

SLOUGH BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY	Volunteer Policy
POLICY NUMBER: SBCP-14	



Primary Responsibility:	Pastor	
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DISTRIBUTION

Original	Slough Baptist Church Office
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1. Purpose and Scope

The **aim** of this policy is to acknowledge the importance of those who serve as volunteers and to provide a framework for their service and their support.

This policy covers the vast number of volunteers within our church fellowship that support and enable church activities. In addition to this policy, those who volunteer to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults need to also read the clear guidelines and safeguarding arrangements in SBCP 03 (Children and Young People) and/or SBCP 32 (Adults at Risk)

This policy does not cover volunteers of independent groups who from time to time are active within Slough Baptist Church premises, by the agreement of the church trustees with their group's leadership. Such groups that regularly deploy their own volunteers on SBC facilities are expected to have their own volunteer policies and may be required to disclose these policies to the church trustees in order to obtain agreement or maintain agreement to use the premises

2. Definition of a Slough Baptist Church Volunteer

There are a large number of volunteers who serve the church, its members and the wider community in a variety of different areas of church life. Essentially, a Slough Baptist Church volunteer is one of our congregation who, without expectation of financial reward, takes responsibility for a specific task within the church, either as a one-off action or over a period of time, however big or small this task may be. For example, some serve in the area of worship, some serve with the children and young people, some serve with the practical needs of running a church, some serve in pastoral care and some reach out to the wider Christian and Non-Christian community.

3. Costs and Gifts

Volunteers do not receive payment for their services. Slough Baptist Church will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred partially or fully if this is agreed by the budget holder.

Entirely at the discretion of the trustees, Slough Baptist Church may occasionally be pleased to acknowledge extended faithful service of a volunteer by the presentation of a non-monetary token of the fellowship's appreciation.

4. Who Should Serve within the Fellowship?

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

We wish to encourage people from all ethnic backgrounds, ages and abilities to become involved in church life. We are never too old or too young to be used by God.

Anybody who regularly participates in one or more of our regular activities is welcome to serve. To serve others is a biblical principle and a great privilege. Service is a great encouragement to those being served and to those serving, as volunteers can see themselves as being of use and needed according to their talent and ability.

Therefore, it is important that both the church leadership and those who lead small groups within the fellowship encourage others to volunteer and serve.

5. Faith

We are a Christian church. It is therefore important that the majority of volunteers willing to serve in an event or regular activity have a personal faith, and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

There are some areas of service for which we also ask for a maturity of faith in varying degrees: those are the areas of teaching, discipleship, mentoring, worship leading, pastoral care and church leadership.

There are areas of service within the fellowship where it is good to volunteer even though the personal faith and commitment is not fully there. However, it is not appropriate for someone to volunteer who openly opposes the Christian faith.

6. Suitability

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all his parts form one body, so it is with Christ. and so the body is not made up of one part but of many. now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12, 12+14+27)

Gifts, talents, faith and ability need to match the need. Not everybody can do everything. It is the responsibility of the church leadership and those heading up individual areas to identify the right volunteers and assess their suitability. If there is any doubt or concern regarding the suitability of a volunteer, the person heading up an individual area should consult the Pastor or one of the Elders before taking a decision. An area of service is agreed by all involved: the person serving, those heading up the particular area and the church leadership.

There are clear guidelines with respect to children's and youth work volunteers: these are outlined in detail in our Safeguarding Policy, SBCP-03.

7. Training and Support

The church is committed to support those who serve and volunteer within the fellowship. We aim to develop a culture within the fellowship that makes encouragement and support natural, effective and consistent.

There is opportunity for internal teaching and training from fellow members and leaders where this is required. Much of the training and support of volunteers happens 'on the job' in the immediate environment of the area of service and is provided by those serving alongside the volunteer.

There may also be opportunities to receive specific teaching and training outside Slough Baptist Church. Where appropriate, the fee for such training may be carried fully or partially by the church.

It is vitally important to avoid any symptoms of burn out. Service must never get in between the volunteer and their personal relationship with God. Service has to be in a context of a growing relationship with God. This means those who give through service need to also receive, be strengthened and encouraged. One important way this can be achieved is by being part of the Sunday worship services without being in service at the same time. A rota system should be implemented to guarantee any volunteer can participate as an "ordinary" member of the congregation in our Sunday worship on a regular basis, without any responsibilities at the same time.

8. If you want to stop ...

Whilst service is vital and important there may well be a point to move on or relinquish an established role due to a variety of circumstances.

Service should be done willingly and with a happy heart, it should not become a burden or a source of stress and pressure for the volunteer concerned.

We aim to provide an environment where changes are acknowledged and supported.

9. What if things go wrong...

Our volunteers, and all of us involved in the life of the church are only human and therefore make mistakes and get things wrong.

If you are concerned about a particular volunteer or their service, then unless indicated otherwise by our Safeguarding Policies, the best course of action would be to discuss this with the person directly to explore and resolve the concerns. In situations where our Safeguarding Policies do not apply, the next steps for an unresolved issue would be to discuss this with the direct leader and then with the Pastor as a route of escalation.

We aim to foster an environment of encouragement and help, not of gossip and hurt.

As a church we would like to acknowledge that the safety of those volunteering and those participating in our activities is of great important to us. No volunteer is expected to take unnecessary risks. Each volunteer must be aware of any potential hazards in their area of service. If there is any concern, the church trustees or the person heading up the area of service should be made aware so that appropriate action can be taken. Volunteers should be made aware of any risks assessment relevant to their area of work/service.

10. Acknowledgements

Without those serving and volunteering on so many different levels at Slough Baptist Church, we would not be a fellowship, but a gathering group, if anything at all.

This is acknowledged by the Church trustees and their commitment is to support, encourage and aid those serving and volunteering in any way possible and appropriate.

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