



Fun and Education through Farming

Farm Volunteer Policy

Introduction and Scope

Larkrise Community Farm recognises the significant and valuable role that volunteers play in supporting us to achieve our aims. This policy reflects our commitment to ensuring the volunteer is integrated into the heart of Larkrise Farm, that volunteering with us is a constructive and rewarding experience and that all volunteers are treated in an equal, fair, and just manner.

This policy sets out to provide guidance to staff and volunteers and outline procedures and support mechanisms available to volunteers. It defines the term “volunteer” and provides a framework of best practice which we will endeavour to follow when appointing, managing, and supporting our volunteers.

Definition of the Relationship

Volunteers are individuals or groups who offer their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain beyond reimbursement of expenses; helping us to achieve our aims.

There is no contract of employment between Larkrise Farm and its volunteers and volunteers are not considered employees of Larkrise Farm.

Larkrise Farm Commitment to the Volunteer

Larkrise Farm views its volunteers as a valuable resource and is committed to providing support and recognition of their input. Volunteers are supported through the provision of resources necessary to complete their duties, induction and appropriate training and a supervision commitment. Volunteer contributions are recognised through written references (where appropriate), invitation to special events and opportunities to feedback to the development of volunteer management at Larkrise Farm. Volunteer’s tasks will be mutually agreed during the recruitment selection. Volunteers are not bound by contract but are obliged to volunteer in line with the Volunteer Policy and the Volunteer Agreement.

Commitment of the Volunteer

Larkrise Farm expects volunteers to behave in a manner which reflects positively on the organisation and to promote the key organisational messages where possible. Larkrise Farm expects volunteers to execute agreed duties, unless otherwise informed, and requests that volunteers carry out in the name of the charity only those tasks approved by supervising staff. Larkrise Farm expects volunteers to be supportive of staff, other volunteers our students and of the Larkrise Farm ethos and aims.



Commitment of the Volunteer cont...

We would ask that all volunteers volunteering on a regular basis to please, where possible, give us four weeks' notice if they are considering leaving their volunteering role. We also ask that volunteers attending irregular events such as a fete to please give us at least one week's notice if you are not able to attend a scheduled event.

Principles

This Volunteer Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Volunteers are required to be at least 18 years of age.
- Larkrise Farm will endeavour to ensure volunteers are properly integrated into its organisational structure, that they are kept abreast of organisational developments and that necessary mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work.
- Larkrise Farm does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Larkrise Farm recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development opportunities and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs.
- Larkrise Farm expects staff to work positively with volunteers.

Recruitment and Selection

Larkrise Farm recruitment and selection of volunteers is designed to ensure that we recruit volunteers who are suitable for the role they would like to do:

- a) Larkrise Farm will provide volunteer role descriptions which outline duties and responsibilities.
- b) Prior to appointment, volunteers are invited to engage in a two-way discussion of the proposed role including its requirements and expectations with a view to assessing mutual suitability.
- c) Prior to appointment volunteers are asked to complete a COVID-19 Medical Risk Assessment.
- d) Commencement of the volunteering opportunity is subject to an enhanced DBS check and reference clearance.
- e) Volunteers will be subject to a probationary or trial period of 2 months.
- f) Support, guidance, and supervision are provided as appropriate.

Disclosure of Criminal Record

Due to the nature of our work all volunteers are subject to a Disclosure & Barring Service check, as part of the recruitment process. Larkrise Farm complies fully with the code of practice provided by Disclosure Scotland, Access NI and the Disclosure and Barring Service and undertakes to treat all volunteer applicants fairly in line with our commitment to equal opportunities and to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Our Criminal Record Disclosure Policy which includes information about the recruitment of ex-offenders can be made available to all applicants during the recruitment process.



Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Larkrise Farm is committed to promoting equal opportunities. Volunteering opportunities at Larkrise Farm are open to all regardless of age, race, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. Larkrise Farm recognises the positive benefits a diverse volunteer pool can bring to the organisation and is committed to ensuring our recruitment and selection procedure reflects this.

Disabled Volunteers

Larkrise Farm promotes diversity in all areas of volunteering and as a charity, we encourage disabled people, in particular, to volunteer with us. The main farm building and yard is fully accessible.

Disabled volunteers can act as role models and mentors to our students that we work with and may inspire them during their journey towards independence. Disability should not be a barrier to volunteering and volunteers can still claim benefits as long as you are aware of the restrictions explained in the 'Volunteering while getting benefits' leaflet produced by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organisation as well as task specific training to ensure they can carry out their work on behalf of Larkrise Farm effectively and efficiently.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the organisation.

Support and Recognition

All volunteers will have a named supervisor responsible for the management of their work, who is there to provide guidance and assistance. Those engaged in more sustained volunteering will have more formal supervision sessions at agreed intervals. These sessions shall be conducted via email, phone or face-to-face as appropriate and agreed.

The Business Manager, Ashley will review the volunteering placement as often as required, with the aim of ensuring that recognition keeps apace with role development. Larkrise Farm is happy to provide a confirmation of contribution for volunteers who have given a minimum of a full week of their time or a reference for those contributing over longer, sustained periods. Volunteers may be invited to "thank you" events and consulted where possible.



Volunteer Expenses

It is Larkrise Farm policy that volunteers should not be out of pocket for their contributions. Therefore, we are happy to reimburse reasonable receipted travel undertaken on Larkrise Farm business if firstly agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Health and Safety

All volunteers volunteering at Larkrise Farm, or on the premises where Larkrise Farm are involved where an event is being held, are to be given a Health and Safety induction. All volunteers in the course of representing Larkrise Farm are covered by the organisation's Public Liability Insurance. We endeavour to ensure that any events which volunteers are asked to attend on behalf of Larkrise Farm are safe and accessible. This is achieved through the prior completion of risk assessments at Larkrise Farm organised events and in some cases written confirmation of appropriate insurance cover at third party organised events.

Concerns and Complaints

Larkrise Farm is committed to the welfare of our volunteers and we believe that any concerns brought to light at an early stage can be dealt with in an informal manner. In the unlikely event that a dispute cannot be resolved in this manner, the Assistant Manager or the Farm Manager can be involved. All volunteers have the opportunity to feedback to the Assistant Manager through meetings. You can contact the Assistant Manager by emailing asstmanager@larkrisefarm.org.uk.