**Volunteer Policy: July 2023**

**Introduction, scope and purpose**The purpose of this policy is to inform staff, artists and volunteers on how we will work with volunteers who engage with Rendez-Vous dance Ltd.

This policy will define what a volunteer is and how Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will recruit, manage and support volunteering in the organisation. A copy of this policy will be given to every volunteer by those who support/supervise them, such as Rendez-Vous dance Ltd core staff or artists leading volunteer supported activity.

Because this policy applies to the whole of the organisation including Rendez-Vous dance Ltd board members, everyone will be aware of its existence and purpose.

Alongside this policy there may be other documents that need to be shared with volunteers and those who involve/manage them. These documents will be printed and given to the relevant parties and copies will be kept with the Executive Director.

**What is a volunteer**

As stated in *The Volunteering Code of Practice,* Volunteering is:

“…An important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain”

This policy is aimed at volunteers aged 18 and above.

**Code of Practice: Values**

**Choice**People must be free to choose to volunteer; no one will be forced to volunteer. Volunteers are also free to choose not to volunteer.

**Diversity and Inclusion**Volunteering is open to all aged 18 and above, regardless of socio-economic background, gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation or faith.

**Mutual Respect**In return for giving their time, energy and skills, volunteers expect to gain something – this could include: a sense of worthwhile achievement; useful skills; experience and contacts; sociability and fun; inclusion in the life of the organisation.

**Recognition**We want to recognise volunteers’ contribution to: Rendez-Vous dance Ltd, the community, the social economy and to wider social objectives.

**Volunteer Recruitment Process**All volunteers will complete a ‘Volunteer Enquiry Form’. The Enquiry Form includes a space for volunteers to provide two suitable references. The form will also ask volunteers to disclose any ‘unspent’ convictions under the requirements of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

A volunteer may need to have a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) check before they can start volunteering. The most likely reason for needing a DBS check is that the volunteer will have contact with children, young people or Adults at Risk in regulated activity. Rendez-Vous dance ltd will pay for the costs of the DBS check.

Having a criminal record will not be a barrier to volunteering unless Rendez-Vous dance Ltd thinks that a conviction means that the applicant is unsuitable. Volunteers should be made aware that the DBS process may take some time to complete.

If a potential volunteer has already completed an online DBS check, then following national policy Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will ask for their unique number, allowing Rendez-Vous dance Ltd to register an interest in the volunteer and confirm their current status to volunteer. Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will discuss this process with the individual and if no disclosures are relevant then will proceed with recruitment. If there are disclosures that need to be discussed then we will arrange an appointment to do this. The outcome will depend on disclosure and the organisation’s risk management of disclosure. Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will not reimburse the cost of an individual’s online check if they have already registered as part of national policy.

If the DBS contains disclosures these will be dealt with according to policy, this will be explained fully by the supervisor.

All volunteers will be invited to meet their potential supervisor from the organisation for a discussion on the volunteer role, its requirements and each other’s expectations. This meeting is for both the supervisor and volunteer to see if the volunteering opportunity is suitable.

After all the security checks have been carried out, potential volunteers will be told whether the volunteering will go ahead. Rendez-Vous dance Ltd retains the right to refuse the offer of a voluntary role to any volunteer, for example if any background checks are not satisfactory, if there is a breach of the organisation’s core values or the organisation is not able to provide appropriate support to the volunteer.

**Rendez-Vous dance Ltd Induction and Training**

All volunteers will receive an induction with their supervisor that will include:

* A full explanation of their role and tasks and the expectations of the organisation;
* An introduction to the team which will include staff and other volunteers;
* A clear introduction to where they will be based when volunteering and who to go to if they need help or support.
* An introduction to the building (if currently based in a venue), including any health and safety information relevant to the role. This should include fire safety and personal safety e.g. where to store personal items, toilets and general building layout;
* Additional training and induction for each role will be identified by the supervisor; this may include a risk assessment.

**FAQs**

**Expenses**

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will reimburse volunteers' reasonable out of pocket expenses. These will be pre-agreed by the Producers and could include:

Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering;  
Lunch/Dinner paid for whilst volunteering.  
  
The volunteer’s supervisor will agree expenses as appropriate to the role. More information on Volunteer expenses can be found in Rendez-Vous dance Ltd’ Rates of Pay & Expenses Policy.

**What if things go wrong in the volunteer role?**

Volunteers, although valued by Rendez-Vous dance Ltd, are not employees and have no contractual obligation to Rendez-Vous dance Ltd. If an issue arises the supervisor will speak and listen to the volunteer, this may lead to agreements about changes in behaviour or expectations which will be monitored and reviewed.

If the supervisor or the volunteer feel that there is no resolution to the issues, then the volunteer will be asked to leave.

If a serious issue such as theft, violence or a safeguarding issue arises the volunteer will not be given time to change behaviour but asked to leave immediately as they are no longer supporting the aims and core values of the organisation.

The volunteer can access Rendez-Vous dance Ltd complaint procedure if they feel they wish to make a complaint: a copy will be provided at induction**.**

**Requesting a reference**Rendez-Vous dance Ltd values and respects the motivation and skills of its volunteers and will be happy to provide a reference. A minimum of 5 volunteering sessions is needed to allow us to gain a measure of the volunteers’ skills, knowledge and personal qualities. The reference will be completed by the person managing the volunteer.

**Health and Safety**

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd have a duty to look after the safety and well-being of our volunteers.

This means that in line with our Health and Safety Policy we will make sure that appropriate precautions are taken to control and manage any significant risks, including having support sessions, training and information about any relevant health & safety policies and procedures.

Like employees, volunteers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by what they do, or omit to do, while volunteering.

Volunteers must also co-operate with our organisation in carrying out any duty or complying with any requirement imposed by relevant health and safety laws

**Insurance**

Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will indemnify (this means ‘cover’) its volunteers against claims made against them for injury or damage as long as the volunteer:

a) Acted in good faith and honestly believed that they were acting within their power or duty as our volunteer and;

b) Let the Supervisor know as soon as reasonably practicable about any incident which could lead to a claim, so this can be managed and recorded.

**Confidentiality and data protection**

During the recruitment and induction process all volunteers will be made aware of their rights under Data Protection and GDPR (General Data Protection Rights).

During recruitment/induction we will explain to volunteers:

* Why we ask them for their personal data
* Where we store their information and for how long
* How they can access their information
* That when they leave or if they decide not to proceed with volunteer enquiry how we will sensitively delete or anonymise their details

Throughout their volunteer journey including induction we will be fully transparent about data storage and provide them with a copy of our privacy policy.

All volunteers will be asked to complete image and video consent forms and have the right to withdraw consent at any time. Rendez-Vous dance Ltd will retain all images and video for reporting/promotional use for 3 years from the date of consent and delete them once they are no longer appropriate.

Volunteers must not have access to personal information for colleagues, children, young people or vulnerable adults unless it is deemed necessary by their supervisor, for example in case of a medical condition that staff and volunteers should be aware of such as diabetes or epilepsy.

**Can volunteering affect benefit claims**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) states that:

‘You can volunteer for as many hours as you want, as long as you still meet the conditions to get your benefit or tax credit’.

As legislation varies over time it is always best for volunteers to check the latest information either with their benefits advisor or on the website [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk). It is the volunteer’s responsibility to do this.

**Smoking Policy**

Rendez-Vous Dance Ltd asks that volunteers do not smoke whilst volunteering/in the vicinity of any activity during breaks.

**Gifts**We ask that volunteers do not accept gifts over the value of £15 from our staff, freelancers or artists. We realise this is a sensitive issue but any gifts should be given to the supervisor, they may be returned to the person giving the gift or donated to Rendez-Vous dance Ltd for redistribution with the person’s agreement.

##### Drug and Alcohol Policy

Volunteers should not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst volunteering with Rendez-Vous dance Ltd, on its grounds or supporting our activities. Rendez-Vous dance Ltd asks for volunteers to remove or cover any Rendez-Vous dance Ltd branded clothing, lanyards or identifiable items before consuming any drugs or alcohol in public settings.

**Monitoring and reviewing**

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director and the board to regularly review this Volunteer Policy to make sure it is always in accordance with legal requirements and best practice in relation to volunteer management. This will be done annually or when the need arises.