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1. Purpose of the Policy

This Volunteer Mentor Policy will demonstrate that care and thought has gone into how volunteer mentors with Seeds4Success will be treated. It will ensure fairness and consistency and that volunteers know what they can expect and where they can turn to for support.

Seeds4Success aims to provide an environment for volunteer mentors to broaden their skills, gain experience or to apply their existing skills and abilities. It is only with the support of our volunteer mentors that we can provide our mentoring programme and as with all our volunteers they significantly enhance the capacity of our services and provide us with increased skills, enthusiasm and drive.

This policy covers volunteer mentors but not those mentors employed by Seeds4Success.

2. Seeds4Success

Charities Aims and Objects:

To act as a resource for young people aged 5 to 25 years living in Wiltshire and the surrounding counties by providing advice and assistance and organising programs of physical, educational and other activities by means of:

- a. advancing in life and helping young people by developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals;

- b. advancing education;
- c. relieving unemployment;
- d. providing recreational and leisure time activity in the interests of social welfare for people living in the area of benefit who have need by reason of the youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social and economic circumstances with a view to improving the conditions of life of such persons;
- e. Conserving and enhancing their natural environment

Mission Statement:

“Through inclusive engagement of young people in social action and a range of positive activities, our aim is to develop confident, healthy, skilful, valued and empowered members of our local community, providing targeted support to those facing additional barriers”

Seeds4Success and mentoring:

Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which the mentor is a positive role model who gives time to support, encourage, guide and advise the young person. A mentor uses their skills and experience to help the young person to set and meet goals, challenge the young person’s views, and help them to achieve their potential.

3. The Role of a Volunteer Mentor

Definition of a Volunteer

A “volunteer” is defined as someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of others, who does so freely, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward, except for the payment of actual out of pocket expenses

Definition of a Volunteer Mentor

A Seeds4Success mentor is an independent, trained volunteer who meets and talks with a young person on a regular basis and over a long period of time. This reliable and stable relationship focuses on the hobbies, interests and talents of the young person and in doing so enables them to develop their social skills and relationships with family and friends, to build self-esteem, confidence and resilience, and helps them to achieve their goals and potential. In doing so, the young person becomes a valued member of and positive contributor to their community

Who volunteers?

Volunteers come from a whole range of backgrounds, ages and experience. Some have previously worked with young people or are interested in getting involved in this type of work.

Some people are just interested in doing something valuable with their time and supporting a local group or using their skills and experience to mentor young people in the community.

Why volunteer?

Volunteering can be challenging at times, but people are often surprised by just how much they personally benefit from the experience. There is a real sense of achievement in seeing a group of young people or individuals develop over time, and pride in knowing that they have given young people an invaluable experience. It is also an excellent way to develop skills and experience.

Why Involve Volunteers?

Volunteers are essential to Seeds4Success and we are always looking to recruit new and enthusiastic volunteers who are willing to support our work. The dedication, hard work, energy and enthusiasm of our volunteers ensures that we can make a lasting difference to the lives of local young people.

4. Recruitment

Seeds4Success is committed to creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff, volunteers and beneficiaries are recognised and valued. Every employee, volunteer and beneficiary is entitled to be part of an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, discrimination, bullying or harassment will be tolerated (please refer to the *S4S Equality and Diversity Policy*).

Selection for volunteer mentors will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All selection/rejection decisions will be recorded. All volunteer mentors will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential through mentor training and regular contact and meetings with the Mentoring and Support Manager and other volunteer mentors. Please refer to the *Mentors' and Lone Working Policy*, and the *Mentors Handbook* for details of training and the meeting schedule.

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteer mentors that take into account the principles of our *Equal Opportunities Policy* and that reflect the nature of the role. We seek to recruit volunteer mentors from a diverse range of backgrounds and that reflect the makeup of the local community. On expressing interest in becoming a volunteer mentor, the applicant will be contacted by the Mentoring and Support Manager to discuss the role and requirements and to answer any questions and then asked to complete a mentor registration form (help with this can be given with this if necessary).

All potential volunteer mentors will be asked to attend an informal interview with our Mentoring and Support Manager or Charity Director. This will include:

- Background to the organisation
- Information about the young people we work with
- Detailed information about Seeds4Success
- The role, responsibilities and requirements of a volunteer mentor
- An overview of the mentoring programme and procedures

DBS Code of Practice

All volunteer mentors will be asked to provide two references and will need to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Seeds4Success complies fully with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all volunteers fairly.

Seeds4Success actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against anyone on the basis of a conviction or other information that is revealed. Seeds4Success can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about (please refer to the *S4S Equality and Diversity Policy*).

Volunteers subject to a criminal record check submitted to DBS should be made aware of the existence of the Code of Practice at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/143662/cop.pdf

Seeds4Success undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking to volunteer before withdrawing any offer to volunteer.

5. Expenses

We value our volunteer mentors and want to ensure that there are no barriers to involvement in the mentoring programme.

Public Transport

Public transport costs will be reimbursed on production of a receipt. We will only reimburse the cost of standard fares or First Class when it can be evidenced that it was cheaper than travelling on a standard fare. We will not reimburse penalty fares incurred on public transport. We encourage volunteer mentors to buy tickets in advance and to travel outside of peak hours wherever possible and when it fits with the timing of planned sessions.

Mileage Rates

Seeds4Success offers to make a contribution towards the cost of mileage for all volunteer mentors. Claims may be made for journeys from home to any venue for a mentoring session or other activity or meeting involved in the mentoring process that has been agreed by the Mentoring and Support Manager in advance. Only the driver is eligible to claim for the journey. Claiming mileage expenses is optional.

Mileage can be reclaimed at a rate of 45p per mile.

Claims can include the cost of parking and toll charges. However, we will not reimburse fixed penalty notices or parking fines.

Other expenses

Seeds4Success will reimburse other expenses incurred as part of the mentoring process. We understand that refreshments may be bought from a shop or café before or during the mentoring session. Receipts should always be kept and submitted to the Mentoring and Support Manager with the Mentor Expenses Form.

Expenses (not including transport, ticket and activity costs) should be kept within the £7 per session limit wherever possible. If expenses are expected to go over this amount in a session, the Mentoring and Support Manager should be contacted for approval.

Any planned activities or visits to venues should be approved by the Mentoring and Support Manager in advance and any associated costs agreed.

Making a claim

Expense claims should be submitted via the Mentor Expense Form. This is available for download from the Mentor's Area of the website or paper copies can be provided. This should be emailed or returned to the Mentoring and Support Manager weekly or monthly, along with any supporting receipts etc.

Travel arrangements and their associated costs, expenses incurred through activities and entrance fees must be approved by the Charity Director or Mentoring and Support Manager in advance. If approval has not been given, then we reserve the right to refuse an expense claim.

Expense payments are made via BACS (or by cash if necessary) and are normally processed weekly on Tuesdays (wherever possible) and within 28 days.

Mentors who are regularly incurring costs as part of the mentoring process may be provided with a cash float to pay for expenses. A monthly expense form along with receipts would need to be submitted in the normal way.

If you need assistance with completing a Mentor Expense Form, please contact the Mentoring and Support Manager.

6. Supervision & Support

The Mentoring and Support Manager has responsibility for the support and supervision of volunteer mentors. This support will follow the procedures detailed in the *Mentor's Handbook* and *Mentors' and Lone Working Policy*.

Volunteer mentors are invited to contact the Mentoring and Support Manager, Charity Director or any trustee at any time to arrange a one to one discussion either over the phone or face to face. There are currently trustees responsible for HR (Andy Noble) and volunteer management (Jon Rich). Contact details are below.

Andy Noble - Andrew.noble190@btinternet.com / 07516 471 595

Jon Rich – jon@youthadventuretrust.org.uk / 07469 886 523

At the conclusion of mentoring a young person, a volunteer mentor will be invited to a review meeting with the Mentoring and Support Manager. This meeting will give the volunteer mentor an opportunity to discuss:

- the outcomes for the young person and their family how they and the mentoring programme contributed
- what they felt they gained from their experience
- what they enjoyed/liked least about mentoring
- if they felt adequately prepared, supported and supervised for the role
- suggestions they might make to improve our mentoring programmes
- if they would like to continue to mentor another young person or if they wish to leave the programme
- the reasons for leaving if this is the preferred choice

7. Insurance

All volunteer mentors are covered by Seeds4Success's insurance policy whilst they are engaged in their role as a mentor. It is the responsibility of the volunteer mentor to inform their motor insurance company that they are using their car in the act of volunteering. This should not result in an increase in premium, as volunteering should be regarded as part of the 'social, domestic and pleasure' use of the vehicle.

A copy of our insurance policy is available on request.

8. Whistleblowing

A 'whistleblower', as described in *The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998*, is someone who reports certain legitimate types of wrongdoing or concerns that are in the public interest. This means it must affect others, for example the general public. Whistleblowers are protected by law and should not be treated unfairly because of any report they make.

Concerns can be raised at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future. Proof is not required, just a reasonable belief, and Seed4Success have the responsibility to investigate any concerns in a way that respects confidentiality, ensures there are no reprisals and avoids harassment of the whistleblower or any unfair treatment. Where such reports are made in good faith, the whistleblower will not be penalised, regardless of the accuracy of the report. However, where allegations made maliciously the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

A qualifying disclosure is one made by an employee or volunteer who has a reasonable belief that any of the following is being, has been or is likely to be, committed:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- Corruption, bribery or blackmail.
- Fraud, theft or other financial irregularities.
- Failure to comply with a legal or regulatory obligation.
- Disclosure related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
- Damage to the environment.
- Improper use of authority, discrimination, harassment or abuse.
- Other unethical conduct.
- Concealment of any of the above.

Volunteer Mentors should report concerns in confidence to the Seeds4Success Mentoring and Support Manager and if not appropriate then the Charity Director or Trustee.

Please see the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy if the concern relates to the safeguarding of children or young people.

Please refer to the Gov.UK website for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

The charity Protect (<https://protect-advice.org.uk/>; Tel: 020 3117 2520; email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk) can also give confidential advice to you regarding the disclosure of wrongdoing in the workplace.

9. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

All grievances should be resolved openly, fairly and quickly to:

- Protect our volunteer mentors
- Minimise any disruption to staff and other volunteers
- Protect the reputation of Seeds4Success

A volunteer mentor has a right to complain if they feel they have been treated unfairly and in the first instance they should discuss it informally with the Mentoring Programme Manager, The Charity Director or the Lead Trustee for HR matters. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved this way.

If the grievance cannot be resolved through an informal discussion the *S4S Grievance Policy and Procedure* should be followed.

If a grievance is received about a volunteer mentor, they have the right to be told why they are being investigated, the right to state their case and the right to appeal. The aim should be to resolve the complaint informally through discussion. Options such as additional support, supervision or training should be offered where necessary and a review date should be set. If the grievance cannot be resolved through discussion, the *S4S Disciplinary Policy and Procedure* should be followed and applied.

The decision to dismiss a volunteer mentor should be a last resort. If the volunteer mentor chooses to appeal, this should be made to the board of trustees whose decision will be final.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteer mentors, other volunteers, trustees and volunteer committee members are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and required to sign the *S4S Confidentiality Agreement* (please also refer to the *S4S Data Protection Policy and Procedure*, the *S4S Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy*, the *Mentors' and Lone Working Policy*, and the *Mentors Handbook*). They are also required to provide personal details about themselves as part of our recruitment process which are used and retained in line with our *Privacy Statement*. Through this same process volunteer mentors also agree to share their mobile phone numbers with members of staff for the purposes of emergency communication.

Volunteer mentors must keep any records and information given to them about young people confidential and secure at all times. Sharing of your own personal details, phone numbers, personal email and social media accounts with children and young people or 'friending' them or their family members through these mediums is not permitted unless there is permission granted and clear guidance on what is acceptable within the remit of your volunteer mentor role. Please also refer to the *S4S Internet and E-safety Policy*, the *S4S Social Network Policy*, the *Mentors' and Lone Working Policy*, and the *Mentors Handbook*.

Volunteer mentors are reminded and agree not to take photographs during any mentoring session or any part of the mentoring programme, unless agreed with or requested to do so by the Mentoring and Support Manager or Charity Director. Please refer to the guidance for taking photographs in the *Mentors' and Lone Working Policy*, and the *Mentors Handbook*.

11. Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

The Mentoring and Support Manager has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on an annual basis following its implementation and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in our working practices.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Mentoring and Support Manager or Charity Director.

Reviewed by Jon Rich, Trustee	
Next review date	

Seeds4Success, Mere Youth Centre, The Recreation Ground, Queens Road, Mere. BA12 6EP
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