



Portarlington Neighbourhood House Inc

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VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Welcome

Thank you for volunteering with Portarlington Neighbourhood House. Volunteers play a vital role in assisting the organisation to provide the diversity of services offered to the community. This booklet provides you with information that will assist you to settle in and answer any questions you may have. If you have further questions please speak with the Coordinator.

About Portarlington Neighbourhood House

Portarlington Neighbourhood House is a not-for-profit, incorporated community organisation established in 2008 to provide a variety of community and social services to people in the Portarlington region.

PNH is an organisation governed by a volunteer Committee of Management voted in at the AGM by members of the organisation. Currently PNH employ one paid staff member, a number of sessional tutors and workers and a team of regular volunteers.

Vision

Portarlington Neighbourhood House provides and promotes positive, creative community development and, through its activities, creates and enhances a sense of place and belonging to everyone in the area.

Values

To achieve a socially sustainable and vibrant community, all activities must be GREEN, HEALTHY, SOCIAL, INSPIRE LEARNING, ACCESSIBLE and INCLUSIVE.

Mission

Portarlington Neighbourhood House aims to:

- Benefit and strengthen individuals and the community by providing a caring and inviting centre for all people to meet and interact in a positive and encouraging atmosphere
- Encourage and support new ideas and opportunities through learning, by providing information and affordable services.

Portarlington Neighbourhood House is a member of the **Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Centres** and affiliated to the **Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres**, our peak body.

Groups and Services

Front Counter

The front Counter is open from 10am-3pm Mon-Friday (closed first Thursday of every month). There is a range of information and resources for the community and internet access.

Groups at PNH include:

- Light Exercise
- Computer classes
- Art and craft classes
- Shared recreational pastimes
- Social, cultural and recreational groups

Volunteers in our office staff the front counter, assist with reception and administration work, deal with enquiries, class bookings and room hire, as well as provide information to the public. They also assist with cleaning, maintenance and support to participants in programs.

Why volunteer?

PNH recognises the valuable contribution to the service made by volunteers and actively encourages their participation because it:

- Enables volunteers to contribute to their community
- Provides the opportunity for work experience and the development of new skills
- Enhances the range of services available through PNH
- Allows for wider community participation in the organisation

PNH values the support and efforts of volunteers and has a clear commitment to recruiting, training, managing and utilising their time and skills.

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place within a not-for-profit organisation or project and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- without financial payment
- in a designated volunteer position only.

Source: Volunteering Australia

Principles of Volunteering

Portarlington Neighbourhood House endorses Volunteering Geelong's Principles of Volunteering which state:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer.
- Volunteer work is unpaid.
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice.
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances.
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only.
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to job security of paid workers.

The Coordinator can be contacted by phone 5259 2290 on Mondays to Friday from 10am to 3pm. At other times you are welcome to leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as convenient. If the office is unattended leave a message on the answering machine and the Coordinator will return your call. Remember, the Coordinator is there to help you.

The Coordinator is responsible for organising the roster, the daily supervision of volunteers and initial and ongoing training.

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

Volunteer application

There are a variety of volunteer positions available from time to time. The type of volunteer positions can include: reception and administration volunteer, maintenance volunteer, special event volunteer, project volunteer or marketing and media volunteer.

You may apply for any of the above mentioned positions at any time. Portarlington Neighbourhood House recruits volunteers on a needs basis in response to the requirements of our programs and activities. Your application will remain on file for one year and will be considered for every recruitment that may occur in that time.

Volunteer offer

Volunteers will be required to read the Volunteer Handbook and sign an acknowledgement that they abide by all the principles contained in it. This signed acknowledgement will be kept on file at PNH.

Please note that reference checks may be made before an offer for a volunteer position is made. **Induction and Training**

Volunteers receive training as part of their volunteer service. Volunteers must complete both an induction and on-the-job training. There will be opportunities for additional training.

Induction is mandatory for all new volunteers. Inductions serve as an introduction to Portarlington Neighbourhood House, its mission, policies and guidelines. They act as a framework for volunteering and provide an opportunity to complete administrative requirements.

Volunteer Handbook

The Volunteer Handbook is available at induction. It contains information about the volunteers program, volunteer roles, and Portarlington Neighbourhood House policies and procedures. The handbook also contains registration forms and information regarding volunteer placements.

Volunteer Forms

New volunteers will be asked to complete a Portarlington Neighbourhood House registration form and a volunteer acknowledgement form. All information is treated as confidential and is for administrative use only.

On-the-job training

The Coordinator coordinates ongoing training to further develop the volunteer knowledge and skills necessary to perform volunteer roles.

Volunteer badge

Volunteers are issued with a name badge that is to be worn while the volunteer is on duty, particularly when dealing with members of the public.

Volunteer rights

A volunteer has the right to be:

- Treated with respect
- Properly interviewed and employed in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- Provided with opportunities for learning and growth
- Provided with timely communication, support and advice
- Given meaningful and enjoyable tasks that match the needs of the centre with the knowledge, interests and skills of the volunteer
- Provided with safe working conditions
- Provided with recreational, knowledge-building and social activities including talks
- Kept up to date with changes and developments at the centre
- Supported and supervised in their volunteer role
- Protected by appropriate insurance
- Recognised for services provided

Portarlington Neighbourhood House recognises that volunteers can discontinue service at any time and for any reason. Portarlington Neighbourhood House reserves the right to discontinue the volunteer service relationship if deemed to be in the interests of the organisation.

Volunteer responsibilities

A volunteer has the responsibility to:

- Support Portarlington Neighbourhood House goals and objectives
- Be an active participant in meetings and training sessions as required
- Work as a team with staff and other volunteers
- Treat others with respect
- 'sign in' and 'sign out' when starting and finishing a shift, as a means of recording the overall volunteer contribution to Portarlington Neighbourhood House and in case of emergency at the centre
- Aim to provide the highest quality of customer service and information to the public
- Ask for support when needed
- Be courteous and helpful to the public and staff
- Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information gained while engaged in centre tasks
- Follow volunteer guidelines, organisational policy and procedures and job descriptions
- Consult with the Coordinator if unclear on any policy or action
- Accept a probationary period during which a volunteer's performance will be assessed
- Notify the Coordinator of change of address or telephone number
- Advise the Coordinator if unable to attend a volunteer shift or meeting

Volunteer hours

Hours and days vary according to the volunteer role, and can be negotiated with the Coordinator.

The importance of volunteer hours

It is very important that Portarlington Neighbourhood House knows how much time volunteers spend volunteering because the data helps to tell the true story of volunteer work and the number of service hours they contribute. The data is used for recognition of service events, reporting volunteer activities, insurance claims and emergency security purposes.

Restriction on hours

As a member of Volunteering Geelong, Portarlington Neighbourhood House accepts the recommendation that volunteers are not to work more than 10 hours a week.

Rosters

Volunteers work on a roster basis. Rosters change periodically and are negotiated with the Coordinator. If possible, two weeks notice should be given for any changes to the roster. Volunteers should notify the Coordinator if unable to attend a shift, or if running late contact the person whom you are relieving.

Volunteer policies and procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance is important to centre operations. Volunteers should be aware of their roster commitments and notify the Coordinator in advance if they are unable to attend.

Conduct

Volunteers are expected to follow rules of conduct to protect the interest and safety of volunteers, staff and Portarlington Neighbourhood House. Inappropriate conduct may lead to dismissal. Examples of improper conduct are:

- Disruptive verbal behaviour
- Failure to follow direction
- Breach of confidentiality
- Breach of trust
- Neglect of duties and responsibilities
- Sustained failure to attend or lateness, theft or inappropriate removal of Portarlington Neighbourhood House property
- Physical violence
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs while undertaking volunteer duties
- Committing a criminal offence while undertaking volunteer duties
- Public expressions inconsistent with Portarlington Neighbourhood House policies, procedures and programs
- Intended breach of Portarlington Neighbourhood House's mission, goals or principles
- Intended breach of Portarlington Neighbourhood House's Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures.

Dress code

Portarlington Neighbourhood House volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive image. Volunteers are to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Comfortable and neat dress is appropriate for most volunteer jobs. Volunteers who have contact with the public must wear their name badges and follow dress requirements as requested by the Coordinator.

Emergency

Emergency procedure training is given to all new volunteers at induction and on site. Volunteers should familiarise themselves with emergency procedures and the location of fire extinguishers. Emergency procedures and plans of the building can be obtained from the Coordinator and should be displayed in the reception office.

Evaluation

Volunteers may receive periodic evaluation to review their performance. The evaluation allows volunteers and the Coordinator to suggest change and seek ideas. Evaluation is intended to offer a positive and informative exchange for both parties.

Grievance

In the first instance, any dispute or problem should be discussed with the Coordinator. In the event of a dispute arising between a volunteer and Portarlington Neighbourhood House staff, a board member will be asked to mediate. If the issue is not resolved within four weeks the matter will be referred to the President.

Leave of absence

Volunteers can request a leave of absence with the approval of the Coordinator.

Loss of personal property

Volunteers should exercise all reasonable caution to protect their personal property. Portarlington Neighbourhood House will seek to provide a secure working environment. Purses, wallets or other valuable items should never be left on or under a desk. If an item is lost or stolen the Coordinator should be notified immediately. In certain circumstances the Manager may be asked to consider a claim for compensation.

Non-smoking environment

Portarlington Neighbourhood House provides a safe and healthy environment. Smoking is prohibited in the workplace in accordance with Victorian government policy.

Recognition

Volunteers can receive various formal recognitions from Portarlington Neighbourhood House and the community for volunteering excellence.

Records management

The Volunteers program maintains records on each volunteer. All personal files are maintained in line with Portarlington Neighbourhood House's policy on data protection.

Reimbursement of expenses

The volunteer is responsible for all expenses incurred, except in cases where expenses are incurred at the request of the Coordinator, or reimbursement of authorised expenses is agreed upon prior to a financial commitment being made. The volunteer must submit the receipts for which they seek reimbursement for approval by the Coordinator.

Resignation

A letter of resignation should be submitted to the Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the effective date. The Coordinator may conduct an exit interview – all feedback is confidential.

Review

Volunteer placements may be reviewed periodically. Reviews are intended to identify issues that may affect the volunteer placement. A written record may be kept of these reviews.

Safety and liability

If a volunteer is injured during the course of volunteer service the Coordinator must be notified immediately and an incident report completed. Portarlinton Neighbourhood House's insurance covers volunteer workers for injury or damage that results from work-related activities.

Use of facilities and equipment

Volunteers are expected to be efficient and economical in their use and management of public resources including financial, material and human resources. Care should be exercised when using equipment and service requirements must be followed. Telephones are to be used for work-related purposes; however, Portarlinton Neighbourhood House accepts the occasional need for personal calls, which should be kept to a minimum. The use of office computers, email and internet access is restricted to work-related purposes.

Volunteer acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have read the volunteers Handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to read the handbook and consult with the Coordinator regarding questions related to either the handbook or Portarlinton Neighbourhood House policies.

I acknowledge that revisions may occur both to the handbook and Portarlinton Neighbourhood House policies and the Coordinator maintains a current electronic version on the shared folder.

I understand I have entered into a voluntary relationship with Portarlinton Neighbourhood House and that I will not receive payment for my services. I understand that my commitment to volunteer service varies according to the volunteer role I perform. I understand that I can terminate my volunteer service for any reason. I also understand that Portarlinton Neighbourhood House reserves the right to end my volunteer service if it deems it to be in the best interests of the organisation.

I acknowledge that any material provided for the purpose of my volunteer service shall be returned to Portarlinton Neighbourhood House upon my leaving the Volunteers program. I understand that copyright in any original work created by me in the course of my volunteer service resides with Portarlinton Neighbourhood House I will maintain the confidentiality of privileged information gained in the course of volunteering.

Under no circumstances may I make any statement to the media (including press, radio or television) concerning Portarlinton Neighbourhood House business without the approval of the Committee of Management.

I acknowledge that by signing below I agree to abide by the principles contained herein.

Signed

Name

Date