



## **Volunteer Handbook**

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Students Association  
Registered Charity No. SC019833

<http://www.standrewsvoluntaryservice.org.uk>

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# Introduction

Thank you for joining the St Andrews Voluntary Service (SVS). We hope that you enjoy volunteering on some of our many projects.

SVS enables and encourages many students to contribute to the local community. Volunteering is important for personal development, improving career prospects, town-gown relations and helping others. Volunteering with SVS can make a real difference, both to your life and to others.

We are a sub-committee of the Students Association, so every matriculated student is automatically a member, unless they have opted out.

To contact us, first go to our website, <http://www.standrewsvoluntaryservice.org.uk>, where you'll find the e-mail addresses of relevant committee members. You can also attend our office hours, from 1-2pm weekdays in the SVS office which you'll find on the top floor of the Union. Alternatively, call us on 01334 472766 or extension 2003 from a university phone line. You can also e-mail us on [svs@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:svs@st-andrews.ac.uk).

Thank you once again for volunteering,

The SVS Committee

# How SVS Works

SVS began as a branch of the Christian Union that distributed volunteers to the local community to assist with tasks like gardening and shopping. In 1987, SVS separated from the Christian Union to become a recognized charity in Scotland and started to expand into other project areas. More recently, in 2006, SVS became a subcommittee of the St Andrews Students' Association.

## Structure

The SVS Committee organizes the day to day running of SVS. The current positions are as follows:

**Convenor** - SSC Volunteering Officer, elected by the whole student body every March. The Convenor is responsible for keeping SVS running smoothly, keeping tabs on the rest of Committee and representing SVS within the Union.

**Secretary** - Responsible for minute taking at meetings, publishing the minutes, maintaining the general mailing list, maintaining the alumni database and distributing correspondence to the SVS mailing list.

**Treasurer** - Responsible for balancing the SVS budget, keeping the account books up-to-date, and determining budgets for SVS events.

**Events Manager** - Responsible for the organization of fundraising events, recruitment events and socials. The Events Manager is responsible for assembling subcommittees to manage large events, including the annual MAD Ball/ Awards Evening.

**Publicity Manager** - Responsible for promoting SVS and its events through posters, social networks and other materials.

**Development Manager** - Responsible for maintaining and soliciting sponsorship and liaising between SVS and the University Careers Centre. The Development Manager will also assist the Events Manager in organizing recruitment and fundraising events, in particular the Summer Opportunities Fair and summer travel bursaries.

**Website Manager** - Responsible for maintaining and updating the website.

**Youth Project Officer** - Responsible for management, expansion and recruitment for all the opportunities volunteering with youth.

**Youth with Special Needs Project Officer** - Responsible for management, expansion and recruitment for all the opportunities volunteering with youth with special needs.

**Adults with Special Needs Project Officer** - Responsible for management, expansion and recruitment for all the opportunities volunteering with adults with special needs.

**Elderly Project Officer** - Responsible for management, expansion and recruitment for all the opportunities volunteering with the elderly.

**Environmental Project Officer** - Responsible for management, expansion and recruitment for all the opportunities volunteering with the environment.

**Animal Welfare Project Officer** - Responsible for management, expansion and recruitment for all the opportunities volunteering within animal welfare.

**Awards Officer** - Responsible for processing applications to the Saltire Award and encouraging volunteers to apply for the Saltire Award.

## Applying

The first thing to do is to look on our website, <http://www.standrewsvoluntaryservice.org.uk>, where you will find details of all the opportunities we currently offer. There are limited spaces on each project, so you are not guaranteed your first choice. Once you have decided which projects you are interested in, fill in the online applications form with as much information as is relevant. Then wait until you hear from the relevant project officer, you may need to attend an informal meeting or a training session before you are assigned to a project. You can also e-mail the project officers directly for information, their e-mail addresses can be found on the website.

# Saltire Award

The Saltire Award is a national movement, which recognizes 16-25 year olds who give up their free time to help the community. The certificates are awarded for 50, 100 and 200 hours of volunteering. Applying for the award can be beneficial:

- To get recognition for all the effort you put into volunteering.
- To help motivate yourself to either start volunteering or keep going over the long-term.
- To add something to your CV which will catch future employers' eyes.
- To reflect on your time spent volunteering and see how worthwhile your efforts have been.

To apply for the award, you need to sign up online at <https://saltireawards.org.uk/>, add the organisation you work with as "University of St Andrews SVS" (or any other organisations) and then your personal details including your address. Please remember to update your address before claiming the certificates. International students should ideally apply at least a month before graduation/leaving home for holiday—apologise that redirections might not be available.

You can either download the time sheet online under "Organisation", complete it and then submit to SVS office on the top floor of the Union together with the registration form. Or alternatively, you could keep "My Journal" and "Submit time" on your "My Saltire" account and claim the certificates when you want to.

What counts towards the Award:

- SVS projects
- Charities Campaign
- Student Support Services
- ENTS
- Orientation Volunteers
- Class representative
- Charity shop work
- Families First

For more information, contact the Awards Officer, whose e-mail can be found on our website.

# SVS Policies

## Rights of Volunteers

- to know what is expected of them
- to have clearly specified lines of support and supervision, to know who you are responsible and answerable to, and to know where to get help, guidance and support
- time to settle into a project
- to be shown appreciation
- to be insured
- to choose your own level of commitment
- to have safe working conditions
- to have the resources necessary for the project
- recourse to a grievance procedure
- to reclaim out of pocket expenses, at a level agreed upon by you and your Project Officer
- to be free from discrimination
- to have input into the decision making within the project and SVS

## Support for Volunteers

- SVS will invest personnel resources for the adequate management of volunteers, and make sure the committee is adequately trained to do so.
- SVS will provide a basic Introduction to Volunteering training session.
- SVS will provide some funding for out of pocket expenses, at a level agreed upon with volunteers and Project Officers. Volunteers may be expected to fundraise, but will be clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.
- SVS will ensure adequate insurance for all volunteers.
- SVS will provide information on policies or legislation which may affect volunteers.
- SVS will ensure that working conditions are safe for volunteers.
- SVS will ensure volunteers are aware of their role description, including expected time commitments.
- SVS will ensure volunteers always know the name of someone they can go to for support.
- SVS will ensure volunteers are treated with respect and in line with Equal Opportunities policies.

## Expectations of Volunteers

- Be reliable.
- Be honest.
- Be punctual and regular in attending your project.

- Respect confidentiality (of other volunteers as well as service users).
- Attend any relevant SVS training.
- Work within agreed guidelines.
- Let the Project Officer know in advance when unable to attend the project or when wishing to leave the project.
- Abide by SVS's Equal Opportunities and Confidentiality policies
- Seek advice and help when necessary, we can't help if we don't know there's a problem.
- Take care of personal belongings.
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation.
- Not smoke when on any SVS project.
- Not consume alcohol prior to or when on an SVS project.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Refrain from using your car to transport SVS clients, as it may invalidate your vehicle insurance.

## Confidentiality

In the course of your work with SVS you may be party to some personal information about or given by the people you are working with. This could be the person you're working with, parents, children, professionals or other volunteers. The information needs to be passed on sometimes, for example if a child tells you about abuse. For that reason you should never promise to keep any information in confidence, as you may not be able to keep that promise.

However, sometimes you may also need to keep information private. There are no hard and fast rules on what is confidential, but use common sense, and if you're not sure, keep it on a need-to-know basis. You are in a position of trust, so please honour this and respect people's privacy. Shared information should be restricted to other volunteers on the project and the Project Officer, this will be information that helps you best care for the individuals you are working with.

It's great to share your experiences of volunteering with friends or people on other projects, but please do so only in general terms. Remember that you live in the same town as most of the people you work with!

Similarly, you may share your own personal information with other volunteers and vice versa. Please treat their information as you would wish yours to be treated.

If you have any doubts, contact the relevant Project Officer.

## Personal Information



When you fill in an SVS application form you give us personal information. We may disclose your contact details to third parties, for example the Project Leader, or the project itself, where appropriate. The computer files are updated yearly, but any information we hold on paper (ie references) can be held for up to 3 years. You are entitled to access the information we have about you, to have a description of any potential recipients of the information and to know where the information came from. Applications for access must be made in writing to The Secretary, SVS, The Students Association, St Mary's Place, St Andrews, KY16 9UZ. You can also apply by e-mail to [svs@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:svs@st-andrews.ac.uk).

## Equal Opportunities

The Equal Opportunities Policy applies to all members of SVS, and aims that all individuals will be treated with respect and not be subjected to unfair discrimination. All members, whether existing or potential, will receive fair and equal treatment when applying to, or working as members of SVS. SVS does not tolerate unfair or unlawful discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, gender, marital status, disability, religion, age, sexual-orientation, socio-economic grouping, union activity, politics or any unrelated spent criminal convictions. Within the Equal Opportunities Policy, the term discrimination is defined as: judgements or actions taken on the basis of the aforementioned criteria. This does not restrict the need for other valid judgements in matters such as selection, engagement and assessment of members.

Any infringement, or report of infringement, of the Equal Opportunities Policy by a member of SVS will be taken seriously. If you believe the Policy has been breached, report it to the Convenor.

In achieving equality of opportunity, SVS expects commitment from all members of SVS. The effectiveness of the Policy depends on the active support of all members of SVS, who must:

- a) accept the principle of equality of opportunity, in all aspects of SVS work.
- b) not induce, be complicit with others in, nor condone, unfair discrimination.
- c) be aware of the SVS Policy on Harassment, and ensure that their behaviour does not offend other people nor can be interpreted as harassment.

### Equal opportunities in applications

SVS handles applications within the framework of the SVS Equal Opportunities Policy and does not discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of any of the above criteria.

Selection of a volunteer will be based upon the individual's application and/or interview in respect of:

- a) evidence from the application form

- b) referee's reports, if requested (which will remain confidential and not be available to the applicant)
- c) achievement as shown by previous work by SVS
- d) personal qualities suitable for the work applied for
- e) interview performance
- f) number of places available

SVS welcomes applications from all matriculated students of the University of St Andrews and all members of the University of St Andrews Students Association without discrimination and is wholeheartedly committed to giving volunteering opportunities to all appropriately qualified applicants. It is important that the process of recruitment, selection and engagement of volunteers is free from any unfair discrimination of any kind. The process will be supervised by the Convenor. When an applicant is rejected the reasons must be documented such that they can, if necessary, be scrutinized later. Should an individual decide to challenge a decision to reject their application, then this information will be made available to the applicant.

Full records must be kept of all interviews, in particular, when applicants are rejected following an interview, the reasons must be documented and the record of the interviews kept.

The aim of the selection process is to identify individuals who show evidence of personal qualities that suggest they will make a success of their work with SVS and act as good ambassadors of SVS to the local community.

## Harassment and Bullying

Bullying and harassment can have a detrimental effect upon the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it.

Harassment is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of individuals and which appears or feels offensive, demeaning, intimidating or hostile. This definition includes sexual and racial harassment and bullying as well as any form of personal harassment. It can be a single explicit incident which causes distress or repeated unacceptable behaviour.

Sexual harassment constitutes the inappropriate introduction of sexual comments or activities. This can include, but is not limited to, staring, touching, kissing, displaying sexually explicit material, verbal abuse, persistent demeaning or offensive jokes, sexual innuendo, interrogation about sexual activities, unwanted comments about appearance, degrading messages, requests for sexual contact and actual sexual assault. There is no justification for sexual harassment even if the offense is not intended.

Racial harassment constitutes the inappropriate introduction of racial comments or activities. It is a hostile or offensive act or expression, or incitement to commit such an act. Such behaviour can include, but is not limited to, derogatory name calling, insults or racist jokes, racist graffiti, threats, physical attacks and ridicule of an individual for cultural differences such as appearance, dress, diet, religion or ethnic background.

Personal harassment constitutes the inappropriate introduction of comments or activities concerning an individual's disability, age, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, religion or any other form of personal victimization. These forms of harassment can include, but are not limited to, insults based on appearance or personal circumstances, using a person's known disability to demoralize them, teasing or pranks.

Bullying is destructive rather than constructive. It is criticism of a person designed to humiliate rather than assist. Bullying often consists of: shouting at, belittling, ignoring, exclusion, or group pressure. It is not confined to open, derisory remarks or aggression, but can also be subtle and devious. Bullying can be unpredictable, irrational and sometimes unseen by others. It can cause an individual to feel isolated.

If you feel that you're the subject of harassment or bullying in any form, do not feel that it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it. You can take the following steps:

- a) If you are able, tell the person that their behaviour is causing offense.
- b) Report the matter to the SVS Convenor.
- c) Remember that Student Support Services are always there to help you.

Complaints of harassment are treated seriously by SVS. It should therefore be noted that anyone making malicious or mischievous complaints will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

## Grievances

We have a high level of commitment and professionalism towards our volunteers, but things can never be perfect. If you have any grievances, first speak to your project manager/officer, and if no solution is found you can bring your grievance to the SVS committee by e-mailing [svs@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:svs@st-andrews.ac.uk). We will do our best to resolve all problems quickly and effectively.

**N.B. If the grievance concerns the SVS/committee itself, the Volunteer should contact the Director of Student Development and Activities directly ([dosda@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:dosda@st-andrews.ac.uk)).**

## Disciplinary Procedure

If a volunteer acts out with the expectations of SVS, or brings the reputation of SVS of the University into disrepute they may be excluded from their voluntary position. The situation will be handled impartially and exclusion from volunteering will be as a last resort. This is to assist in securing a fair and responsible treatment for all SVS members and clients and to maintain standards of individual conduct.

Examples of gross misconduct are committing a crime whilst on an SVS project, possession or use of illegal drugs whilst on an SVS project, being under the influence of intoxicants or drugs whilst on an SVS project, behaving in a disorderly manner, endangering the life, health or safety of fellow volunteers or clients by a willful act of negligence, divulging confidential information to a third party. This list is not exhaustive, nor implies that SVS will not take action in accordance with its rights and duties under the law.