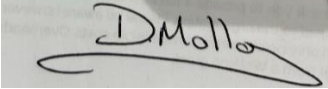
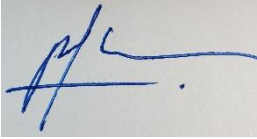




# First **Star** Scholars **UK**

## Volunteering Policy

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Date of Last Review</b>  | <b>18/11/2024</b>       |
| <b>Review Cycle</b>   | <b>Annually</b>         |
| <b>Date (Month/Year) of Next Review</b>   | <b>11/2025</b>          |
| <b>Date Policy was Ratified</b>   | <b>18/11/2024</b>       |
| <b>Named Lead for Writing/Review</b>  | <b>Emily Hollis MBE</b> |
| <b>Signed:</b>  | <b>Date</b>             |
| <b>CEO</b>  | <b>18/11/24</b>         |
|  |                         |
| <b>FSSUK Board of Trustees – Chair</b>  |                         |
|  |                         |

## **Introduction**

At First Star Scholars UK (FSSUK), volunteers play a vital role in delivering our services to children and young people (CYP) in care. Volunteers bring energy, diverse skills, and commitment, enriching the experiences of the young people we serve while helping us achieve our mission. Volunteering with us offers individuals the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on their community, while also gaining new skills and enhancing their personal well-being.

We are committed to maintaining high standards for our volunteer programme, ensuring volunteers are well-supported, effectively managed, and able to thrive in their roles. This policy establishes clear guidelines for volunteering, ensuring that both volunteers and the organisation understand their respective roles and responsibilities.

## **Policy and Procedure Implementation**

The CEO will monitor the implementation of this policy on an ongoing basis. All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy and will receive training to ensure they understand and comply with its requirements. The policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it aligns with best practice and national guidelines, ensuring its continued relevance throughout the "Volunteer Journey."

## **Equal Opportunities**

FSSUK is committed to providing equal opportunities in volunteering. We believe that everyone, regardless of background, should have the opportunity to contribute and be involved in our work. Our volunteer recruitment, selection, and retention processes will be conducted without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We promote diversity and inclusivity and encourage individuals from all walks of life to apply for volunteer roles.

We are committed to creating a welcoming environment free from discrimination, harassment, or unacceptable behaviour, and we expect volunteers to support and uphold this commitment.

## **Legal Status of Volunteers**

Volunteers at FSSUK are not considered employees or workers, and therefore they are not entitled to employee benefits such as salary, paid leave, or pension contributions. However, volunteers will receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses where relevant. All volunteers will be provided with a volunteer agreement outlining the nature of the working relationship, expectations, and the rules and regulations they must adhere to. Volunteers will be treated with the same respect and care as employees. Volunteers are still expected to adhere to, and sign, our Code of Conduct and Acceptable IT Use agreements. Please also refer to these and our Expenses Policy for further details.

## **Eligibility for Volunteering**

Volunteers must be aged 18 or over to apply for voluntary roles. There is no upper age limit for volunteering, as long as individuals can meet the requirements of the role. Volunteers must also have the legal right to reside in the UK and to participate in volunteering activities. Volunteers must hold the appropriate visa to work or study in the UK and must provide evidence of their visa status.

## **Volunteer Recruitment**

FSSUK will recruit volunteers through various channels, including advertisements, local press, volunteering websites, social media, and word of mouth. Interested applicants will be provided with a clear role description outlining tasks, responsibilities, and the skills required.

Applicants must complete an application providing basic information and details of relevant experience. They will also be asked to provide two references. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an informal interview with a member of staff, where both parties can discuss the suitability of the role and determine whether it is a good match.

Volunteers can choose to serve for any duration, depending on the role. Some positions may have a fixed duration, which will be discussed with the volunteer in advance. Volunteers may leave their role at any time, but we appreciate as much notice as possible.

## **Volunteer Management**

FSSUK strives to ensure that volunteers have a positive experience and can contribute meaningfully to our organisation's mission. Volunteers can expect:

- A role that aligns with FSSUK's goals and objectives.
- An induction and ongoing training to ensure their skills are developed.
- A clear role description and expectations for performance.
- Access to support and supervision from a designated staff member.
- A safe working environment where volunteers can thrive.
- Recognition for their contribution to the organisation's success.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Complete the induction process and any mandatory ongoing training.
- Perform their role to the best of their ability, demonstrating commitment, punctuality, and reliability.
- Adhere to FSSUK's policies, including safeguarding and confidentiality guidelines.
- Treat others with respect and work collaboratively.
- Keep themselves and others safe while volunteering.
- Represent FSSUK positively in all interactions.

## **Induction, Training, and Support**

All volunteers will undergo an induction to ensure they understand their role, the charity's mission and values, and the policies and procedures they need to follow. This will include

health and safety guidelines, as well as specific information about the tasks they will be performing.

Volunteers will receive relevant on-the-job training as necessary to ensure they are equipped with the skills required for their role. Volunteers will be encouraged to participate in additional training to further develop their abilities. Some training may be mandatory, depending on the nature of the role.

Each volunteer will have a designated staff member who will provide day-to-day support and guidance. Volunteers will be encouraged to discuss any concerns or issues with their staff contact.

### **Dealing with Feedback, Concerns, or Complaints**

FSSUK aims to provide a positive and supportive environment for volunteers. We recognise that issues may arise, and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns or provide feedback. If a volunteer has any concerns about their role, they should initially speak with their named staff member. In cases where the matter cannot be resolved informally, the volunteer may follow the charity's formal grievance procedure.

### **Health and Safety**

Volunteers are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others. They must follow the health and safety guidelines provided by FSSUK, report any accidents or near misses, and cooperate with any health and safety protocols in place. Failure to comply with health and safety guidelines may result in the termination of the volunteer's placement.

### **Insurance**

Volunteers are covered by FSSUK's public liability insurance while volunteering, provided their actions are within the scope of their role and the agreed volunteer agreement. Volunteers are not covered for personal loss or damage to their personal belongings.

### **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

FSSUK will protect volunteer information in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All personal information will be kept confidential, secure, and used only for legitimate purposes. Volunteers must maintain confidentiality about FSSUK's operations, staff, and service users during and after their volunteering period. Please refer to our data protection policy, appropriate policy document, retention policy and privacy notices for further details.

### **Leaving the Volunteer Team**

Volunteers may choose to leave at any time, providing as much notice as possible. Upon leaving, volunteers may be asked to complete an exit survey to provide feedback on their experience. Volunteers' details will be retained in line with our retention policy.

**Safeguarding**

FSSUK is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all young people we work with. Volunteers involved in direct contact with children and young people will undergo an enhanced DBS check and will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction. All safeguarding concerns will be handled in line with FSSUK’s safeguarding policies and procedures.

**Version Control - Approval and Review**

| <b>Version No.</b> | <b>Approved by</b> | <b>Approval Date</b> | <b>Main Change</b>         | <b>Review Period</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.0                | Diarmuid Molloy    | 18 November 2024     | New policy format approved | Annually             |
|                    |                    |                      |                            |                      |
|                    |                    |                      |                            |                      |
|                    |                    |                      |                            |                      |

## Appendix 1 - Volunteer Agreement

This Agreement is made between:

**First Star Scholars UK** (hereinafter referred to as "the Organisation")  
and  
**[Volunteer Name]** (hereinafter referred to as "the Volunteer").

As a volunteer, you are not considered an employee or worker of the Organisation and, therefore, are not entitled to a contract of employment. Your services are provided on a voluntary basis only, and this Agreement outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the Organisation and yourself.

You will not receive remuneration or benefits for your volunteering role, other than the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses as specified below.

### Role of the Volunteer:

Your role as a volunteer is **[insert role details]**, and your voluntary service will commence on **[insert start date]**.

### What the Organisation Will Provide:

#### 1. Induction and Training:

The Organisation will provide you with a comprehensive induction to familiarise you with our work, values, and operations. You will also receive any relevant training needed to carry out your volunteer role effectively.

#### 2. Supervision and Support:

You will be assigned a named supervisor who will provide ongoing support throughout your time as a volunteer. The purpose of supervision is to:

- Set clear expectations and explain the standards the Organisation expects.
- Support you in achieving and maintaining these standards.
- Provide guidance and feedback on your role and performance.
- Foster positive relationships with other staff and volunteers.
- Help you develop personally and professionally in your volunteering role.

#### 3. Expenses:

The Organisation will reimburse you for any pre-agreed out-of-pocket expenses incurred during your volunteering, in line with the Organisation's Expenses Policy.

#### 4. Health and Safety:

You will receive relevant training and information to ensure your safety and well-being while volunteering. The Organisation is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.

#### 5. Insurance:

The Organisation will ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided for you while you are undertaking authorised voluntary activities.

**6. Equal Opportunities:**

The Organisation is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Volunteers will be supported according to the principles outlined in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

**What the Volunteer Agrees:**

**1. Performing Your Role:**

You agree to carry out your volunteering role to the best of your ability, to meet the time commitments you have made, and to perform the tasks and responsibilities to the agreed standards.

**2. Adhering to Policies:**

You agree to follow the Organisation’s policies, including all safeguarding procedures, and maintain confidentiality regarding all sensitive information you may have access to during your volunteer role.

**3. Use of Personal Vehicle:**

If you use your personal vehicle while volunteering, you agree to ensure it is properly taxed, insured, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.

**4. Notice of Absence:**

You agree to provide reasonable notice if you are unable to attend or fulfil your volunteering commitments. This will allow the Organisation to make alternative arrangements if needed.

**5. Confidentiality:**

You agree to keep all confidential information, whether related to the Organisation, staff, volunteers, or service users, private both during and after the term of your volunteering role.

**General Statement on Volunteering:**

Volunteers are an integral part of the Organisation’s success, and we deeply value your contributions. We are committed to making your volunteering experience as positive and rewarding as possible and will support you throughout your time with us.

**Acknowledgement:**

By signing this Agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and understood its contents and agree to provide your voluntary services in compliance with the Organisation’s procedures and standards. You also agree to maintain confidentiality about the Organisation’s operations and its clients both during and after your voluntary role.

This Agreement is not a legally binding contract and does not create an employment relationship. It is intended to outline the expectations and responsibilities of both parties. This Agreement should be read in conjunction with the Organisation’s Volunteer Policy for completeness.

**Signed by the Volunteer:**

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

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Signed by the Organisation:**

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

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

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