

AFL Ireland retains a strong volunteer ethos, from administrators, team managers, coordinators, umpires and coaches who freely give their time play a vital roles in our organisation.

This policy applies to all people in AFL Ireland who take on various roles and responsibilities in a voluntary capacity. Volunteers are the life-blood of AFL Ireland: their contribution ensures success - and the growth of AFL in Ireland both for recreation and in building professional pathways.

An inclusive and diverse volunteer environment is one where the principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy are promoted and are part of everyday goals and behaviour.

AFL Ireland encourage the following to nurture an inclusive and diverse volunteer environment.

- There is a welcoming culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and everyone feels valued.
- Policies are in place concerning equality A positive volunteer working environment, dignity, volunteer welfare and fair recruitment practices are all evident.
- The organisation has a zero tolerance towards any acts of discrimination or harassment by or against volunteers and other stakeholders
- All members of the AFLI committee, the leadership of the clubs and volunteers are all aware of the inclusive values of the organisation and are actively consulted and involved in policy development
- All volunteers are encouraged to develop and progress. Any barriers faced by specific groups are identified and action taken to address them.
- The organisation is aware of any potential tensions within the volunteering environment and takes action to anticipate and address them. Everyone is encouraged to raise concerns at an early stage
- Inclusive strategies are fully supported and promoted by all

This policy is supported by several other policy documents including by not limited to:

Good Practices for working with Children and Vulnerable Persons

AFL Ireland Code of Ethics

AFL Ireland GDPR Policy

AFL Ireland Privacy Policy

Constitution of AFL Ireland

Garda Vetting and Volunteer working with Children and Vulnerable Persons Forms

Volunteer Policy Guidelines

1. General principles

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering in AFL Ireland. It supplements the AFL Ireland Good Practice for working with Children and Vulnerable Persons policies and procedures.

These procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf and at the direction of the AFL Ireland executive committees and sub committees

1.2 AFL Ireland is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other members and volunteers are encouraged to facilitate this process.

1.3 AFL Ireland will consider involving anyone as a volunteer. AFL Ireland encourages diversity and equality amongst all volunteers. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer.

1.4 Volunteers will be treated equally and fairly and are included in the organisations, functions and decision-making processes wherever practical.

1.5 In the case a volunteer can not fulfil aspects of their role they have committed to they should inform their clubs or the committee as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made and support given.

1.6 Appropriate behaviour - Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of the AFL Ireland Code of Ethic and Good Practice in Children's sports and uphold its ethos. As representatives of the organisation, they are responsible for presenting a positive image of the sport.

1.7 Representing AFL Ireland & affiliated clubs Volunteers must seek prior approval from the AFL Ireland and affiliated clubs before undertaking anything that might affect the organisation as a whole. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

1.8 Confidentiality AFL Ireland and affiliated clubs respect the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering within AFL Ireland.

1.9 Records A system of records may be maintained on all volunteers, including contact details, vetting disclosures, dates and times of service, duties performed, courses completed etc. Volunteer records are maintained by AFL Ireland and the affiliated clubs the volunteer is a member of.

1.10 Any voluntary service is at the discretion of AFL Ireland and the affiliated club the volunteer is a member of. They may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteer's relationships with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationships. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity. Volunteers are entitled to appeal the decision under AFL Ireland in writing to the President to be decided at the next meeting of the executive committee.

2. Recruitment

2.1 Volunteers can be recruited on a pro-active basis by the organisation using publicity avenues that are suitable for the roles that need to be filled. Potential volunteers may also apply speculatively or

come via volunteers from affiliated clubs, all members are encouraged to volunteer in some capacity throughout any given season.

2.2 Checks for suitability Garda Vetting and references (safe recruitment) are always completed if the volunteer will be working with children or vulnerable persons within AFL Ireland

2.3 All volunteers working with children or vulnerable persons within AFL Ireland will complete the AFL Ireland Volunteer Application form which must be approved by at least two members of the executive committee and the mandated person of the club at which they will be involved.

2.4 Other checks may also be completed (for example, ascertaining umpires qualifications). Volunteers are always advised in advance of the intention to make these checks. If they refuse permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be considered for certain roles and responsibilities.

3. Working with children or vulnerable persons

3.1 A Garda Vetting disclosure must be obtained by an applicant through AFL Ireland before they can begin relevant or regular work with children or vulnerable persons. Basic awareness in child safeguarding training must also be completed within six months of taking up a post.

3.2 Volunteers are actively encouraged to identify training courses, seminars, conferences, and so on, which would help them to perform their roles better and which would aid their personal development and share this skill base and knowledge with AFL Ireland

4. Communication

4.1 Open communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Respect for the agreed policies and procedures should be given. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their roles.

4.2 Volunteers who do not adhere to AFL Ireland's rules and guidelines or who fail to perform their volunteer roles satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of members, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for working with Children policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

4.3 Exit interviews Where possible, informal exit interviews are held with any volunteers who are leaving the organisation, either because they have reached the end of their project, or are leaving for some other reason. Interviews are usually conducted with a member of the executive committee and written records may be kept. The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve the way AFL Ireland operates. The offer of a personal reference for future employment etc. is made to each volunteer.

5. Support and recognition

5.1 AFL Ireland endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary involvement.

5.2 Volunteers are the life blood of AFL Ireland. The benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. All members and spectators are encouraged to thank volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to AFL Ireland, especially in relation to Umpires. AFL Ireland is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times such as departing volunteers.

5.3 Expenses Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so it is essential that where appropriate AFL Ireland & affiliated clubs cover preapproved costs that may occur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. The costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those from getting involved.

5.4 Insurance Appropriate insurance is provided by AFL Ireland to cover all volunteers volunteering on behalf and at the direction of the organisation as part of our annual membership.

5.5 Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with the organisation and are assisted into assuming additional and greater responsibilities over time, if they desire this. We encourage all volunteers to engage with training courses offered by our affiliate AFL Europe.