Duke of Edinburgh Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Our Special Friends (OSF) supports the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award by providing opportunities for young people to volunteer with our charity. We value the energy and enthusiasm that DofE participants bring. It is important that DofE volunteer activity contributes to supporting the needs of the charity. Thus, our capacity to accept DofE volunteers will depend on our client need and resources at the time of enquiry.

Purpose

This policy outlines how Our Special Friends will:

- Support DofE volunteers in meeting the requirements of their Award
- Ensure a safe and positive volunteering environment
- Provide clarity on expectations for both the charity and the volunteers

Eligibility

- Volunteers must be aged **14 or over** and registered with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- An adult over 18-years-old must accompany all DofE activity if the student is under 17. This adult must go through the full OSF volunteer recruitment, include references and a DBS check (as the minimum age to apply for a DBS is 16-years-old
- Volunteers must complete an induction before beginning their role

Volunteer Roles

Depending on age, ability, and availability, DofE volunteers may support Our Special Friends in:

- Assisting with fundraising and events
- Providing Dog Walking for clients in need of support
- Providing administrative support (data entry, mailings, office tasks)
- Provide Animal-Assisted Activity visits with volunteer's own dog

Supervision and Support

- DofE volunteers will be supported by the Volunteer Support Manager (VSM). They will receive case related support from a lead volunteer/and or practitioner in the office team
- Volunteers are encouraged to update the office team of any case updates, changes to their availability and/or concerns
- Volunteers will receive correspondence via The Monthly Paws, email updates and training opportunities

Safeguarding and Welfare

- Our Special Friends is committed to safeguarding all our volunteers

- Safeguarding policies and procedures apply equally to DofE participants
- All volunteers should complete our bespoke 'Introduction to Safeguarding' training video. This includes the DofE student themselves
- Any concerns regarding welfare or safety should be raised and addressed promptly by the Volunteer Support Manager (VSM)

Health and Safety

- OSF will only offer tasks that are age-appropriate and safe
- Risk assessments are in place for all volunteering activities
- Volunteer role guidelines are available to give guidance on how to carry out tasks safely

Commitment and Conduct

We ask all DofE volunteers to:

- Be reliable and attend as agreed
- Communicate if they are unable to attend or if there is a change in circumstances
- Respect the confidentiality of OSF clients and adhere to OSF policies and procedure
- Informed VSM of expected finish date at the earliest opportunity to allow for client support planning

OSF will:

- Provide written confirmation of volunteering by submitting a report when notified to do so
- Respond to reference requests for future opportunities

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our Special Friends welcomes DofE volunteers from all backgrounds. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where young people can learn and contribute.

Date of review: 18/11/2025

Date of next review: 18/11/027

Owner: Frances Day (VSM)

Signed: F.Day

Date: 18/11/2025