

ÓGRAS

DON GHAEILGE – DON ÓIGE



**Ógras Volunteer Policy
2020**

Policy Statement

Ógras is committed to providing a professional and efficient service in supporting volunteerism in Irish-language youth clubs and activities.

We recognise that in order to achieve our goals we need to involve volunteers in our own work. It is also essential that we present a model of good practice in volunteer management.

We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities. We aim to train, support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise. We value volunteerism for its unique benefits including the example it shows to young people, how it builds stronger communities and the many different perspectives and sets of skills it brings to Ógras. Our policy reflects this purpose and values.

Procedural Guidelines

Purpose of document

The purpose of this internal document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering at Ógras. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other policies and procedures of Ógras, as well as our definition of volunteering, our mission statement and our value base.

These procedures apply to all non-elected volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf and at the direction of Ógras.

1. Responsibility

The Ógras Manager 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 management committee members) are expected to facilitate this process.

2. Eligibility

Ógras will consider involving anyone as a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organisation. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer.

3. Definition

A volunteer is someone who freely contributes time, skills and service at the direction of and by agreement with Ógras, but is not paid nor expects to be paid. Those who work with young people are known as “Leaders” in the organisation.

4. Relationship with paid staff (Where applicable)

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of paid staff, not as a substitute for them. Conversely, Ógras does not accept the services of its paid staff as volunteers. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships

5. Working conditions

Volunteers are treated as full members of the Ógras team. They are treated as equally and fairly as paid staff and are included in the organisations, functions and decision-making processes wherever practical.

6. Working times

Working times are negotiated between the Ógras 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 the club/organisation as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

7. Appropriate behaviour

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of Ógras and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of the organisation, they are responsible for presenting a positive image of Ógras to the outside world.

8. Representation of Ógras

Volunteers must seek prior approval from Ógras' Manager before undertaking anything that might affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

9. Confidentiality

Ógras respects the volunteers right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of privileged information to which they are exposed to while volunteering within Ógras .

10. Records

Personal information about volunteers will be stored, accessed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of relevant legislation .

11. Service at the discretion of Ógras.

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of Ógras. Ógras may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteer's relationships with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason,

decide to terminate their relationships with Ógras. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.

Recruitment

1. Role descriptions and person specifications

Like paid staff, volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role description must be developed for each voluntary opportunity. This must include a title of the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place of work, name of supervisor and tasks to be undertaken. The role description may be amended in joint agreement with the volunteer and the Ógras Manager. A copy of the final version must be given to the volunteer. Role descriptions must define a time limit (no longer than one year) for voluntary involvement, after which time they are reviewed, and updated if appropriate.

2. Volunteer's role in recruitment

Volunteers are encouraged to recruit other volunteers locally in consultation with staff. All new volunteers must go through the recruitment and selection procedures. Volunteers may also lead new club development in an area as part of a wider organisational plan.

3. Equality

Ógras seeks to reflect the diversity of the community it works in, and this diversity is to be welcomed, respected and encouraged. All young people and adults will participate on the basis of who they are, regardless of background or other status and have equal opportunities to involve themselves appropriately in Ógras.

4. Applications

Volunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis by the organisation using publicity avenues that are suitable for the roles that need to be filled. Potential volunteers may also apply speculatively. Volunteers are recruited in accordance with Ógras' equal opportunities policy. All volunteers are required to complete an application form.

5. Interviews

Candidates are invited to attend an informal chat with a member of staff, to ascertain their interest in and suitability for the role. Written records of all interviews are kept.

6. Checks for suitability

References are always taken up. If the role requires it, health (mental and physical) is also undertaken. Other checks may also be completed (for

example, ascertaining professional qualifications). Volunteers are always warned in advance of the intention to make these checks. If they refuse permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be placed.

7. Appointment

Formal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and all necessary checks have proved acceptable. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor can be met.

8. Young People Volunteering

Ógras recognises the many varied and diverse roles young people fill in youth organisations today and also in society in general. Ógras also recognises the special and specific issues that engaging with young people (particularly under 18's) entails and will ensure the implementation of the necessary structures to protect both the young person and the organisation. This will include any necessary documentation including parental consent and the provision of proper adult supervision and support under the relevant Child Protection Guidelines.

Training

1. Induction

All volunteers receive induction when they begin voluntary work with Ógras. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of their volunteering role. This includes but is not limited to induction training for new volunteers, which covers child protection, insurance, health and safety and activities and ideas, optional leaders training, and additional training based on specific needs, such as challenging behaviour and games workshops. Your Regional Development Officer can provide more information on the training available in your area. Ógras will strive to make the information sessions accessible and relevant to needs as appropriate. The implementation of training will be done in a supportive atmosphere. There will also be periodic review of this training policy and evaluations of all training programmes .

2. On-the-job training

Volunteers receive initial and ongoing on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their tasks well. The training must be appropriate for the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

3. Additional training

Volunteers are actively encouraged to identify training courses, seminars, conferences, and so on, which would help them to perform their roles better

and which would aid their personal development. Approval to undertake such training free-of-charge must be given by the Ógras Manager and this will only be done if sufficient funds are available. Priority is given to long standing volunteers and those who have received little or no training in the past. Ógras may also design specific courses based on needs identified by volunteers or staff.

4. Training information

If additional training was paid for by Ógras, any course or other materials belong to the organisation and must be filed in the Ógras office. All volunteers are required to submit a short report outlining the content and usefulness of the course or meeting attended. Training information must be disseminated to relevant people within the organisation.

Supervision

1 Lines of communication

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their assignments. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.

2. Supervisors

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer. The Ógras Manager normally takes on the supervisor's role, but all staff members receive training and guidance on how to involve volunteers effectively in the work of the organisation.

3. Corrective action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation sessions. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or the dismissal of a volunteer.

4. Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the organisation's rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. No volunteers' involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their supervisor. Grounds for dismissal 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 Ógras policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

5. Concerns and grievances

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the management committee. The management committee will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a written complaint, and take appropriate action. The chair of the management committee makes the ultimate decision.

6. Exit interviews

Where possible, informal exit interviews are held with any volunteers who are leaving the organisation, either because they have reached the end of their project, or are leaving for some other reason. Interviews are usually conducted with the volunteer's ex-supervisor and written records are kept. The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve the way the organisation operates. The offer of a personal reference for future employment etc. is made to each volunteer.

Support and recognition

1. Support

Ógras endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work. Support forms part of the regular supervision sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, let off steam and discuss how they feel about volunteering. The Ógras manager will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas that are affecting their performance. Ógras endeavours to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles.

2. Contact person

Each volunteer will have a designated member of staff or volunteer, who may be called a "Development Officer", to guide and advise them in their role and will have regular access to that person.

3. Recognition

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

organisation. The Ógras Manager is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times.

4. Expenses

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so it is essential that Ógras offers to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. The costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those on low incomes. Current rates and procedures for claiming expenses are agreed by the management committee and publicised to all volunteers. Expenses are subject to the production of receipts. Child care and loss of earnings are not covered.

5. Insurance

Insurance is provided by Ógras to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation. All volunteers are given information about the public liability insurance cover provided through membership of Ógras.

6. Health and Safety

Ógras volunteers must take care to ensure their own safety and the safety of the young people with whom they work. Volunteers should be provided with copies of relevant organisational health and safety procedures and receive appropriate support and training.

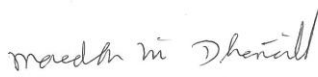
7. Child protection and other policies

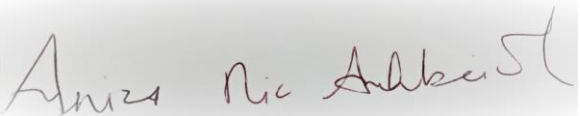
Ógras has policies on Child Protection, good practice in working with young people, Tobacco Alcohol and Drugs, Integration and other topics which all adult volunteers must implement. All volunteers over 18 years will undergo Garda Vetting or vetting by Access NI

Policy Created

Date this policy was created	July 2020
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Signatures

	Name and position	Signature
Approved by	Maedhbh Ní Dhónaill Stiúrthóir Ógras	

Approved by	Anita Nic Amhlaidh Cathaoirleach	
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Review Date

Date this policy will be reviewed	July 2023
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Responsible for implementing the Policy

The Bord of Directors and Ógras management have responsible for implementing the policy.