

Version Control	
Title	KRSP Volunteer Policy
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Purpose of Document	The procedures outlined in this document apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of and at the direction of the Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership.
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Reviewed By	Nicola Keeshan
Authorised By	KRSP Board
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Review Date	2027
Comments	GCS: 1.3 (c) Managing, supporting and holding to account staff, volunteers and all who act on behalf of the organisation. Give responsibility for developing the volunteer policy to the CEO.

1. Introduction

An initiative of Sport Ireland, Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) plans, leads, and coordinates the development of sport and physical activity in County Kilkenny. Our work as a Local Sports Partnership (LSP) is categorised by Sport Ireland (SI) into three main functions - the provision of information, the facilitation of education and training opportunities and the development and implementation of programmes and events that encourage increased levels of participation.

We actively collaborate to empower individuals, clubs, and communities in lifelong engagement of active recreation, sport, and physical activity. This involves close partnerships with sporting bodies, community and voluntary groups, and statutory agencies. Our focus is on ensuring sport is inclusive and attracts participants from every corner of Kilkenny, from every age group, of all abilities, and all social backgrounds.

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to the Board, CEO, Staff, and Volunteers within KRSP. It supplements other policies as well as the organisation's strategy including mission, vision and values.

This policy relates to those who choose to volunteer with KRSP. The principles outlined in the KRSP Diversity and Inclusion Policy will also apply to the KRSP Volunteer Policy.

The implementation of this Volunteer Policy is a shared responsibility between the Board and the CEO. While the CEO is tasked with developing and executing the policy, the Board is responsible for providing oversight and ensuring that volunteers are managed and supported effectively, in alignment with the Governance Code for Sport. This policy sets out KRSP's approach and commitment to the management and support of volunteers.

2. Why We Involve Volunteers

KRSP believes that volunteers have an important and invaluable role to play in helping KRSP achieve its goals with mutual benefits for both parties. KRSP recognises that volunteers are not recruited to replace or displace paid staff members. Instead they are recruited to complement the work of paid staff within KRSP to enhance the delivery of KRSP programmes and activities.

The policy sets out a framework for volunteers and KRSP staff to work together in a mutually supportive and complementary manner. KRSP welcomes volunteers and recognises their contribution to the work of the partnership, with a range of roles from administration to coaching to mentorship. The commitment, dedication and leadership of volunteers in sport passes on knowledge and experience, encourages healthy and active lifestyles and engages communities. In return, it is the aim of KRSP that the volunteer's experience will be beneficial and rewarding.

Under the KRSP Pillar, Active Empowerment, it is recognised that volunteers are integral to the success of sport and physical activity in the county. People are the lifeblood of

sport and its most valuable asset. Volunteering can provide a great opportunity for people to develop their own skills at the same time as volunteering time and resources towards a sport and/or physical activity. KRSP will proactively manage their volunteers to the best of our ability. Volunteers need ongoing support, such as induction, supervision, training and recognition.

We will work to develop a volunteer recognition and appreciation initiative to celebrate their invaluable efforts. Additionally, volunteers will be actively involved in reviewing and reflecting on the success of KRSP programmes, ensuring their voices are heard and their insights shape future initiatives.

Successful programmes are run by enthusiastic and knowledgeable people, who contribute and feel valued.

Volunteer management is a critical part of our organisational governance, as there are potential risks should volunteers not be supported and managed appropriately.

3. Volunteer Management Procedures

3.1 Responsibility

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff are required to facilitate and support this process.

3.2 Relationship with paid staff

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

3.3 Eligibility

KRSP welcomes volunteers. Individuals must however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of KRSP and may only be placed with KRSP if their needs as volunteers match the needs of KRSP.

No person who has a conflict of interest with KRSP will be accepted as a volunteer.

All volunteers are required to attend the Safeguarding 1, Child Welfare & Protection, Basic Awareness Workshop and are also required to undergo Garda Vetting if over 16.

3.4 Volunteer Working Conditions

Volunteers are recognised as an integral part of the KRSP team and are highly valued for their contributions. While their role differs from that of paid staff, volunteers are treated with fairness, respect, and inclusivity. Wherever practical, they are involved in relevant functions and decision-making processes. Volunteers are provided with suitable workspaces, along with access to the equipment and facilities needed to carry out their roles effectively and comfortably.

4. Guidelines for Involving Volunteers

4.1 Recruitment and Selection

All volunteers will be subject to comprehensive recruitment and selection procedures including interview and appropriate vetting procedures. Please refer to Appendix 2 for the Safe Recruitment of Volunteers (taken from the KRSP Child Safeguarding Policy).

All Volunteers will have:

- Undergone informal interview
- Completed Volunteer application form
- Provide names of two independent referees or completed a confidential reference form
- Successfully completed the Garda vetting process if required.
- Satisfactorily complete Safeguarding 1, Child Welfare & Protection, Basic Awareness Workshop where appropriate and other relevant training
- Signed Code of Conduct

Following completion of the above steps, individuals may then register as a volunteer with KRSP.

Role descriptions and personal specifications

Volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks/roles they are expected to undertake. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role description will be discussed with each volunteer. This will include the volunteering role, start and finish dates of programmes, hours and place of work, name of supervisor/coach and any tasks to be undertaken. If appropriate, a brief role description may also be drawn up. The role description may be amended in joint agreement with the volunteer and the KRSP staff member.

Applications

Volunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis using various avenues of communication that are suitable for the roles that need to be filled. Volunteers are recruited in accordance with KRSP's recruitment and selection procedures (See Appendix 2 KRSP Safe Recruitment of Volunteers - KRSP Service Providers). All volunteers are required to complete a volunteer application form which includes personal information and experience, signed codes of conduct, signed personal declaration, identification check and Garda Vetting form.

Interviews

Candidates are invited to attend an informal interview with the relevant KRSP staff member, to ascertain their interest in and suitability for the role. All unsuccessful candidates are thanked for applying and encouraged to reapply for other volunteering opportunities, either current or in the future.

Checks for Suitability

KRSP works with children and vulnerable adults and as a result, all volunteers who could potentially come in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults through their volunteer role are required to go through a Garda Vetting (16 and over) and reference check process (See KRSP Garda Vetting Policy) prior to beginning as a volunteer in the organisation. KRSP guarantees confidentiality through this process. Any disclosures that come to light in this

process will not necessarily exclude the applicant from becoming a volunteer. All cases will be considered on an individual basis by the KRSP Safeguarding Committee.

References provided by the volunteer will be checked and if the role requires it, health checks may also be undertaken. Other checks may also be completed (for example, ascertaining professional qualifications) if appropriate. Volunteers are always informed in advance of the intention to make these checks. If they refuse permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be placed on the volunteer database.

Appointment

Volunteers will commence appointment(s) after the role description has been agreed and all necessary checks have proved acceptable. No volunteer placements are made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the relevant staff member can be met.

Probation

All volunteer placements are subject to an initial trial period of three months. At the end of this period, the KRSP staff member may need to meet with the volunteer to discuss the volunteer's suitability for their role. At this point, volunteers may continue in their current role, be reassigned to a more suitable role, or may be removed from the KRSP volunteer database.

4.2 Induction and Training

All volunteers will be required to undergo an induction before taking up their role. Induction arrangements will vary according to the nature of the role.

Training programmes will be designed around the roles that volunteers are undertaking within the organisation. During training volunteers will be made aware of good practice guidelines. Some training will be mandatory so that all volunteers receive the correct training necessary to take up their roles. Training and development opportunities outside of mandatory training may also be provided to enable volunteers to fulfil their voluntary role more effectively.

All volunteers will be subject to a three-month probation period where each side may choose to withdraw from the volunteer agreement.

Induction

All volunteers will receive the appropriate induction overseen by the relevant KRSP staff member when they begin voluntary work with KRSP. This may consist of a general introduction to the work of KRSP as well as a more specific discussion on the purposes and requirements of their specific volunteering role. This may include the Volunteer code of conduct, Equality, diversity and inclusion and Safeguarding guidelines where applicable.

Support

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

Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with KRSP and are assisted into assuming additional roles over time, if they desire this.

Training and Information

Information on relevant upcoming training/courses will be disseminated to volunteers.

KRSP provides or facilitates access to relevant training courses and workshops, based on the needs of the volunteer and within the resources available to KRSP.

4.3 Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

KRSP will establish comprehensive volunteer management and co-ordination procedures.

Supervision

All volunteers will be supervised on a regular basis by the KRSP staff member assigned to the programme that they are volunteering on. They will be provided with support in order to feedback on progress and discuss future development. Volunteers are encouraged to express their views.

Working Times

The times for volunteering are agreed between the relevant KRSP staff member and the volunteer which is usually the date, time and duration of specific programmes and/or placements. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform the relevant KRSP staff member as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Appropriate Behaviour

Volunteers are expected to work within the relevant policies and procedures of KRSP and adhere to its values. They are also expected to sign a volunteer Code of Conduct prior to inclusion on the KRSP volunteer database. As representatives of KRSP, volunteers should be aware that their actions and behaviour reflect KRSP to the wider community.

Representation of KRSP

Volunteers must seek prior approval from the KRSP CEO, through the relevant KRSP staff member before undertaking anything that might affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies etc. Volunteers must abide by KRSP policies in terms of photography and social media throughout their time volunteering with KRSP.

Confidentiality

KRSP respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with KRSP.

Records

A system of records is maintained on all volunteers, including volunteer information forms and the programmes that they are involved in etc. Information on volunteers is stored and processed in line with KRSP data protection policy.

Service at the Discretion of KRSP and Volunteer

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of KRSP and the Volunteer. KRSP may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteers' relationship with KRSP. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationship with KRSP. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, either by phone, in writing or in person.

4.4 Insurance

Volunteers are covered under KRSP's insurance while volunteering for KRSP under the supervision of KRSP staff and/or designated tutors.

4.5 Expenses

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so KRSP may offer to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses they may incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for KRSP if appropriate. KRSP does not pay travel expenses to volunteers unless previously agreed with the volunteer prior to starting their role

4.6 Problem Solving

KRSP aims to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. The volunteer or KRSP may discontinue the volunteering placement at any time. It may be necessary to cancel the volunteer role due to unforeseen circumstances in KRSP. Should a volunteer not adhere to KRSP relevant policies and procedures or not carry out work satisfactorily, the volunteer will be called to a meeting with the relevant KRSP staff member to discuss the matter. Following the meeting with the relevant KRSP staff member, the volunteer may be asked to cease volunteering at KRSP.

Lines of Communication

Lines of communication will operate in both directions, formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, materials and meetings relevant to their programmes/events. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering role.

Supervisors

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the management of that volunteer. A KRSP staff member will normally take on the supervisor's role. Staff members will receive guidance on how to involve volunteers effectively in the work of KRSP.

Supervision Sessions

KRSP 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 and discuss how they feel about volunteering. KRSP staff will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas that are affecting their performance.

Volunteers may receive feedback on their work/role. This may involve a review of the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes in work style, seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with KRSP, convey appreciation to the volunteer and/or ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in his or her role. The sessions also serve as an opportunity to plan future tasks/volunteering.

Disciplinary Procedures

Volunteers who do not adhere to KRSPs volunteer code of conduct or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to disciplinary procedures. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with the relevant KRSP staff member who is supervising them.

Grounds for disciplinary procedures include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct (breaches of code of conduct), 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 KRSP policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

Concerns and Grievances

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately by the relevant staff member, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the KRSP CEO.

Procedures outlined in the KRSP Complaints Comments and Compliments Policy will be followed when dealing with issues or concern raised.

Exit Interviews

Where possible, informal exit interviews may be held with any volunteers who are leaving, either because they have reached the end of their programme/project or are leaving for some other reason.

The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they have to offer to help improve the way the volunteering operates within KRSP. The provision of a reference for future volunteer roles/employment opportunities etc. will be considered to volunteers who have performed their volunteer roles satisfactorily.

4.7 Personal Safety

Volunteers should conduct themselves in accordance with KRSP's Health and Safety Policy to ensure their own safety and the safety of others.

4.8 Recognition of Voluntary Contribution

Volunteers provide a unique service to KRSP, the benefits of which can be difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. KRSP staff are responsible for acknowledging the support of volunteers on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to KRSP. KRSP is committed to consulting with volunteers around how it could positively reward their effort.

Some suggestions:

- **Appreciation Event:** Reward volunteers with an event at the end of the programme/project where resources allow.
- **Certificates of Appreciation:** Present volunteers with official certificates acknowledging their contributions and efforts.
- **Training Opportunities:** KRSP offers volunteers access to training and workshops that can further their skills and knowledge.
- **Personalised Thank You Notes:** Send handwritten thank you notes from the organisation to express personal appreciation.

- **Merchandise:** Provide KRSP-branded merchandise such as t-shirts, hats, or water bottles as a token of appreciation.
- **Spotlight Stories:** Feature individual volunteer stories on the KRSP website or in newsletters, highlighting their unique contributions and experiences.

These additional methods can enhance our volunteer appreciation programme, making it more comprehensive and rewarding. These initiatives will not only celebrate their hard work but also inspire others to get involved in volunteering.

5. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

KRSP Volunteer Involvement

KRSP monitors and evaluates volunteer involvement on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements.

Review

This policy is reviewed every 3 years. Feedback on this document will be sought from KRSP staff supervising volunteers and KRSP volunteers, where appropriate.



Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

Code for Sport Leaders

Sport Leaders play a vital role in children's sport. KSRP ensures that the work of Sport Leaders, is guided by this safeguarding guidance and best practice whilst also recognising that they are entitled to obtain a healthy sense of achievement and satisfaction through their involvement in children's sport.

In order to act as a role model and to promote their safety and the safety of young people Sport Leaders should:

Create a safe and enjoyable environment for children by:

- Planning and preparing appropriately and be positive during sessions.
- Making sure all levels of participation are enjoyable and fun.
- Prioritising skill development and personal satisfaction over highly structured competition.
- Setting age appropriate and realistic goals.
- Avoiding favouritism - each child will need attention according to their sporting needs.
- Praising and encouraging effort as well as results.
- Showing respect for all involved, children and adults.

Recognise and ensure the welfare of children by:

- Monitoring attendance for activities.
- Not exposing a child to criticism, hostility or sarcasm.
- Never swearing at, ridiculing, shouting unnecessarily or arguing with a child.
- Being aware of a child's developmental needs and how a child may be psychologically or physically affected (if relevant for your role).
- Working in an open environment.
- Ensuring there is adequate supervision.
- Involving and updating the appropriate person and/or parents/guardians when a problem has arisen.
- Respecting a child's sensitivity.
- Never using physical punishment or force.
- Not using verbal or physical punishments or exclusion for mistakes.

Additional Information:

- Do not allow or engage in bullying behaviour, rough physical games, sexually provocative games, never allow or engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- In the management of a child's participation, where there are recommendations around the management of a child's medical needs, KRSP will aim to facilitate,

where possible, a child's participation in KRSP activities through prior discussion between parents and sports leaders.

- Avoid carrying out any medical testing or giving advice of a personal or medical nature if not qualified to do so or undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children. Any such activity, if qualified, must only be with parent/guardian consent and the understanding of the child.
- Keep any information in relation to a child/young person of a personal or medical nature strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information on a need-to-know basis.
- Never exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Acknowledge the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged. The use of alcohol is not permitted at any time whilst responsible for young people e.g. training sessions, events and on trips with young people.

Appendix 2: Safe Recruitment of Volunteers

KRSP Service Providers

The vast majority of Sports Leaders will get involved in sport or leadership through a genuine desire to see children or young people or their particular sport develop. Unfortunately, we must face the reality that a small minority of people will get involved as an opportunity to gain access to children or young people. These adults create an air of acceptability about their role, therefore justifying their close contact with children or young people.

Although those who want to abuse children or young people may find it more difficult to do so in a group setting, such as a leisure centre or sports pitch, they can use this time to gain the trust of not only the young person but also other adults, including other Sports leaders/parents/carers. This is known as ‘grooming’ or ‘entrapment’. Developing credibility is an essential part of any abusers ‘grooming process.’ An abuser will “groom” the environment i.e. creating a justifiable reason for getting the child alone.

The safe recruitment process supports KRSP to try to ensure that the Sports Leaders working with young people have the best interests of the children and young people at heart, deliver under good practice guidelines so that children have a positive experience of sport and physical activity.

The following are the steps KRSP will take to ensure that people who are employed by KRSP are suitable to work with children. KRSP service providers include tutors, programme leaders and volunteers, coaches and commercial providers.

Procedure for Safe Recruitment	Y/N	Date/Initials	Comment
Recruitment Process			
Clearly defined /Tutor Service Agreement/ Volunteer Agreement including role and responsibilities and person specification including level of experience/qualifications required made available			
Recruitment documentation must specify KRSP’s commitment to safe recruitment and the protection of children and vulnerable persons			
Application/Interview Process			
Tutor Application Form required/provided. Volunteer Application Form required/provided			
Meeting / informal interview with a minimum of one LSP staff member			
Suitability of individual for position working with children/vulnerable persons assessed based on experience, ability to communicate and commitment to good practice			
Individual made aware of KRSP’s Code of Conduct in relation to children and be advised that should they be appointed they will be subject to garda vetting and reference checks			
Individual to provide contact details for two referees. Referees should not be related and ideally will have had regular contact with the applicant over a sustained period of time.			

Checks Required Prior to Appointment			
Self-Declaration Form completed			
KRSP Code of Conduct signed			
Garda Vetting process satisfactorily completed			
Qualifications checked			
References - obtain at least 2 referees and ensure the question with regard to Safeguarding is satisfactorily answered.			
Tutor Contract for Services Agreement issued and signed. Volunteer Agreement issued and signed.			
Onboarding/Induction/Training			
Safeguarding training completed			
Safeguarding Policy read and signed			
KRSP Induction to role/organisation complete			
Support plan in place			
Tutors - Supervision and monitoring plan in place.			