



## SQUASH LINK VOLUNTEER POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Volunteers are essential to Squash Link, ISEA's flagship programme. They make a vital contribution to our mission and are currently active:

- Leading our squash coaching sessions, during which participants take part in squash training one-to-one and group coaching / play competitive games.
- Supporting educational activities.
- Contributing to civic engagement projects.
- As members of the Board of Directors that governs our organisation.
- In desk-based roles e.g. on projects relating to fundraising and PR.
- In organising community engagement initiatives, mentoring opportunities for participants, tours of third level colleges and workplace visits.

ISEA believes strongly in the value of volunteering and seeks to involve volunteers in what it does to:

- Provide its participants with a diverse range of positive mentors and role models from throughout society.
- Contribute a wide variety of skills, experience and perspectives to our programmes.
- Offer an opportunity for ISEA programme participants and graduates to take on a role in which they can support other young people.
- Help increase knowledge and understanding about the causes of social exclusion.

### 2. ISEA's commitment to volunteers

ISEA:

- Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing an effective training programme.
- Will include within its budget the appropriate resources for the optimal management and development of volunteers.

- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific staff posts. To this end, the Founder / Executive Director takes primary responsibility for the management of volunteers with support from ISEA's Board of Directors.
- Will ensure volunteers are represented at board level by ensuring that at least one member of the Staffing and Volunteers Support Committee is an existing volunteer. One Committee member is also specifically tasked with overseeing the organisation's volunteer development strategy.
- Will seek to continuously improve and develop its volunteering programme.
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

### **3. Recruitment & selection**

Recruitment of volunteers will be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with ISEA's Equal Opportunities Policy. We endeavour to promote our volunteering opportunities to a diverse audience and in particular to encourage former participants to take on the challenge of volunteering where this is appropriate.

All volunteers will be talked through an induction presentation and given an information pack including general information about Squash Link and specific information on the volunteer role in which they are interested. They will also be talked through this Volunteer Policy and asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement if they are ready to commit to volunteering.

Volunteers supervising vulnerable young people or be in any other position of trust, will be asked to complete ISEA's Garda e-vetting process. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work. In addition, the suitability of all volunteers taking on the roles involving contact with young people will be assessed through the course of their induction training, which forms part of the selection process for these positions.

In some instances it may be determined during the induction process that an applicant may not have the suitable skills, experience or personal qualities required for a particular volunteer role. In these circumstances, Squash Link will endeavour to find an alternative role suitable for the applicant. If there are no suitable roles available, we will communicate to the applicant the reasons for our decision and decline their offer of help. In exceptional cases, Squash Link may refuse an application without giving any reason.

### **4. Induction and training**

Squash Link volunteers will be required to attend an induction preparation for volunteering. The purpose of this training is to give new volunteers an introduction to skills for working with young people, to key health and safety considerations and to the types of activities that will take place for the benefit of Squash Link participants.

Volunteers in other roles will be required to attend an induction session and training relevant to their role, if applicable. For example, new Board members (Directors / Charity Trustees) will be given an individual induction on their legal and fiduciary duties.

In addition to offering induction training, Squash Link is committed to providing volunteers with a programme of ongoing training with a view to volunteers continuing to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence. For example, Squash Link volunteers will be offered further training in topics such as First Aid and managing difficult situations (places on such training courses may be limited). Squash Link also welcomes proposals from individual volunteers who would like support to help them complete specific and relevant, external, training and qualification courses.

## **5. Volunteer Agreements and role profiles**

Each volunteer will be given a role profile and a Volunteer Agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and Squash Link's responsibilities to them.

### The volunteer's voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Squash Link and its work. To this end, volunteers will be asked for feedback periodically. Finally, Squash Link commits to consulting volunteers with regard to the planning of all major new projects.

### Expenses

Squash Link will reimburse volunteers for all agreed and reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred while volunteering for Squash Link, including items such as travel, car parking and food. Volunteers should submit a Squash Link volunteer expense form to the volunteer manager in order to process their expenses. Receipts or proof of purchase should be provided in all instances.

### Support for volunteers

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. This member of staff is tasked with assigning work to the volunteer, planning their training and development and responding to their ideas and concerns. This main point of contact will initially be ISEA's Executive Director. Squash Link volunteers will have the opportunity to ask for support, air their views, discuss personal development goals and ask for feedback during the planning and review meetings that take place before and after coaching sessions, activities and community engagement initiatives.

In addition, volunteers may be offered additional support in the form of action planning sessions aimed at structuring their volunteer involvement with a view to them acquiring particular knowledge, skills or experience.

### Health and Safety

Squash Link's Health and Safety Policy covers the general welfare of all volunteers. All volunteers are given health and safety information relevant to their location and role as part of their induction. Volunteers involved in delivering the Squash Link programmes should be aware of this policy.

## Equal opportunities

Squash Link is committed to equal opportunities for staff, volunteers and participants in all aspects of its recruitment, support and training. Volunteers are expected to be open-minded, sensitive and respectful of people, values and experiences and should expect to be treated in the same manner.

## Confidentiality

Squash Link strives to create an atmosphere of trust, where young people are empowered to speak with confidence and know that information concerning them is handled and stored in a safe manner. It is Squash Link policy that information about participants can be shared within the staff / volunteer team but not outside of the organisation in normal circumstances. This policy is in place to protect individual staff members and volunteers from feelings of stress or isolation that could be caused by disclosures made by participants. It is also aimed at enabling staff/volunteers to provide support appropriate to each young person's needs.

When a volunteer deviates from Squash Link confidentiality policy, without authorisation, the incident will be investigated. This may result in the volunteer being the subject of disciplinary action. Copies of the full Confidentiality Policy are available to volunteers on request.

## Protection of Children and Young People

Volunteers involved in the delivery of Squash Link programmes should be aware of the organisation's policies relating to the protection of children and young people. This policy will be covered in detail as part of induction training. In particular, volunteers should be aware of Squash Link's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct relating to working with children and young people, noting the central importance of the Irish Sports Council's Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland.

The above policies reflect Squash Link's belief that all young people have the right to freedom from abuse and are aimed at providing young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care and supervision of Squash Link staff and volunteers. As part of these policies, volunteer recruitment is designed to include appropriate vetting procedures.

## Drug and Alcohol Policy

Squash Link is committed to offering a service where participants can explore their personal and social development in a safe environment free from the influence of drugs and alcohol. For this reason, the drinking of alcohol or the use of drugs is not permitted:

- By any young person, while under Squash Link supervision
- By any volunteer or member of staff, while on duty
- By anyone attending to the needs of Squash Link participants

In the event that a volunteer is discovered or suspected of alcohol and/or drug use, action will be taken by the Executive Director to investigate the incident. If there is reasonable evidence to indicate that the individual has been in breach of the policy, s/he may be subject to disciplinary action, which in turn may lead to the termination of their involvement with the organisation.

## Data protection

Squash Link abides by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. Personal information about volunteers is stored securely and access is limited only to those staff members and volunteers who are authorised to use it for volunteer management purposes.

## Problems

Squash Link is committed to dealing with any grievances volunteers may have. In line with this policy volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time. If the contact person is unable to resolve the problem they will refer the matter to the Executive Director and ultimately the Staffing and Volunteers Support Committee, with the permission of the volunteer.

Squash Link has a Disciplinary Policy on how it will deal with any disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer. Copies are available to volunteers on request.

## Moving on

Volunteers are asked to inform Squash Link when they no longer wish to volunteer. Volunteers will have the right to request a reference on the basis of their voluntary work and will be supported to move on to other opportunities.

Please contact Squash Link on 083101314 and / or email: [squashlinkireland@gmail.com](mailto:squashlinkireland@gmail.com) if you have any queries relating to this policy or if you would like to read any of our policies as highlighted in this document.