



Church@TheGabba – PO Box 8093, Woolloongabba, Qld, 4102 – (07)38919210 – office@gabbachurch.org

Volunteer Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Volunteer Policy is to clearly articulate to all members and adherents of Church@TheGabba and other people the Church Leadership's expectations and the responsibilities of all people who volunteer for activities at the Church.

Preamble

This policy is predicated on the Scripture passages of 1 Peter 4:10, Galatians 6:10 and Titus 3:14.

Volunteers offer a valuable resource by giving their time and dedication without pay. It is important to ensure that volunteers are protected by making sure they are well looked after and that they are fit to work. It is important that volunteers are treated with respect and dignity, as with all other people involved in all the Church@TheGabba ministries and activities including The Mustard Seed.

The aim of this policy is to produce a clear framework for the use of volunteers working at the Church@TheGabba and all associated ministries and activities.

Vision

We believe that the highest order of the Christian faith is to go out into the community and encourage all people to share the joy and sense of peace and purpose found only by accepting Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Church@theGabba will embrace the diversity of our community by inviting and welcoming all with open hearts and open arms. Everyone is important to God and therefore important to us.

We joyfully commit to sharing our individual and collective gifts, putting the needs of others and the needs of the faith community above our own. We will at all times value others. We will encourage and nurture individual and spiritual growth through the power of prayer and God's Word.

We embrace and are committed to change to meet the ever changing needs of our world and our faith community to change lives for eternity.

Policy

1. Commitment to volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the effective functioning of the Church. Volunteers are our link to our community. They are integrated into the structure and operations of the Church, and contribute strongly towards its aims and objectives.

People volunteer for a variety of reasons and can contribute in a range of ways according to individual needs and talents that they bring. Volunteers will need to abide by the values, principles and policies of the Church.

2. Aim of policy

The Church Leadership is composed mainly of unpaid volunteers and relies on those people giving their time and effort to make it an effective decision-making and governing body. Other volunteers support the ministries and other activities run by the Church by giving their time to carry out roles which have been initiated by, or agreed with, the Church Leadership. The volunteering relationship is based on trust and does not involve the obligations associated with employment. No payment, other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses, is made by the Church to people who give their time as volunteers.

This policy is intended for volunteers who have accepted an agreed role with the Church and its associated ministries and activities. It outlines the principles on which this relationship is based and provides basic information about volunteering with the Church.

3. Recruitment

The Church welcomes and respects the breadth of experience, skills, dedication and goodwill that volunteers bring. Informal interviews are carried out to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role in question. The selection will be based on the ability of each applicant to fulfil the role concerned, taking into account any effect the volunteer may have on the safety and reputation of all parties.

Every potential volunteer will be asked to complete a short application form and agree to a blue card application where required in the light of the volunteer's work.

Potential volunteers will, ordinarily, have attended the church regularly for a minimum of six (6) months (as per Section 14 (c) of the Church's Risk Management Strategy) unless exceptional circumstances apply, or with Pastoral/Church Leadership discretion.

4. Age

In most cases the volunteer will need to be over 16 years of age to volunteer with under 18s requiring parental consent. Younger people may get involved in some aspects of volunteering if they are accompanied by a responsible adult. There is no upper age limit for volunteers but there may be times and situations that require the Church and the volunteer to evaluate and determine the value of continued volunteering service.

5. Getting Started

The Church wants to make sure the volunteer has everything they need to get started so the Church will provide them with either an induction or access to useful materials and information. The primary contact will usually be the ministry leader who is responsible for the ministry or activity.

6. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The Church@TheGabba is an organisation committed to Christian principles of equal opportunities and diversity.

7. Responsibilities and Expectations

The Church takes its responsibilities towards volunteers very seriously. Volunteers are representatives of the Church and, as such, there is an expectation that they will act appropriately.

The Church's responsibilities to its volunteers:

- To offer equal opportunities to everyone who wants to volunteer.
- To match skills, experiences and desires of the volunteer with appropriate ministry activities.
- To offer appropriate training and support for the role.
- To encourage and affirm volunteers recognising loyalty and dedication.
- To respect all volunteers, encouraging open communication and input and ideas.
- To provide information about the Church's work, policies and procedures.
- To reimburse agreed out-of-pocket expenses.
- To make necessary arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of volunteers.
- To encourage a positive and friendly atmosphere.
- To provide support and encouragement from other suitably qualified people.

The Church's expectations of volunteers:

- To aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality from volunteers.

- To work in partnership with other volunteers, staff and the general public.
- To support, respect and adhere to the Church's policies, guidelines and management decisions – including all aspects of risk management, health and safety, protection of children, data protection and use of the Church name.
- To always act in accordance with the church RMS and Code of Conduct, with particular reference to the policies relating to working with children and youth.
- To always consider and protect the Church's good reputation in actions and conduct.
- To act in the best interests of those who are served through the various ministries and activities.
- To act responsibly and within the law.
- To have a servant heart as modelled by Jesus (John 13:3-14) and avoid the misuse of authority when in a position of trust and power.
- To not be abusive in any way toward others, spiritually, emotionally, physically or sexually, including domestic and family violence.
- To report concerns of abuse according to the Church Risk Management Policy.
- To avoid the use of offensive language (e.g. swear words, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).
- To exercise caution with all potentially addictive behaviours and/or harmful substances (e.g. drunkenness is never acceptable).
- To refrain from using any illicit substances.
- To use caution when initiating or receiving physical contact with those who are served through the ministries and activities, including gestures of comfort as such gestures can be unwanted or misinterpreted.
- To act with sexual integrity. Sex is a gift from God and integral to human nature. All inappropriate sexual behaviour is forbidden (e.g. sex outside of marriage). Sexual innuendo and harassment of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.
- To acknowledge when the volunteer is out of their depth, does not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations, such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling, and to seek help from the ministry leader or church leader.
- To talk to the ministry leader first if you encounter any real or perceived problems so a solution can be found together.
- To let the ministry leader know if there are changes in personal circumstances that may affect the ability to volunteer.
- To have the best possible experience by getting involved and enjoying volunteering.

8. Health and Safety

The Church is committed to ensuring the volunteer's wellbeing and safety whilst they are volunteering and, in turn, the Church expects volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe and pleasant working environment.

All church volunteers must:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their actions or omissions.
- Co-operate with staff by assisting them to fulfil their statutory duties.
- Follow the Church health and safety policy and measures put in place by the Church Leadership or any organisation on whose premises the volunteer may be working on.
- Report accidents/incidents or dangerous circumstances to the ministry leader or a member of the Church Leadership whether or not any person has been injured.
- Be aware of actions to take when an emergency situation arises within the ministry / activity and the process to follow as outlined by the ministry leader.

9. Access to Church Property and Equipment

Access to the Church property and buildings will be under the direction of and at the discretion of the ministry leader.

The Church, through its designated supervisors, has the right to access and inspect the office, work station, filing cabinets, desk, computer files, voice mail, electronic mail and any other property owned by the Church and assigned to a volunteer. The volunteer understands and agrees that they have no right of privacy to any property, space, books, records, or equipment owned by the Church.

10. Expense Reimbursement

Reimbursements to volunteers for church related expenses may only be done with prior approval from the Church Leadership or ministry team leader. A Request for Reimbursement form must be obtained from the Church office.

11. Copyright, Intellectual Property and Photography

The Church policy regarding social media must be followed at all times, particularly in relation to the sharing of photos of children on social media. A copy of the Social Media Policy is available from the Church office.

The Church respects the rights of individuals to original works they have created for general use in a ministry or activity. However, where works have been created specifically for the purpose of branding, identification, promotion or dedicated use in a church ministry or activity the rights to these works will be retained by the church for that specific purpose.

12. Media Relations

No comments or stories should be given directly to the media, unless the volunteer role specifically includes talking to the press or other local media. Generally, media relations are handled by the Church and so any requests from the press, etc. should be referred to the ministry leader or Church Leadership.

13. Data Protection and Confidentiality

The Church will protect volunteer information as part of its data protection responsibilities, as given in the Privacy Policy. A copy of the Privacy Policy is available from the Church office.

The Church expects all volunteers to protect any personal or confidential information to which they may have access. Trust is essential in serving the church. Confidential information must not be disclosed, and must be treated with the utmost care. Exceptions include when:

- consent has been sought and obtained;
- disclosure is required by law;
- abuse notifications whether required by law or not;
- there are concerns for the safety of the person or others; or
- the information is in the public domain.

Disclosure is a serious matter and the assistance of a ministry leader or Church Leadership should be sought.

Any volunteer that shares confidential information may be asked to step down from service.

14. Insurance

The Church has appropriate types of insurance in place to cover its volunteers. These include employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance in the event of a volunteer being harmed due to the negligence of the Church or a third party being injured as a result of the actions of a volunteer whilst performing church duties. However, the Church insurance does not cover volunteer's personal belongings.

15. Using Your Own Vehicle

The Church@TheGabba has motor vehicle insurance for volunteers that drive the Church's bus. Any volunteer wishing to drive the Church bus must first fill out the appropriate application form and be approved.

The Church's volunteer injury and accident insurance policy does not cover volunteer's private vehicles. Driving in connection with volunteering is normally classified by insurers as "social, domestic and pleasure" which is part of the standard cover. The Church recommends that the volunteer check with their insurer, as the Church requires that any private vehicle driven by a volunteer in the course of their providing voluntary services must be comprehensively insured to provide a reasonable level of insurance coverage for the volunteer and passengers.

16. Smoking and Substance Abuse

All Church premises and events are smoke free. No smoking is allowed in or near Church buildings as per legislation. Volunteers are asked not to smoke or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while volunteering. This will be regarded as a very serious matter and dealt with accordingly.

17. Resolving Concerns

If a volunteer has any problems or complaints relating to their service, they should talk to the ministry leader or Church Leadership immediately. The Church takes the concerns of its volunteers very seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve any difficulties. Any disputes with other volunteers should be addressed in accordance with the Dispute Resolution policy. A copy of the Dispute Resolution Policy is available from the Church office.

The Church's policy is to try to resolve all complaints informally, although a formal procedure is available where appropriate. The formal procedure is provided in the Dispute Resolution Policy.

18. Stand-Alone Ministry Events/Activities

In the case of "one-off" ministry activities and events, all volunteers must be made aware of, and abide by, all the legal requirements and church policies that apply to normal ministry activity and, if not already done so, complete and sign a Volunteer Declaration.

Definitions

<i>Church</i>	means Church@TheGabba and also includes the associated ministries and activities of the church and The Mustard Seed.
<i>Church Leadership</i>	means primary governing group of the church such as the Church Council, elders or deacons.
<i>Volunteer</i>	means someone who is working in an unpaid capacity as part of a planned program of activity at the Church. This includes any Church members, adherents, friends or others who may offer their services at Church@TheGabba, The Mustard Seed and other Church activities and ministries from time to time.