

WALFORD MILL EDUCATION TRUST LTD

VOLUNTEER POLICY



WALFORD MILL

Introduction

Walford Mill Education Trust (WMET) is a registered charity which promotes crafts and making through workshops, exhibitions and events, and by providing working space for established and emerging makers. The operation of the trust is currently managed by a team of trustees and run by a small part time team of administration staff with the support of the resident makers.

Why we involve volunteers at Walford Mill

Volunteers at Walford Mill assist the makers and WMET by carrying out general roles such as public facing front of house, housekeeping, administration and grounds maintenance. Other areas where volunteers with specialist experience can assist include events organisation, promotion, outreach and fund raising.

By helping at Walford Mill and taking on some of the routine operational tasks, volunteers give staff, trustees and makers more time to focus on their own work as well as more time to develop future programmes for education, outreach and exhibitions, and attract new makers. In return the volunteers have the opportunity to learn about different crafts, be inspired by the varying work on show, contribute to keeping WMET viable, use existing skills and learn new ones.

This policy covers individual volunteers who will be working under the supervision of staff and resident makers. WMET will be willing to accommodate groups of volunteers, e.g. from local businesses or organisations, looking for one off projects such as helping to clear overgrown areas within the grounds. These groups can include children but must provide their own supervision and have their own insurance.

Volunteer specifications

Volunteers must be aged 16 or over and those aged 16 and 17 will need to provide written permission from their parent or guardian. For most roles volunteers need no previous experience. If they are interested in volunteering at the mill WMET will try to find a role to suit both them and the Trust. Volunteers will never be alone in the building and there will

always be a maker or staff member available to answer queries and provide support. However, as one of the purposes of the volunteer roles is to provide makers with more time to make, the supervision will be light touch and there may not be roles for volunteers who need constant support. In addition the mill building has different levels in the public areas and no lift to the upper floors making it difficult to access fully if a volunteer has mobility problems.

Recruitment

A named Trustee (currently Loraine McClean) has overall responsibility for recruiting and managing volunteers aided by the Site Coordinator and other trustees. Supervision of volunteers is carried out by the Site Coordinator. WMET uses open recruitment methods to ensure that fairness, diversity and consistency is achieved, as described in our Equality Policy. Volunteer posts are advertised via the WMET website, in the Mill, at events such as local volunteer fairs and through word of mouth. Applicants need to apply either by completing the website application form, by writing/email, by phoning or visiting to make the initial contact. Written or online applications will receive an acknowledgement from the Site Coordinator and they will be invited for an informal interview with a Trustee (usually the named Trustee) and Site Coordinator and tour of the building to discuss roles available that may suit them.

If the Trustee and Site Coordinator decides there are no roles available to suit the prospective volunteer this will be explained to them with reasons either at the interview or in writing later. Their details may be kept on file with their permission in case a suitable role becomes available at a later date.

If a suitable role is available the post will be offered to the volunteer, subject to references and the agreement of the Trustees. If the volunteer accepts references will be taken up by WMET. These will be checked by the Site Coordinator and the application reviewed by the named Trustee and another trustee before a starting date is agreed.

There will be a trial period of 3 months and if both sides are happy with the volunteer's contribution they will be offered a permanent volunteer role.

Most of the volunteering roles at WMET do not require DBS checks. If a volunteer is recruited to assist with the education workshops for children, young people or vulnerable adults then this role would require a DBS check.

Induction and training

A volunteer handbook is available for new starters and each new volunteer will have an induction led by the Site Coordinator.

No formal training is required for volunteer roles at WMET and instruction will be provided by working alongside the Site Coordinator, makers or Trust Administrator, depending on the role.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given car parking permits.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will never work alone in the mill building. There will always be a maker or the Site Coordinator on site to provide support and answer questions. However due to the nature of the building it is likely that volunteers, especially those working front of house, may be working some of the time out of sight of the makers. This is something that prospective volunteers must be comfortable with. Volunteers will not have to handle cash or take sales unless they are willing to do so.

Insurance

The insurance policy for Walford Mill covers registered volunteers.

Equal opportunities

WMET has an Equality Policy that covers volunteers. However, the restrictions of the building and level of supervision available may limit the volunteer roles available.

Health and safety

A volunteer risk assessment is available which covers the health and safety of volunteers. The hazards of the building and grounds, fire evacuation plan and first aid provision is explained to all new volunteers during their induction. Volunteers taking front of house roles are also instructed on how to deal with situations where they feel uncomfortable or under threat from customer behaviour. Volunteers will never work alone in the building and grounds and will always have the Site Coordinator or an identified maker to provide support and take over a situation if necessary.

Problem Solving

Should volunteers wish to raise any issues or concerns they can take these up with any of the Site Coordinator or members of the Board of Trustees. Details of the Trustees will be provided during induction. Volunteers will be made aware of the WMET whistle blowing policy and the WMET problem solving procedure during their induction.

If the makers or staff members have concerns over the work or behaviour of a volunteer they will raise this with the Site Coordinator or Trustee with volunteer responsibilities. They will review the issue with discretion and take action as necessary following the guidelines

provided in the WMET volunteer disciplinary procedure. Any discussions with the volunteer will be held in private. If necessary both sides can ask for support and help from the Board of Trustees.

Confidentiality

The need for confidentiality of information and data protection is explained to volunteers during their induction. WMET has a Data Protection policy which covers volunteers as well as makers and staff.

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