

# SOS-UK VOLUNTEER & STAFF AGREEMENT

Hello and welcome to SOS-UK! It is really important that everyone who works with us on our projects and campaigns is able to understand and agree to everything written in this document. Take your time and ask questions if there's anything confusing or difficult to understand. Let us know if you'd like someone to read this out loud with you, we are more than happy to.

## 1. WHAT IS THIS AGREEMENT FOR?

We aim to create an environment that supports the diversity of people and their ideas. We recognize that people work best when there is mutual understanding of expectations and commitments. As we welcome you into SOS-UK we ask that you review this document carefully and agree to our collective values.

**Throughout this document where we refer to 'we', this is inclusive of all our volunteers and staff.**

## 2. VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT CODE

- **Abide by our guiding principles of behaviour**, laid out in annex I (page 5) of this document. You must also abide to SOS-UK's social media policy and safeguarding policy, that has been shared with you as part of this agreement.
- **Foster a culture of respect and teamwork**. Working with a team means exhibiting diplomacy, honesty and cooperation. We look out for one another. We believe that every person is worthy and deserving of kindness, community, and has the ability to grow. We recognise that sometimes people make an honest mistake and we help them learn and grow from their mistakes. We ensure we work in a supportive environment, that is solutions focused.
- **Assume the best intentions of others**. It can be hard to read someone's tone over the internet, even on calls! We're all working together on a shared mission and no one is perfect —that means we need to be practicing respectful communication and accountability with one another.
- **Stay on topic**. From Slack to Zoom calls to in-person working, we have a variety of shared workspaces with many people trying to work together on our goals. It can be easy to get side tracked, but please make sure to keep channels and spaces focused on their purpose. If there

isn't a channel that feels fitting, let the staff team at SOS-UK know and we may consider creating one!

- When volunteering for SOS-UK **you are representing SOS-UK** therefore please be considerate of ensuring to maintain professionalism and demonstrating values reflective of SOS-UK. If speaking about your own opinions etc please specify that this is the case.
- When carrying out SOS-UK endorsed activities, **always use professional SOS-UK endorsed communication channels** which you will be informed about as part of your induction.
- **Follow through on commitments.** Do your best to follow through on what you say you'll do. This helps us help manage expectations and maintain good communication with those you are working with. That said, we know things come up, so just be sure to communicate as soon as possible if something changes.
- **Safe and legal activities.** We are all responsible for our own actions and realise the impact this could have on SOS-UK. SOS-UK will never ask you to undertake, or condone any activities that are unsafe, illegal and/or criminal (e.g behaviour at demonstrations). SOS-UK will not take responsibility for actions in breach of safe working taken by any staff or volunteers. If you feel you are being put in an unsafe situation during your time with SOS-UK, please speak with a member of the team or your line manager.
- **Maintain confidentiality:** Build trust with other volunteers and SOS-UK by respecting the confidentiality of community members including volunteers and staff. Unless you receive prior written approval from SOS-UK, you will not disclose confidential SOS-UK information or confidential information given to you by others, with the exception of when required to by law to avoid harm to you or another.
- **Practice a safe and inclusive workspace.** Demonstrate anti-oppression and inclusion to ensure all staff and volunteers are safe and supported members of SOS-UK. Where you have observed or experienced harassment, bullying or safety concerns, please report them immediately through your line manager, or other formal channel if they are not available/it's more appropriate.

Your rights as a SOS-UK volunteer or staff member are important to us. We are all integral members of the SOS-UK team. You can expect to have these rights met by SOS-UK in your volunteer/staff experience:

- **Right to training and resources:** You have the right to be trained to effectively carry out the tasks at hand. You should be invited to training on specific skills that are relevant to your role. You also should have access to staff or other experienced volunteers to ask questions and get the support you need! We will meet you where you're at so we all succeed and no one gets left behind.
- **Right to say "No."** We will respect the skills, dignity and individual needs of every volunteer and staff member. You have the right to say no if asked to undertake a task you don't want to do, and we'll respect that. A positive working environment requires consent and a willingness from both parties to partake in the activity!

- **Right to be appreciated.** Volunteers and staff have rights to recognition and thanks, whether this is a verbal expression of appreciation or a formal letter of reference.
- **Right to be treated with fairness and respect:** We communicate openly and make room for learning and growth, while always respecting and honouring the dignity and value of each person on our team. Volunteers and staff are entitled to respect and support from other volunteers and staff. You are also entitled to be treated fairly.
- **Right to a harassment-free environment.** You have the right to report any instances of harassment, and to have any reported grievances or instances of harassment investigated.

### 3. BEFORE YOU START

- **Guardian / Parental Consent if you are under 18.** We take safeguarding of our volunteers and staff very seriously. If you are under 18, we need our Guardian / Parental Consent Form signed by a legal guardian or parent.\* The form outlines all likely types of activity the role involves and gives details of the safeguarding practices which are in place as well as contact details for the safeguarding lead.

In the event that an U18 is unable to gain parental consent, the safeguarding team will work with them to assess their options for participation. For anyone aged 16-17, alternative measures may be able to be put in place on a case by case basis. For anyone under 16 the reality is that their involvement with many of our campaigns may be limited due to our safeguarding responsibilities.

You cannot start volunteering or working with SOS-UK if you have not submitted this form or spoken to the safeguarding team to put alternative measures in place.

- Given the nature of our work in supporting students, it is likely that, as a volunteer or staff member, you will be working directly with under 18-year olds. If this is the case, and you are over 18, **you will be required to undergo a DBS check.** You will be informed whether you need to do this when signing up with SOS-UK.
- You must attend **compulsory online safety and safeguarding training.**
- You must provide **emergency contact details.**
- You must **sign and date this agreement.**

### 4. BREACHING THE VOLUNTEER AND STAFF AGREEMENT

As an SOS-UK volunteer or staff member, regardless of whether you are within our workspace, we expect that you uphold the values and belief system of our organisation wherever you are including the online space.

For this reason, if we have sufficient evidence, as deemed by us, that you have breached the above agreement in a space with other volunteers or staff members, we reserve the right implement the following processes. Each level will be considered based on the severity of the specific breach of this agreement and number of times this agreement has been breached. This will be decided on by core staff at SOS-UK, who will seek to understand the breach/es by speaking with the individual and those harmed and/or witness to the breach.

Level 1 - A first written warning with agreed action plan

Level 2 - A second and final written warning with agreed action plan

Level 3 - Exclusion/ dismissal

Each warning chain stays valid for twelve months, from the date of the latest warning, before it is wiped and reset.

We also reserve the right to suspend volunteers, at our discretion, for a fixed-term period as part of our sanctions to keep our workspaces safe and inclusive, and to protect our volunteers and staff.

If you feel that this volunteer and staff agreement has been breached, as a first step please raise this with the core SOS-UK member of staff working on your project/campaign or, if applicable, your line manager or speak with a trusted fellow volunteer/ member of staff.

If you have a suspected issue of safeguarding to report, please then get in touch with the SOS-UK safeguarding lead Michelle Hemmingfield, [michelle.hemmingfield@sos-uk.org](mailto:michelle.hemmingfield@sos-uk.org).

## 5. YOUR SIGNATURE

I understand that by signing this document I understand and am formally agreeing to this SOS-UK volunteer and staff code of conduct.

☐ (optional) I am happy to give my consent to SOS-UK to use photos of me that have been taken as part of my SOS-UK activities.

**SIGNATURE:**

**NAME:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**DATE:**

## 6. ANNEX 1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOUR AT SOS-UK

### Anti-oppression & awareness of privilege

Some of us have privileges in society that others of us don't, related to our class, race, gender, age, sexuality etc. This often impacts how comfortable we feel making our points heard and how much we are listened to in wider society. We aim to be aware of how our privileges impact our behaviour, including how we are harming each other without meaning to.

### Inclusivity

We don't assume that everyone comes from the same background or has the same life experience. We actively work to include and support everyone to get involved and contribute however they can. We try to work in different ways to respect everyone's skills and don't assume that one kind of work is more 'valuable' or 'important' than any other.

### Embracing our difference

We are all different! We focus on things that bring us together instead of defining each other by our differences. We remember that we won't always agree but we listen to each other and try to understand each other's opinions. We take responsibility for our words and actions and are not afraid to change our minds.

### Challenging harmful behaviour

Our words and actions can harm people even if this is not our intention. If we do or say something that is harmful we can expect to be challenged in a way that respects us as a person but challenges our behaviour.

We challenge harmful behaviours when we see them and always aim to help each other understand where we have caused harm. We remember that it should not be the responsibility of those who experience the harmful behaviour to educate others on why the behaviours are harmful. Challenging harmful behaviour in ourselves and others is a collective responsibility.

### Open to learning

When our behaviour is challenged we agree to remain open to constructive feedback and criticism rather than becoming defensive. Feeling uncomfortable because we are challenged is a sign that we need to look at our own behaviour and not a sign that we are being discriminated against. When we are challenged we agree to listen and reflect on what we are being told, even if we disagree. We work to create an environment where it is okay to ask if we don't understand something, and where a wide range of different ways to learn are available. We are all responsible for our own education and for sharing what we have learned with others.

### Boundaries and Consent

We all have different personal physical, emotional, sexual and online boundaries. We don't assume all of us are comfortable with the same things. We always respect other people's boundaries, including when they are different to our own, and we expect our own boundaries to be respected. We ask for consent before touching someone or discussing potentially upsetting topics. We remember that boundaries can change: just because we have been okay with something in the past, this doesn't mean we will always be comfortable with it.

We take responsibility for our actions and for when we violate someone else's personal physical, emotional, sexual or online boundaries, including when this boundary-crossing is accidental or

unintended. Not saying 'no' is not the same as saying 'yes'. If we are not sure if someone is comfortable with something, we ask.