

Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



*"Each one should use whatever gift they have received to serve others,
faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

1 Peter 4:10

Hello and Welcome

Thank you for taking on this volunteer role in your church community. We hope you find it both enjoyable and rewarding. Your role plays an important part in bringing our mission to life, of being a Christ-centred church, missionary communities and good stewards of our resources. You are joining with hundreds of other volunteers across the Diocese contributing to this mission.

This handbook, along with our Policies and Procedures and your Volunteer Agreement, provides a framework of guidance for everyone who contributes within the Diocese. This guidance is to support and encourage us all in our activity and enable an environment that is based on co-operation, recognition and respect for each other.

Our Mission

The Bishop of Portsmouth, The Right Reverend Philip Egan, has developed a 10-year mission plan, *You Will Be My Witnesses*, based on the mission-statement Bringing People Closer to Jesus Christ through His Church, to affect transformational change across the Diocese. This mission has been, and continues to be, a transformational journey of evangelistic outreach, with three overarching principles

1. To be a Christ-centred Church; putting Christ at the centre of our hearts and our lives.
2. To be Missionary Communities; going out on Christ's service and mission.
3. Being prudent stewards of Christ's Church, making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy for future generations.

For more information regarding Bishop Egan and the plan *You Will Be My Witnesses*, please visit the Catholic Portsmouth Diocese website: <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about/ten-year-plan/>.



Organisation of the Diocese

Governance

The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth is registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales (No. 1199568), Jersey (No. 457) and Guernsey (No. CH263). We have a Board of Trustees who support the Bishop by overseeing the charitable work of the Diocese. Trustees are appointed by the Bishop from among our clergy and lay faithful for their expertise.

The Curia or Framework for Collaboration

The Diocesan Curia consists of those institutions and persons which assist the Bishop in the governance of the Diocese, especially in guiding pastoral action, in caring for administration within the overall authority of the Diocese and in exercising judicial law. The Curia comprises of many teams, experts and ministers who directly assist the pastoral mission and life of the Diocese.

Further information about the Curia and parishes can be found in the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Directory, a copy of which is available on the website.

Parishes and Schools

Our parishes and schools are the heart of the diocese and where the majority of volunteering takes place.

Parish Priests have overall responsibility for parish activity including the appointment of volunteers. Volunteers cover a wide range of roles including committee members, administration, ministries, practical service and outreach. These will be arranged within the parish both for compliance and to best suit its needs.

Schools have their own procedures for volunteers and they are not covered by this handbook.

Department for Support and Administrative Services - DSAS

DSAS is part of the Curia and is based at St Edmunds House in Portsmouth. The department is overseen by the Chief Operating Officer and assists the Bishop and Board of Trustees in the administration of the temporal resources of the Diocese and its parishes, (employees, land, buildings, money, and the discharge of its legal and contractual obligations). There are around 35 employees in the DSAS, many working part time who undertake the type of activity that you might see in any organisation or charity.

Expectations

We value your time and faithfulness in volunteering and are committed to providing you with a supportive environment so you can carry out your role both effectively and enjoyably. The successful activity of our Parish and Diocese and its reputation with the wider public is maintained by the high standards of conduct of our volunteers. Acceptance of these standards is a basic part of your conditions of volunteering.

We expect you to:

- Be reliable and honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Undertake any training required for your role
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the Diocese
- Respect the work of the Diocese and protect it from reputational risk
- Comply with all appropriate policies and processes

You can expect us to:

- Provide adequate support for your volunteering role(s)
- Recognise the contribution you make
- Provide a safe environment in which to volunteer
- Provide insurance for approved volunteer activity
- Ensure a fair hearing and resolution of any problems
- Reimburse relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- The opportunity to receive appropriate training
- Be free from discrimination



"Being a volunteer is a positive and important part of my Catholic life. There can be challenges but being able to make a difference to those in need is incredibly rewarding."

The Essentials

Support and supervision

Your Volunteer Coordinator, who may be the Parish Priest, a member of staff or another volunteer, is your first point of contact and are identified in your volunteer agreement. In a parish, the Parish Priest is ultimately responsible for who volunteers in the parish and what role they carry out. We want you to enjoy your time, and for it to be both fulfilling and rewarding so please do ask any questions if you are unsure about anything connected with your role.

You will have received a copy of your role profile and when you begin you will given access to any equipment, training and information relevant to your area of volunteering.

Holidays or sickness

If you cannot attend scheduled volunteering time because of holiday, please let us know in advance so we can plan ahead. If you are unwell or unable to volunteer unexpectedly, we would be grateful if you can let us know with as much notice as you are able. We understand that might not be much. Thank you.

Accidents and incidents

We have clear policies and procedures for reporting accidents and incidents (including near-miss incidents) for staff and volunteers, whether these occur in our premises or elsewhere. This includes threatening or aggressive behaviours. This is so the cause can be ascertained, control measures re-evaluated and action taken to prevent recurrence.

Please report any accidents or incidents to your Volunteer Coordinator or Parish Priest immediately, ensuring that no-one is left in any vulnerable or unsafe position or place. If they are not available, contact should be made with the HR Team. Volunteers will be required to complete accident and incident reports, however minor.

Expenses

The Diocese values the contribution of its volunteers. Volunteers can claim reasonable pre-agreed out-of-pocket expenses in line with the Expenses Policy. The policy can be found on the Intranet or via your Volunteer Coordinator.

“Volunteering at the foodbank allows me to live out the gospel in a very practical way by serving those in need. It is also a place where I have made friends and enjoyed a lot of laughter and support.”

Insurance

Volunteers carrying out pre-approved activities are covered by the Diocese's Public and Employer's Liability Insurance.

If you use your own car for volunteering, you are responsible for informing your insurer that you are using your vehicle for this role. If you use your car to give lifts to other volunteers, staff, parishioners or beneficiaries, you will be asked to show a valid drivers licence and insurance.

The Diocese, including the parish does not accept any liability for the loss of or damage to personal property brought onto its premises or taken to its events. You may wish to arrange insurance to cover your personal items. Personal valuables should be kept in a secure place during volunteering hours.

Photographs and multimedia

From time to time, we (Parish or Diocese) will ask if people involved in any particular church activity agree to having their photograph / image taken for use in our publications including, reports, multi-media events, websites or social media. In all such cases you will be asked to sign a permission slip granting the Parish/Diocese permission to use. As a volunteer, please do not take or publish unauthorised photographs of anyone, including children and vulnerable adults involved in church activity without written consent (including audio or video).

Smoking, alcohol and substance misuse

The 2007 legislation on smoking is intended to protect the public from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. It is against the law to smoke in virtually all enclosed public places, workplaces, and public and work vehicles. Failure to comply with the law is a criminal offence, with fines for non-compliance.

The consumption of alcohol or recreational drugs is not permitted during volunteering hours. We all have a duty to ensure that we are in a fit state to carry out our roles. If a volunteer attends a session in an intoxicated state they will be sent home safely, and a formal meeting will be scheduled.



Legal Requirements

Safeguarding

"The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of children towards whom it has a special responsibility. The Church, and individual members of it, undertake to take all appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all, and to practice fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people, and adults at risk" (CSSA)

National safeguarding policies have been agreed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW), which apply to all volunteers. Please see the Catholic Safeguarding Standard Agency website: <http://www.cssa.uk.net> for more detailed information on the national policies. In particular, volunteers are bound by the CSSA national policy of acceptable behaviour which can be accessed via <https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/national-safeguarding-policy/>.

Some specific volunteer roles involve activity with children and adults at risk, and a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be made, and specified procedures need to be always followed. These procedures will be discussed with you, where relevant, by your Volunteer Coordinator under guidance from The HR or Safeguarding Team.

Even if your role does not directly involve you in undertaking safeguarding activity it is everyone's responsibility to advise the Head of Safeguarding of any suspicions they may have of an unsafe environment or situation. If you have any concerns, please contact the safeguarding team at safeguarding@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or call 023 9421 6486.

Equal opportunities

The Diocese is committed to a policy of equal opportunities, which is a legal duty in which employees and volunteers are selected and treated based on their relevant merits and abilities. This is also to ensure that we benefit from the talents and skills of people who want to make a positive difference to the Diocese and to provide a way for our community to work together within the concept of fairness and justice for all.

However, the Parish or Diocese may apply exceptions to comply with the doctrine of the Catholic Church to avoid conflict with the strongly held convictions of a significant number of the members of the Church and the Diocese.

Diocese property

All documents, equipment, letters, files, and records, both paper or electronic, that come into your possession or control, during your volunteering activity remain the exclusive property of the Diocese and should not be held on any personal devices or at non-Diocesan property, unless specific agreements are in place.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you are expected to maintain confidentiality of personal details that you learn as part of your role, sharing only with those who need to know within the organisation. There may be a legal requirement to report something if a crime has been committed or with a safeguarding concern. Ideally speak to either your Volunteer Coordinator, Parish Priest or Safeguarding Minister or team first, as appropriate, unless someone is in immediate danger.

We also expect you to support the actions and decisions of the Diocese led by the Bishop and the Board of Trustees. You are in a position of trust, and required to maintain confidentiality about Diocesan business. You should not be providing personal views or criticism of the Diocese to external parties which involves the naming of employees or clergy or general negative comments or allegations.

If you are approached by the media, please always direct them to the Head of Communications at communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or if you are approached by any other individual in a personal or business capacity to provide any comments, then contact your parish priest to agree a response.

If you have any concerns about the operation of the Parish or Diocese, then please discuss this with your Volunteer Coordinator, Parish Priest or the HR Team in the first instance so that these can be resolved as soon as possible. If this is not appropriate, you can utilise the whistleblowing process (see below).

Data protection

All volunteers must adhere to the Diocese's Data Protection Policies and ensure that all personal data is managed securely and in line with the Information Commissioner's Office guidelines. For any queries, guidance, or to report a data breach please contact: gdpr@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk before taking any action, and refer to the policies and forms on the [GDPR](#) pages of the Diocese website to ensure the correct procedure is followed.

IT and telephone support

You should be provided with the necessary equipment you require to undertake your role. If you require any further IT support after your induction, then please email itsupport@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

All users will have multi-factor authentication (MFA) enabled to get into their Portsmouth Diocese Office 365 suite.

If MFA is setup through text code or authenticator application on a personal mobile, it may be necessary for you to use your device to obtain this code during logging in.

Health and Safety

The Diocese is committed to looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who works or volunteers for us. Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by our staff. It is therefore important that you understand and accept your personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all. As a volunteer it is important that:

- You carry out your tasks in such a way as to not risk your own health and safety or that of others.
- You follow our health and safety policy and procedures and, where appropriate, lone worker procedures.
- Report any health and safety concerns you may have in good time to your Volunteer Coordinator, or if you feel uncertain about anything.
- Only carry out your agreed activities as outlined in your role description.

Your induction should cover health and safety such as using equipment properly, any specific clothing or personal protective clothing, fire safety and how to report any problems.

If you need to make a complaint

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a positive opportunity to improve and provide a better service. We encourage you to raise any problems with your Volunteer Coordinator at the earliest opportunity, so that issues may be resolved promptly and informally. However, if a more formal approach is suitable, the Diocese will aim for a positive and amicable solution in accordance with the procedures in its Complaints Policy.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which volunteers can voice their concerns about something that affects them and others, where they have a reasonable belief that it is substantially true, without fear of repercussion. The Diocese has a Whistleblowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and aims to support volunteers in appropriately reporting any concerns.

Volunteers are expected to understand and take seriously their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management, designated officers and, where relevant, external agencies.

Notifying changes to your personal details

Please notify your Volunteer Coordinator of any of the following:

- Change of address, telephone number and email address
- Change of name
- Change of kin to be notified in cases of emergency
- Changes to your health that may impact your ability to carry out your role safely
- Changes to your visa status if this impacts your permission to volunteer
- Criminal charge, caution, or conviction (if you are in a role that requires a DBS or other checks)

And Finally

Thank you for reading this Volunteer Handbook. We hope you continue to find it a useful reference point throughout your time with us. We will update this handbook from time to time to ensure it stays relevant and it can be located on the intranet or from your Volunteer Coordinator.

If you have any queries and concerns which these documents are unable to help you with then please contact your Volunteer Coordinator, Parish Priest or the HR team directly.

We hope that you find volunteering in the Diocese both enjoyable and rewarding.

Thank you for offering your gifts, time and experience.

