

# **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION PACK**

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## INTRODUCTION

**Welcome** to "MORPH!" Thank you for deciding to give of your time and talents to work with young people. We are excited to have you on board and pray that you will see God's hand at work in and through you as you take on this challenging, yet rewarding responsibility. This information pack will help to ease you in to your involvement here. Please read through this guide carefully as you will find information on what your responsibilities are and how to carry out those responsibilities appropriately.

### **Mission Statement**

As a volunteer you should be made aware of the main aim of the project:

*"MORPH is a shared vision to see transformation in the local community. It aims to transform the emerging cultures through a movement of Christ centred and mission minded prayer."*

Depending on what aspect of the ministry you will be involved in there are different specifics to the vision/mission statements. That said we all share the following core values.

### **CORE VALUES:**

- **Faith, hope and love:** The Christian faith is central. We want to be ambassadors of these qualities and model them to the community believing that through our character Christ can be seen.
- **Relationships:** Commitment to the personal, social and spiritual development of the local community. Recognising programmes have limitations we instead value pilgrimage (journeying together), community and story-sharing as a way of reaching others.
- **Discipleship:** Having established relationships of trust we aim to disciple i.e. model a life worth following. We believe that by demonstrating active citizenship people will naturally wish to find out what makes us tick. Our faith is intrinsic to this as is a life-style of learning.

- **Partnership/Networking:** Partnership with other organisations, bodies and people groups is important. The networking allows for a sharing of resources and opportunity to share experiences. We are rooted in the local church.
- **Reconciliation:** To embrace and help in healing the lives of individuals, communities and society.
- **Justice:** We believe in standing up for those who are oppressed, overlooked and excluded.
- **Developing Leaders:** To help, support and develop leaders.
- **Integrity and Accountability:** Honesty, integrity, openness and accountability are crucial principles to all aspects of our work.
- **Relevant.** "We must reflect the needs of the culture". EU law states that a youth is anyone aged 11 to 30.  
"Our focus is youth aged 11 to 30... the emerging culture"
- **Transformational.** We seek to positively impact the local community using a variety of methods.

***"We are driven by purpose. Throughout all our work we apply the principle of vision, change and evaluation. Without living on the edge we fail to create community transformation, without making changes we become dry and ineffective and we only know what needs to change if we are prepared to evaluate how effective we are in achieving our vision."***

**"We desire to be visionary, leading the way in youth work and making changes necessary. This can only be done if we are purpose driven and effective evaluators."**

**"We desire to remain a movement by always looking at ways to move forward."**

## **WHAT WE DO**

488 young people were asked what they thought the town of Dungannon needed with regards to a youth facility. Their response highlighted five main areas. We have made them our focus and strive to ensure all are met. They are;

**A Safe Place**

**Music Space**

**Advice**

**Sports**

**Trips**

As a volunteer you will be able to help out in all aspects of this work. The amount of time and energy you give will be totally up to yourself, however we do ask that you keep to your commitment of whatever hours you agree to every month.

Roles that volunteers fulfil involve youth work, tuck shop, cleaning toilets, teaching music to others, organising trips, detached work etc. Much of it is up to your ingenuity but there are some things that are expected of you such as keeping the place tidy and making sure people don't go running wild

## **The Role of Volunteers**

The main role of a volunteer is to build relationships with the young people. MORPH wants to model a life that epitomises that of Christ and provide opportunities for the people we meet to imitate us. The Christian ethos of the project is very strong and it influences how we work – we want to see young people brought into the Kingdom of God. As a volunteer working alongside us we need to know that you support what we are doing and why we are doing it. Whilst we want everybody to help us in our work we ask that you would respect our core principles and values.

# ATTITUDES

*A programme doesn't change a life, a relationship does*

- **Be patient**

It takes time to build up relationships with young people and to gain their trust. It may take a number of months of consistent work before this bridge of trust is built.

- **Listen**

Focus on listening to the young people rather than trying to be the one with all the answers. In doing so the young people will realise that you are genuinely interested in them and care about them.

- **Be accepting**

It's important that the young people know that they are accepted for who they are and not judged by the things they do.

- **Be an example**

You will be closely observed to see how you react to various circumstances. Young people will try to test you, stress you, embarrass you and anger you. If you make a mistake or react badly, don't be afraid to say so and apologise – this will gain respect rather than lose it. Your life is being watched.

# CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

In the appendices we include a small orange card which outlines A Code of Good Practice for people working with us. Please study these very carefully as they detail appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for all staff and volunteers when working with young people. They also outline the procedure to be followed should a young person make a disclosure to you. It can be handy to keep the card in your pocket so that you can refer to it quickly when necessary.

Each year YFCNI runs a training session which covers the Child protection guidelines in greater depth. All new volunteers **must** attend this and it is recommended that even if you have covered this kind of training before elsewhere or if you have been a volunteer for a while, you should refresh your mind with this training every 2-3 years.

## The essentials of Child Protection:

- Child Protection is about integrity & remaining above reproach – that’s why, for example, it is never appropriate to be in a room alone with a young person.
- Child protection ensures that there are clear lines of reporting/accountability – information/concerns should always be passed to the project Co-ordinator’s. Any incidents also need to be written up and recorded in the Incident Report File (kept in the office).
- Confidentiality/Secrecy – Confidentiality is not about keeping secrets but passing information only on a “need-to-know” basis.
- The recommended leader-child ratio is 2:20 (with children aged 7+) – for good relationship building it is ideal to have more. At the very least there should be one leader per room. And as already stated there needs to be a good balance of female and male leaders.
- Any person planning on doing detached work or living in the estates to plant community need additional info regarding Child Protection and your home. Please consult us for details.

**Morph has additional Child protection guidelines in relation to Detached youth work. Please see in attachments.**

# DISCIPLINE POLICY

If youth work is about social education, then discipline is about behavioural education. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character, prepares for life and is an expression of God's love for an individual. As a result we have put in place the following set of rules for the young people and guidelines to handle discipline issues when they arise.

## RULES

- ❑ **Listen to the leaders and do what they ask you.** They are here to listen to you, to help you, to have fun and make sure everybody is kept safe.
- ❑ **Respect the other young people who use the centre.** Please treat others the way you want to be treated.
- ❑ **No smoking in the building.** Please only smoke outside the centre because it's a hazard to people's health including your own.
- ❑ **No swearing/cursing.** Please do not swear or curse because it's disrespectful and offensive.
- ❑ **Do not wear sectarian clothes, sing sectarian songs or display sectarian slogans.** Please remember there are more points of view than yours.
- ❑ **MORPH activities are drug-free zones.** If you are in possession of any illegal drugs you will be asked to leave and the police will be contacted.
- ❑ **No fighting or horse-play.** Usually someone always gets hurt, even if just pretending to fight, so just don't do it.

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

### Warning System

Where appropriate MORPH operates a yellow/red card warning system whereby:

- If a young person is persistent in breaking rules or commits an offence as detailed under the list of inappropriate behaviours (see below) they should be given a warning – a verbal '**yellow card**'. The details of the incident should be recorded in the Incident Report File. All staff can give yellow card warnings.
- If this offence is repeated, the young person should be given a verbal '**red card**' and their parents should be contacted. Red cards can only be given to young people in conjunction with the Project Co-ordinator's/staff/Team Leader. Details of these incidents also need to be recorded in the Incident Report File.

▪ **Barring** – Depending on the seriousness of the incident a young person can be barred for one evening by any **member of staff**. A volunteer must **not** do this. This must also be reported in the incident book. The Centre Co-ordinator can decide the next day if the barring should be longer (usually no more than a week) staff arrange to meet up with the young person and ideally their parents (if serious) in the following week to:

- discuss the incident, clarifying what went wrong
- arrange for restoration and
- agree compliance to the centre's rules for return.

### **Inappropriate behaviour**

There are certain behaviours that we view as being inappropriate and we are not prepared to accept:

Yellow card warnings:

- Disrespecting leaders
- Carelessness with property
- Carelessness with other's property
- Horseplay – carelessly endangering self or others
- Loitering outside of the building
- Inappropriate/vulgar communication
- Deliberate verbal damage to a person
- Insubordination/refusal to obey reasonable request of a leader

Red card warnings:

- Deliberate physical damage to a person
- Vandalism – wilful damage/destruction to other's property
- Serious endangerment of life

### **Delivery of Discipline**

**Staff and volunteers** are responsible for creating an environment of safety, respect and enjoyment and this means being involved in delivering discipline. As stated already volunteers are expected to uphold and maintain the rules of the centre for both leaders and young people alike but only staff have the authority to bar young people.

Points to remember:

- Discipline is about creating a positive environment and culture where the young people feel a sense of ownership and realise that enforcement of the rules makes anywhere a good place to be.
  
- It is important that young people are given a clear explanation about why what they have done wrong is wrong and why they are being penalised. Rules are clearly displayed throughout the centre and it can help to point these out to the young person to make things clear.
  
- Recording – When yellow card warnings are given, it is ideal to record the incident in the Incident Report File in front of the young person so that they realise how seriously we regard the matter. We need to avoid empty threats but take action and deal with an issue immediately.

- Restorative Justice – As far as possible it is good to create opportunities for the young people to make amends for what they have done e.g. help fix/replace whatever has been broken, write apologies etc.
- Always support the decisions of the full-time staff and back up other members of the team. If you don't, the authority of the team will be diminished. If however you feel that something has been genuinely overlooked in the making of a decision, raise the matter privately with the Project Co-ordinator. If you are not happy with their decision approach another project Co-ordinator of MORPH. If this is still not satisfactory we advise that you raise it with the committee that runs each individual aspect of the ministry.

### **Other points to note:**

- We are not running a police state so there is no need to go overboard with law enforcement, the key is to aim for an environment of safety, fun and respect.
- Remember that in difficult situations, the young people will be watching you to see how you react, so try to stay as calm and objective as possible, acting with integrity so that you maintain respect from others.
- Noise is not a real problem, don't react to noise alone.
- Bad language is not to be ignored. Explain to the young people that it is offensive to you. However exercise discretion. Sometimes turning a deaf ear is the best policy, unless serious provocation is intended.
- If a dispute takes place between two young people, don't touch them unless they are physically fighting. If this happens it is legitimate to use physical restraint, but don't dive in without getting support – there should always be 2 other leaders present as witnesses.
- Any formal contact with young people outside the centre needs to be discussed with the full-time staff first. Don't give out your address or telephone number unless you are involved in disciplining a young person and it has been cleared with a project Co-ordinator.
- Please also take note of the location of the First Aid Box (office), Fire Exits (main door & back room) & Fire Extinguishers (office, kitchen & beside tuck shop counter).
- First Aid should only be administered by those with the appropriate qualifications. The SELB Youth Office runs First Aid training each year, so please take the opportunity to do the training (see pp. 19).
- Work on each individual young person's positives, do not compare one young person with another, but encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.

- Build healthy relationships with young people and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect young people to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give quieter and well behaved young people attention and resist allowing demanding young people to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- **Never** smack or hit a young person and try not to shout. Change your voice tone if necessary.
- Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger. Call on support of others if you are getting angry.
- Every young person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows that each young person should be dealt with on an individual basis.
- Be proactive and encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take a disruptive person to one side and engage with them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging their strengths.

### **Incident Report File**

There are books in the office: Accident, Discipline and Child Protection. Each book includes a template form to make writing up a report on the incident easier. If a young person is hurt or injured in any way during the course of a session in the centre, an accident report form should always be filled out. It is next to the first aid box. For Discipline the box is kept next to our young people's files. The Child protection book remains locked in a drawer. A note should be made and given to the **Project Supervisor** to fill in the appropriate information.

# Training & Development

MORPH is committed to supporting its staff & volunteer team through further training and development because we believe that such investment is beneficial not only for individual development but also for the project as a whole and the young people we seek to reach.

## **Reviews**

Once a year we aim to carry out a review individually with each member of the volunteer team just to ensure that we are giving you appropriate support, find out any training needs, and give you the opportunity to assess your role within MORPH.

## **Training events**

Throughout the year training events are run by MORPH, the SELB Youth Office and other organisations. These are valuable opportunities to meet and learn from other volunteer youth workers who will have similar experiences and be able to identify with the issues you are facing. We will seek to keep you up-to-date with these opportunities as they arise.

Anyone connected with the advice centre will have differing training criteria. For some that will be highly skilled counselling qualifications, for others - coaching or spiritual direction training. For some people it may simply be a look at mentoring or discipling. Due to the nature of this work boundary lines are required and we would ask you not to step outside of the nature of the work established when you start. If you haven't been asked or trained in counselling it is vital that you are comfortable in referring people.

## **Qualifications in Youth Work**

We would encourage you to consider taking training courses in youth work to further your skills and increase your confidence in working with the young people. There are a number of different options available: OCN is a nationally recognised qualification and facilitated by providers such as the SELB or YouthLink. There is also an OCR Young Trainee Leader course for those aged 16-18. More details are available from staff.

## **Training Costs**

As MORPH is keen to invest in you through training, it is possible that it will be able to contribute with training costs, please speak to staff for more details.

# Practical guidelines for all staff and volunteers

These guidelines are to protect people from false allegations being made about their behaviour. Staff and volunteers cannot depend on their reputation to protect them if an allegation was to be made. It is always possible that someone else may misinterpret their actions, however well intended.

## General Conduct

Staff or volunteers should not normally be working in situations which require them to be alone in private with a young person, of either sex. One to one work i.e. Mentoring should take place in a public context e.g. School premises or local café..

Staff and volunteers should not normally arrange to meet young people outside of the official framework established in their job description.

- a) If an occasion should arise that a young person needs to be seen outside of that official framework it should be where other people are around and know the meeting is taking place.
- b) If, in exceptional circumstances, it is necessary to meet with someone of the opposite sex think carefully about the venue, insist that any doors are left open and request that a team mate comes in from time to time.

**Touching** is an area of key importance so the following need to be followed:

- a) keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- b) Touch should be related to the young person's needs, not the worker's.
- c) Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child – not the worker.
- d) Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to adult or child.
- e) Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances.
- f) Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued. Concerns about abuse must always be reported.

## Medical Care

Staff or volunteers should never administer any kind of medical treatment to a young person without the prior written consent of their parent/guardian, including simple medical treatment such as giving them a painkiller or a plaster. Therefore community based projects are encouraged to obtain a medical consent form for the young people attending encouraged to obtain a medical consent form for the young people attending their activities. Having completed medical consent forms on file will help the team to be prepared in the event of an accident or incident. Staff or volunteers will find that it is not at all unusual for young people to suffer from allergies of various kinds, or to be dependent on a form of medication.

If a medical consent form for the child has been provided by the parent/guardian has been provided then it should be consulted in the event of an accident or medical incident (e.g. having a fit, drug overdose.)

In any event the following simple assessment process should be observed:

Initial assessment of the problem, is it minor or serious. If possible the assessment should be corroborated by another worker.

If it is serious, an ambulance should be called by dialling 999.

If it is minor it may be treatable, if medical consent has been received. Alternatively or the young person may be taken home if consent has not been given.

In either case the team will need to establish what is known about the medical history of the young person – consult the file containing medical consent forms for information. If no medical consent form exists for the young person then ask questions.

Detailed accident and incident forms will need to be completed following such events and if necessary further investigations will be carried out by senior management of Morph.

**RESIDENTIAL:** Ensure that during a residential, adults do not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so.

**It is recognised that a number of the volunteers assisting in the work of the Youth for Christ Northern Ireland may be very close in age to the young people with whom they are working. It is still important that they maintain a professional distance and care must be given to ensuring that no inappropriate relationships are formed.**

# VOLUNTEER CONTRACT

## Recruitment

To become a volunteer a member of the public must go through the following procedure:

- Attend on at least two occasions to get a feel for the work, ensuring that they're interested and will be committed to the centre.
- Fill in a volunteer application form providing two references of character along with completing a POC's NI (police check) form.
- Once the references and POC's form have been received and are of a positive nature the person is free to join the volunteer team.

**N.B.** Any information resulting from the POC's check is kept totally confidential and is only handled by full-time staff on a need-to-know basis.

## The Volunteer Contract

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to do the following as a volunteer of MORPH.

- Support MORPH's Core Values including it's statement of faith.
- Be present and punctual for all team-times.
- Be a team player
- Support the Project Team Leader's in all decisions
- Stick to the scheduled rota
- Respect the full-time staff
- Willingly help with the dirty work

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_