

Love in Action Children's Home – Volunteer Program

Internal Organization

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a comprehensive framework for the implementation and management of our volunteer program at Love in Action Children's Home.

As we strive to create a nurturing and supportive environment for the children under our care, it is our belief that volunteers can play a crucial role in enhancing our capacity to provide personalized attention and a sense of belonging and family to each child.

This document outlines the structure, guidelines, and expectations for our volunteer program, with the aim of fostering a collaborative and purposeful engagement between volunteers and the orphanage community. By establishing clear procedures and expectations, we seek to maximize the positive impact of volunteers, ensuring a harmonious and enriching experience for both the children and those dedicating their time and skills to support our mission.

Volunteering perspective

Our volunteer program is designed to consider the well-being of the children first and foremost. We believe that volunteers, their experiences, compassion, skill sets and willingness to support the organization can all be used to enrich the lives of our children. We do not believe that we can be everything or provide everything without the support of our community and the volunteers that work with us.

Because of this, we view volunteers as important and intimate "friends of the family." They do not replace caregivers as the primary parenting figures, but should instead be an encouragement and support to those with caregiving responsibilities, bringing their uniqueness to the child's experience of being raised in a diverse community.

With this understanding, volunteers should avoid the desire to provide or compensate for the love of a parent, but instead should come alongside those Caregivers who have dedicated their lives to providing that love, and should supplement the care with a friendship that enhances everyone's lives.

Potential volunteering opportunities

Suggested opportunities for a volunteer include:

Administrative Roles

Childcare Support Roles

Short-term Roles

- Running errands
- Assisting certain employees
- Fundraising support
- Networking support
- Volunteer management
- Website development
- Providing counsel as board members
- Game time
- Extra-curricular activities / programs
- Mentoring
- Homework help
- Transportation
- One-time administration development
- Work projects
- Summer activities

Property Support Roles

- Cleaning
- Building maintenance
- Groundskeeping
- Garden development

Levels of Engagement and Screening

All of our volunteers are screened for the safety of everyone involved, children, staff and volunteers.

The volunteer screening process is not one-size-fits-all, however. Positions that maintain a cursory relationship with the children require less stringent screening, while positions that work directly with the children should receive the highest levels of caution for the protection of everyone involved.

With the Levels of Engagement, we are assessing the opportunity that the volunteer will be filling, and measuring how much trust is required. We can divide the Levels into Low, Medium and High—Low being a volunteer that will have little to no interactions with children, and High being a volunteer that will have the opportunity to develop close relationships with the children, or have regular access to, or potential cause to access, sensitive locations or information (administrative offices, laundry room, bedrooms, living rooms).

The following is our mapping of various volunteer opportunities across the Levels of Engagement, and the screening process in place for each Level.

Levels of Engagement — Screening Map

Level of Engagement	Volunteer Position	Screening Measures
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fundraiser/event support ● Community engager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Written Application

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintenance support ● Donation pick-ups ● Remote work (website development, social media engagement, financial accounting, letter writing, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Google / Social Media Check
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrative support ● Cook or kitchen staff ● Cleaning service ● Extracurricular activity (supervised) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview ● Criminal Background Checks ● Reference Check ● TBRI Training (depending)
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private tutor ● Therapist/psychologist ● Extra curricular activities (unsupervised on campus) ● Driver for children to appointments/school/activities ● Caregiver support ● Full-time, on-campus volunteer ● Any volunteer with access to children's confidential files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation Period (50hrs) ● Regular Background Checks ● Driving Records ● Professional Licensing/Education Check ● TBRI Training
Adolescent Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authorized off-campus activities ● Personal conversations with teenagers ● Teaching life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation Period (20hrs) ● Regular Background Checks ● Driving Records ● Professional Licensing/Education Check ● TBRI Training

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

General Program Policies

The Home will engage volunteers and community support individuals for the purpose of bettering the Home's quality of care provided to residents.

The Home will create, maintain and observe a formalized Volunteer Program, directed by an identified Volunteer Program Director, with all necessary policies and procedures to ensure the safety, confidentiality and care of the residents first and foremost, as well as that of the participants.

The Home will create and maintain an updated Volunteer Manual, which is to include, at minimum, the following:

- Mission and vision
- Campus guidelines
- Visitation guidelines
- Dress code
- Child protection policy
- Incident reporting procedure

The Home will create a comprehensive screening and orientation process, including a "Levels of Engagement and Screening" document for reference, by which all volunteers are screened and integrated into the Volunteer Program.

The Home will maintain regular communication with volunteers, ensuring that they are informed of events, changes or information that will impact their experience with the organization in any way.

All volunteers will sign a Volunteer Agreement, stating their recognition of and adherence to the stated policies and procedures of the Home, the Volunteer Manual and Child Protection Policy.

Under no circumstance will volunteers of any Engagement Level be left unsupervised by a staff member until they have undergone a High Engagement screening process and completed at least (50) hours of observed volunteer work with the residents.

Campus rules

All volunteers will adhere to the provisions of the Policy and Procedures Manuals, Volunteer Manual, and any Collaboration Agreements that have been signed by the Home. Failure to comply with any of the aforementioned may warrant the suspension of the visitation and, if necessary, a definitive suspension of visitation or volunteer privileges will be made.

Volunteers and visitors must always treat residents with respect, refraining from using demeaning language, descriptors, nicknames or pseudonyms that imply discrimination.

Volunteers and visitors must refrain from disseminating matters related to the organization and operation of the Home, as well as data related to resident children and adolescents, to the general public.

In the case of identifying any potential danger, illness or vulnerable situation of any child, the volunteers or visitors must give immediate notice to the Executive Director of the Home so that the necessary actions may be taken.

All volunteers and visitors must keep both the facilities and the furniture clean and in good conditions in order to guarantee a healthy and adequate environment for the residents.

Volunteers must comply with the schedules established by the Home's Management.

Visitors and volunteers may not bring in food, electrical appliances or extra clothing without prior authorization from the Home's Executive Staff. In addition, it is strictly forbidden to bring objects into the Home that could put people who live or work in the Home at risk.

It is strictly forbidden for visitors to enter the bedroom area of the children, or the areas classified as restricted by the Home's Executive Staff, except when on a tour supervised by a member of management, or otherwise given specific permissions by Executive Staff.

The delivery of gifts directly from outsiders to girls or adolescents is not allowed. All gifts must first be shown to and approved by the Volunteer Program Director.

Absolutely no photos or videos of girls and/or adolescents is permitted without previous authorization of the Executive Staff, and for clear and restricted purposes.

Visitors and volunteers must observe the confidentiality of children and/or adolescents, particularly not to inquire in depth about their personal life situations.

Off-Campus Rules

In order for volunteers to take children off-campus, whether that be for a fun outing, or simply as a chauffeuring service, the following criteria must always be met:

- The volunteer must have completed all High Engagement screening processes.
- The volunteer must communicate a clear plan with the Volunteer Program Director of where they will be going, how long they will be gone, and what activities they will be engaging in.
- At least one staff member must accompany the volunteer at all times throughout the chosen activity or outing, with the following exceptions:
 - The volunteer is simply chauffeuring children from one location to another directly and without additional activity of any kind.
 - The activity meets all of the following criteria:
 - The volunteer is an adult female, or a group of mixed adults
 - The outing always involves at least two girls, all aged 16 and above.
 - The volunteer has completed all of the screening requirements for a Mentor position

- The planned activity has been discussed with and approved by both the Executive Director and the Volunteer Program Director, including clear details and scheduling.
- It is recommended that the off-campus party include at least two adults with at least 2 children at a time, regardless of the chosen activity. The Volunteer Program Director may allow, at their discretion, only one adult volunteer in attendance. This should, however, be regarded as an exception to the rule.
- The volunteer must have completed a minimum of 50 hours of supervised volunteerism with children.

Procedure : Volunteer Screening & Orientation

When an individual expresses interest in volunteering, whether for a specific role or to offer general support, the following procedure will be followed:

Introductory Period

1. The applicant will fill out a Volunteer Application
2. Copies of the individual's identifying documents will be made (driver's license, passport, visa, or other official identification)
3. A new file will be created for storing the applicant's documents
4. A member of the Executive Staff in addition to the Volunteer Program Director will make an initial assessment of the individual and their application to determine if they are a viable candidate for providing volunteer services in general.
5. If it has not already been done, an introductory conversation must now take place with the Volunteer Program Director or member of the Executive Staff, wherein the applicant is informed of the following:
 - a. The mission, values and history of the organization
 - b. The Home's perspective on the purpose and vision behind volunteer engagement
 - c. The volunteer opportunities available in the Home
 - d. The levels of screening for volunteer opportunities
 - e. The applicant is given a copy of the Volunteer Manual and walked through important sections to ensure understanding and compliance.
 - f. The applicant is given a tour of the Home, and shown which areas are off-limits.

Screening Period

Once the volunteer has, in conjunction with the Volunteer Program Director, identified an area in which they would like to provide support, they will go through the associated screening process. The Volunteer Program Director will refer to the "Levels of Engagement and Screening" documentation to determine the appropriate screening process.

Low Engagement Screening

1. The Volunteer Program Director will conduct an internet search on the individual
2. If the Volunteer Program Director identifies any concerning or questionable results from the screening process that doesn't necessarily warrant immediate expulsion of the applicant, they will bring the application and screening results to the Executive Staff for final determination.
3. The applicant must sign the Volunteer Agreement and NDA.
4. The Volunteer Program Director will explain the responsibilities and any expectation of the volunteer role to the applicant
5. The applicant will be added to the volunteer communications system.

Medium Engagement Screening

1. The volunteer will provide a criminal background check before proceeding with the organization

2. A formal interview will be scheduled and performed with the Volunteer Program Director and another member of the Executive Staff
3. The applicant will attend a trauma-informed care training.
4. The references from the individual's application will be contacted to provide a character reference.
5. If the Volunteer Program Director identifies any concerning or questionable results from the screening process that doesn't necessarily warrant immediate expulsion of the applicant, they will bring the application and screening results to the Executive Staff for final determination.
6. The applicant must sign the Volunteer Agreement and NDA.
7. The Volunteer Program Director will explain the responsibilities and any expectation of the volunteer role to the applicant
8. The applicant will be added to the volunteer communications system.
9. If the applicant will be working regularly with the children, then they are to be formally introduced.

High Engagement Screening

1. Where the individual wishes to volunteer at a High Engagement level, an explanation of the observation period will be provided.
2. The applicant will attend a trauma-informed care training.
3. Volunteers will have a minimum of 50 observation hours before being left unsupervised by a staff member.
4. If the volunteer is providing a professional service, then a licensure or work background check will be performed.
5. If the volunteer will be regularly driving children, then a driving record will be procured.
6. If the Volunteer Program Director identifies any concerning or questionable results from the screening process that doesn't necessarily warrant immediate expulsion of the applicant, they will bring the application and screening results to the Executive Staff for final determination.
7. The applicant must sign the Volunteer Agreement and NDA.
8. The Volunteer Program Director will explain the responsibilities and any expectation of the volunteer role to the applicant
9. The applicant will be added to the volunteer communications system.

Child Protection Policy

Every child is potentially at risk of abuse and exploitation. Some kids may be particularly vulnerable, due to their socio-economic status, gender, disability, ethnicity, or living situation. That's why it's crucial that every person connected with the children we serve here at Love in Action understands child abuse, as well as his or her own role and responsibilities in protecting children.

In this Child Protection Policy:

- Most common types of abuse
- Steps we take as an organization to prevent abuse
- Steps you can take in the event you need to report abuse
- How we'll respond to make sure that the children are safe

Types of Abuse

The most common types of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse – When an adult or another child is physically hurting someone
- Sexual – When an adult makes any sexual advances or engages in sexual conduct towards a child or another child's behavior includes unwanted sexual advances or conduct
- Emotional – When an adult or another child's behavior classifies as cruel or could be considered bullying
- Neglect – When an authority figure is failing to meet the children's basic needs

Child-to-Child Abuse

Allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a child by another child need to be responded to with sensitivity; nevertheless, they do have to be dealt with. All work with young people who have committed abuse needs to ensure the protection of people affected, while at the same time supporting the young person in the process of challenging and changing his/her behavior. Any such approach requires:

1. The recognition that a child who has abused another child is significantly different from adults who have committed similar offenses, because the child is not fully aware of why he or she has committed abuse and what the consequences are.

2. Keeping in mind that the best interest of the child is the primary consideration in all decisions made, for both the victim and the abuser.

Historical Allegations of Abuse

It is often the case that an individual does not report abuse until many years after the event. We are prepared to handle historical allegations of abuse transparently and responsibly according to our defined crisis management procedures.

We will:

- listen to allegations of historical abuse, take them seriously, and act responsibly towards them.
- seek to promote the welfare of those adults who allege historical abuse.
- take all possible steps to protect the child from the person alleged to have been an abuser.

Our Plan for Communication

For the safety of the children, it's essential that we maintain an open and responsive culture in our organization and with all of our partner children's homes and volunteers. We all need to have a safe space to break the silence and taboo of discussing child abuse. Through protected, clear, and honest communication, we can do our part to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Here's what we plan to do in our efforts toward preventing abuse:

1. Everyone connected to Love in Action should understand child abuse in all its implications.
2. We will provide regular opportunities to discuss children's rights and child protection.
3. We will ensure that the children have regular opportunities to voice their concerns, so that any protection concerns may be heard and addressed.
4. The best interests of the child should be the guide of our child protection process. In cases of conflicting interests, we give priority to the child's welfare.
5. Roles and responsibilities regarding child protection are clearly defined and communicated.
6. All employment contracts and codes of conduct signed by staff members and representatives of the organization also refer to the child protection policy.

Prevention

To prevent child abuse, we need to create and maintain an environment which reflects the commitment we have to each child's wellbeing and to maintaining their right to grow up happily and safely.

Child abuse is less likely to occur within a context that fosters child participation at all levels. That's why it is essential that we listen carefully to children, take their views seriously, encourage them to participate in discussions on child protection issues, and offer them the opportunity to build relationships of trust with therapists and caregivers.

In addition, we strive to maintain a high standard of accountability among our staff and volunteers.

1. We are thorough and thoughtful in the processes we use for selection, recruitment and verification of new staff members. Applicants for any position, whether staff member or volunteer, should disclose any previous criminal record. This is accomplished through providing a background check, and by the cross-checking of references.
2. All staff members and volunteers must receive adequate training and sign this document.

Protection of the Child's Privacy

The protection of a child's privacy refers to private data of the child; as well as, pictures, text, video, etc., about children which are produced for publicity purposes. We take the children's right to privacy very seriously, and only use images or stories of the children publicly according to the following policies:

1. Any information about a child's history, medical condition and family background is kept private. We omit surnames and may also change first names to avoid sharing sensitive information of any kind about the children.
2. We have agreements with the individual children's homes about their preferences regarding photography and video, and always adhere to those policies.
3. We do not actively ask children to do or say anything that might make them feel displayed as 'objects of pity' (e.g. to speak about their past or ask for donations).
4. We train our volunteers on these policies and give them ways to share their experiences without disclosing private information or inappropriate photos or video.

Following these guidelines ensures the respect of the children's privacy while at the same time preventing, and raising awareness for, violations of that privacy. Based on these guidelines, staff and volunteers who are directly involved with children have the right and obligation to protect the children from any attempted violations of their privacy—be they intentional or not.

Reporting

Occasion may arise for any individual working with or for Love in Action to report abuse of a child, whether they be a staff member, volunteer or student. These occasions include but are not limited to:

- A Love in Action staff member notices another worker exhibiting abusive behavior
- A child confides in a Love in Action staff member or volunteer that an abusive relationship is occurring
- A Love in Action volunteer notices a staff member is exhibiting abusive behavior

The following outlines our crisis management procedures for reporting existing or potential cases of abuse:

1. Notify the Executive Director as soon as possible. If the Executive Director is unavailable or the subject of an allegation, notify the next available leader in Love in Action.
2. If the abuse is actively happening, please notify the children's home's Executive Director immediately or other person of authority as a person of first-contact.
3. A statement may then be taken to thoroughly capture the details of the observation or allegation and the identities of those involved. These documents are kept confidential and seen only by those with the authority to resolve or report the case as needed.
4. If the alleged abuser is a staff member or volunteer, the Executive Director will ensure that the individual is removed from any interactions with children until the issue is resolved.
5. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance when dealing with cases of abuse; information is to be handled with sensitivity. The child or any other person who gives information regarding child abuse must be made aware that if he or she reports the case, information about the alleged abuse will be shared only with those authorized to have access to this information, i.e. the children's home leadership and other persons involved.
6. Love in Action then ensures that the abuse is reported to the proper government authorities and the children's home leadership so that appropriate action can be taken.

Responding

All forms of child abuse are taken seriously, without exception, and are responded to according to the gravity of the offense. We ensure that there is always a response, regardless of whether the abuse committed is considered large or small. By responding, we can ensure that a transparent and fair procedure is followed, so that no one is falsely condemned, and the rights of everyone involved are protected.

If the offense is on the part of an Love in Action volunteer, staff member or student, we will:

1. Ensure that the affected persons receive the necessary counseling and support in all cases of suspected or proven child abuse or neglect.
2. Pursue the matter to the full extent of the law if the abuse is committed by an adult.
3. Assign one Love in Action staff member to be responsible for handling information and internal and external communication regarding child abuse incidents.
4. Take actions and decisions quickly.
5. Keep confidential any written records of all reported abuse cases and their conclusions to prevent future incidents.