any reason and at any time.
- j) allow copyright for creative works carried out by volunteers for the DNHAS and its Museum to belong to the DNHAS.
- k) carry out the reasonable instructions of persons in authority.

7. Grievance Procedure

7.1 We recognise that from time to time you may wish to raise issues relating to your volunteering, or discuss matters that are causing personal concern. It is our policy to encourage free communication between volunteers and their Head of Department to ensure that any problem or issue arising during the course of volunteering can be resolved as fairly and quickly as possible.

a. Informal stage In order to achieve a speedy resolution of any problem or issue that you may have, you should start by having an informal discussion your immediate Line Manager. Having an informal discussion can quite often solve the problem. Should your grievance concern your Head of Department then the matter should be raised with the Commercial Director.

b. Formal stage If the matter cannot be resolved by informal discussion or if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal discussion, then you must inform the Commercial Director that you wish to take the matter further and submit a formal written grievance within 14 days to the next level of management. You should try to explain fully the nature of your complaint and send the written grievance to us.

Every effort will be made to resolve your grievance at a formal hearing without unreasonable delay. At the hearing, you have the right to be accompanied by either a work colleague or an accredited Trade Union representative. You will receive the outcome of the hearing in writing. All grievance proceedings and records will be kept confidential.

c. Appeal stage Following the grievance meeting, if you are still not entirely satisfied or consider you have not been fairly treated you may appeal in writing. Your appeal should say

why you are appealing against the decision and needs to be received by the Chair of the Personnel Committee within 7 days of your receiving the outcome letter.

At the appeal hearing, you have the right to be accompanied by either a work colleague or an accredited Trade Union representative. You will receive the outcome of the appeal hearing in writing without unreasonable delay. The decision of the person dealing with the appeal is final.

8. Disciplinary Procedure

8.1. The disciplinary procedure establishes a process by which breaches of disciplinary standards can be dealt with fairly and consistently. The disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage all volunteers to achieve and maintain the required standards of conduct, attendance and performance. It should be seen as a corrective procedure ensuring all volunteers are treated fairly.

- a) You will be notified in writing of the allegations and no hearing will take place until a minimum of 24 hours has elapsed.
- b) You will be provided with information relating to the allegation prior to the hearing.
- c) You will have the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a work colleague of your choice or an accredited Trade Union representative.
- d) You or your representative may ask questions or make statements; the representative cannot answer questions on behalf of the employee.
- e) Any decision made will be based on a reasonable belief, the balance of probability and on the evidence presented.
- f) The result of any disciplinary hearing will be confirmed in writing.
- g) You have the right to appeal any decision by applying in writing within 7 days of the decision stating your reasons for appealing.

8.2 Failure to attend a disciplinary hearing and to do so, without good reason, is deemed to constitute a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction and can amount to gross misconduct. In these circumstances your failure to attend will be considered alongside the reasons for the disciplinary hearing and a decision may be made in your absence.

RM 1.05.2021
Review Date May 2022

Name of volunteer:

Signature:

Date: