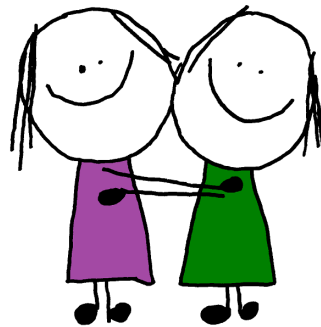


Friends – Play for Disabled Children



Friends – Play for Disabled Children
Email: info@friendsplay.org.uk
Website: www.friendsplay.org.uk
Registered Charity Number: 1167995

Volunteer Policy

Status: Approved

Approval date: 2 October 2026

Version: 1.0

Next review: October 2027

1. Purpose

Friends – Play for Disabled Children (“Friends”) values the contribution made by volunteers who help our activities run smoothly.

This policy explains:

- how volunteers are recruited;
- what volunteers may be asked to do;
- the limits of the volunteer role;
- safeguarding and confidentiality expectations;
- identification at events;
- how concerns are raised; and
- how volunteer arrangements may be ended where necessary.

2. Our approach to volunteering

Friends is a family-led charity and volunteers are generally people already known to the charity, including members, parents, carers or other people connected with Friends.

Friends does not normally run open volunteer recruitment campaigns.

Volunteers may:

- approach Friends to offer help; or
- be invited by trustees to assist with activities.

Volunteer roles are unpaid.

3. Volunteer roles

Friends volunteers generally provide practical event support.

This may include:

- welcoming families;
- checking people in;
- taking or checking attendance registers;
- helping members find the correct activity or transport;
- providing general information;
- monitoring the event environment;
- alerting trustees to concerns;

- helping with headcounts where requested; and
- supporting the smooth running of activities.

Volunteer duties will depend on the event and instructions given by trustees.

4. What volunteers do not do

Friends volunteers do not take over parental or caring responsibility.

Volunteers must not routinely:

- supervise a child, young person or adult at risk independently;
- provide personal care;
- administer medication;
- carry out medical procedures;
- undertake lifting or transferring;
- provide professional advice outside their role;
- investigate safeguarding concerns;
- make promises of confidentiality where safeguarding is involved; or
- make decisions on behalf of the trustees unless specifically authorised.

Parents and carers remain responsible for the individuals they accompany at all Friends activities.

5. Safeguarding

All volunteers are expected to follow the Friends Safeguarding Policy.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported promptly to:

The Safeguarding Lead or a Friends trustee

Email: info@friendsplay.org.uk

Volunteers must not attempt to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services or an appropriate safeguarding authority may need to be contacted.

6. DBS checks

Friends will carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks where a volunteer role is eligible for such a check and where the trustees consider this appropriate.

DBS arrangements will be reviewed where volunteer roles or responsibilities change.

A DBS check does not replace appropriate supervision, role boundaries or safeguarding procedures.

No child, young person or adult requiring support should be left in the sole care of a Friends volunteer.

7. Volunteer induction

Before or when beginning to volunteer, volunteers should receive a simple introduction to their role.

This should include:

- the purpose of Friends;
- what their role involves;
- what their role does not involve;
- the requirement for parents/carers to remain responsible for those they accompany;
- safeguarding arrangements;
- confidentiality and data protection;
- what to do if there is an accident or incident;
- who to contact with concerns; and
- any event-specific instructions.

Induction may be informal but should be recorded using a simple volunteer induction checklist.

8. Identification at events

Friends may provide volunteers with:

- an identification card;
- a Friends lanyard;
- branded clothing; or
- another form of visible identification.

Where identification is provided, volunteers should use it when acting on behalf of Friends unless instructed otherwise.

Identification remains the property of Friends and should be returned if the volunteer role ends.

9. Confidentiality and personal information

Volunteers may occasionally see limited member information when checking attendance or helping with event administration.

Volunteers must:

- only access information needed for their role;
- keep member information confidential;
- not photograph, copy or retain registers or member information;
- not share personal information with others without authorisation; and
- return paperwork to a trustee after use.

Volunteers should not normally have access to:

- full membership records;
- health or disability evidence;
- Nimbus/Access Card records;
- payment information; or
- other sensitive personal information.

Any concern about personal information should be reported to a trustee.

10. Accident and incident reporting

Volunteers should report any accident, near miss, safety concern or significant incident to a trustee as soon as reasonably possible.

Where appropriate, an Accident, Incident & Near Miss Report should be completed.

Safeguarding concerns must also be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

11. Health and safety

Volunteers should follow:

- reasonable instructions from trustees;
- venue and provider rules;
- emergency procedures;
- health and safety arrangements; and
- the Friends Health & Safety and Risk Management Policy.

Volunteers should not undertake tasks they believe are unsafe or outside their ability.

Any safety concern should be raised with a trustee.

12. Behaviour and conduct

Volunteers are expected to:

- treat members, families, staff, other volunteers and venue staff with respect;
- behave in a calm and appropriate manner;
- avoid discriminatory, abusive, threatening or harassing behaviour;
- maintain appropriate boundaries;
- follow Friends policies and reasonable trustee instructions; and
- act in a way that supports the safety and reputation of the charity.

Friends recognises that disability, neurodivergence, communication differences or distress should not automatically be treated as misconduct.

13. Social media

Volunteers must follow Friends group rules and confidentiality expectations when using social media.

Volunteers must not:

- share confidential information about members;
- publish private conversations;
- share screenshots from private groups without appropriate permission; or
- present personal opinions as official Friends views unless authorised.

Concerns about online behaviour should be raised with a trustee.

14. Expenses

Friends volunteer roles are unpaid.

Friends does not routinely reimburse volunteer expenses.

Where trustees agree in advance that a specific expense will be reimbursed, the arrangement should be agreed before the expense is incurred and appropriate evidence retained.

15. Support and concerns

Volunteers should feel able to raise questions, concerns or difficulties with a trustee.

Friends will try to resolve issues informally where appropriate.

Where a concern relates to safeguarding, health and safety, confidentiality or serious conduct, it should be dealt with promptly under the relevant policy.

16. Ending a volunteer role

Volunteers may stop volunteering at any time.

Friends trustees may also end or restrict a volunteer role where they consider this necessary.

Reasons may include:

- safeguarding concerns;
- inappropriate behaviour;
- serious or repeated breaches of Friends policies;
- misuse of confidential information;
- failure to follow reasonable instructions;
- behaviour creating a safety risk;
- unreliability that significantly affects activities; or
- the role no longer being required.

Where reasonably possible, the volunteer should be told the reason for the decision.

Immediate removal from volunteering may be appropriate where there is a serious safeguarding, safety or conduct concern.

Any Friends ID card, lanyard, documents or other charity property should be returned when the role ends.

17. Status of volunteers

Volunteers are not employees of Friends and this policy does not create a contract of employment.

Nothing in this policy is intended to create an obligation for Friends to provide volunteering opportunities or for a volunteer to provide a minimum amount of time.

18. Review and approval

This policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually;
- where volunteer roles materially change;

- after a significant volunteer-related concern or incident; or
- where relevant safeguarding or legal guidance changes.

Approved by: Friends – Play for Disabled Children Trustees

Approval date: [to be completed]

Version: 1.0

Next review: [month/year]