

Volunteer Agreement

St Peter's, Colchester

Adopted by the PCC: [tbc]

Review date: [3 years]

Policy owner: The Parochial Church Council

Volunteer name: [insert name]

Role / ministry area: [insert role or ministry area]

Responsible person / Ministry Area Leader: [insert name]

Date: [insert date]

1. Purpose

This agreement explains the commitments, support, responsibilities and boundaries that apply when someone volunteers or serves in the life of St Peter's.

We are grateful for all who offer their time, gifts, energy and care in the service of Christ and his church. Volunteers are a vital part of the life, witness and ministry of St Peter's.

The Parochial Church Council has responsibility for the governance and oversight of St Peter's, including safeguarding, health and safety, use of resources, and the good order of church life.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we seek to be faithful in all that we say and do. That includes how we serve, how we treat one another, how we protect the vulnerable, how we handle information, and how we use the trust placed in us.

This agreement is intended to help volunteers understand the role they are undertaking, the support available to them, and the standards and responsibilities that apply.

2. Voluntary nature of the role

This is a voluntary role. It is not employment and does not create a contract of employment, worker relationship, or legally binding obligation either for the volunteer to provide service or for St Peter's to provide volunteering opportunities.

Volunteers may step back from a role. St Peter's may also pause, change or end a volunteer role where appropriate, in accordance with the Volunteer Policy and other relevant policies.

Where possible, volunteers are asked to give reasonable notice if they wish to step back, so that rotas, responsibilities and ministry arrangements can be adjusted.

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses may be reimbursed where agreed and properly claimed in accordance with St Peter's financial procedures.

3. Role and support

The volunteer agrees to serve in the role or ministry area named above, in accordance with the relevant Ministry Role Description and any guidance given by the responsible person, Ministry Area Leader, Vicar, Church Administrator, Safeguarding Team or other appropriate person.

St Peter's will seek to provide information, induction, training, supervision and support appropriate to the role.

The volunteer should ask for help if they are unsure how to carry out the role safely, appropriately or confidently, or if they feel unclear, unsupported, uncomfortable or overburdened.

The volunteer agrees not to act outside the agreed scope or authority of the role without appropriate permission.

4. Conduct and boundaries

The volunteer agrees to serve in a way that is consistent with St Peter's Christian ethos, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Volunteer Policy, and Welcome, Dignity and Fair Treatment Policy.

In particular, the volunteer agrees to:

- treat others with courtesy, patience, dignity and respect;
- speak truthfully and charitably;
- work within the boundaries of the role;
- avoid gossip, bullying, harassment, manipulation, favouritism or misuse of power;
- respect personal, pastoral, emotional, physical and safeguarding boundaries;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- use any responsibility, access or information for service, not self-interest;
- communicate appropriately and reliably about rota or role commitments;
- raise concerns through proper channels;
- accept guidance or correction where behaviour has been harmful, unwise, unsafe, unkind or inappropriate.

5. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is central to the life of St Peter's. The volunteer agrees to follow St Peter's Safeguarding Policy and any relevant Church of England, diocesan, parish or statutory safeguarding requirements.

Where the role requires safer recruitment checks, DBS clearance, safeguarding training, references, supervision or other approval, the volunteer agrees not to begin or continue that role unless the relevant requirements have been met, or unless the Safeguarding Team has confirmed what may properly happen while checks are pending.

The volunteer agrees to report safeguarding concerns promptly through St Peter's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding concerns must not be handled merely as ordinary complaints, informal pastoral matters or private disagreements.

No one should promise absolute confidentiality where there is a safeguarding concern, risk of harm, abuse, coercion, criminal behaviour, or danger to a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

6. Health and safety

The volunteer agrees to take reasonable care of themselves and others while serving at St Peter's.

The volunteer agrees to:

- follow St Peter's Health and Safety Policy and relevant operational guidance;
- use equipment safely and only where authorised, competent or trained;
- follow fire, food hygiene, manual handling, first aid and risk assessment arrangements where relevant;
- report accidents, injuries, near misses, faults, defects, hazards or concerns promptly;
- not undertake tasks they are not competent, trained, equipped or safe to perform.

The volunteer should tell the responsible person if there is anything affecting their ability to carry out the role safely.

7. Confidentiality and data protection

Some volunteers may have access to personal, pastoral, safeguarding, rota, financial, governance or other confidential information.

The volunteer agrees to handle such information carefully and only for proper church purposes.

The volunteer agrees to follow St Peter's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice and Data Retention Policy where relevant.

The volunteer agrees not to share personal or confidential information unnecessarily, including through email, WhatsApp, social media, ChurchSuite, Dropbox or other systems.

Confidentiality is important, but it is not absolute. Information may need to be shared where there is a safeguarding concern, risk of harm, legal obligation, serious misconduct concern, pastoral necessity, governance responsibility or other proper reason.

8. Resources, keys and systems

The volunteer agrees to use church resources, keys, equipment, documents, logins, passwords, records and systems responsibly and only for authorised church purposes.

Keys, passwords, data, documents and access rights must not be copied, shared, retained or used beyond what is authorised for the role.

The volunteer agrees to return keys, equipment, documents, records or access rights when asked, or when they step back from the role.

The volunteer should report promptly any lost key, misplaced document, accidental data sharing, account compromise, damage, fault or concern about security.

9. Communication and concerns

The volunteer should raise concerns, difficulties or questions with the responsible person, Ministry Area Leader, Church Administrator, Vicar, churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officer or another appropriate person, depending on the nature of the matter.

The volunteer may ask to review, change, pause or step back from the role.

St Peter's may also ask to review, change, pause or end the role where appropriate, including where there are safeguarding, conduct, health and safety, confidentiality, suitability, capacity, reliability, role-boundary, governance or ministry concerns.

Where possible, such conversations should be handled with clarity, kindness, gratitude and pastoral care.

Safeguarding concerns must always be reported through safeguarding procedures.

10. Related documents

This agreement should be read alongside, where applicable:

- Volunteer Policy;
- relevant Ministry Role Description;
- Code of Conduct;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Welcome, Dignity and Fair Treatment Policy;
- Social Media Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Privacy Notice;
- Data Retention Policy;
- Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- relevant operational guidance, checklists or risk assessments.

11. Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood this Volunteer Agreement, and that I agree to serve in accordance with it and with the relevant policies, procedures and Ministry Role Description for my role.

I understand that this agreement is not a contract of employment and does not create a legally binding obligation either for me to provide service or for St Peter's to provide volunteering opportunities.

I understand that safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection, health and safety, conduct and role boundaries are important responsibilities when serving at St Peter's.

Volunteer signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

For St Peter's: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____