

Trent Valley Literacy Association

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# **Volunteer Handbook**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Trent Valley Literacy Association. Your volunteer contribution is vital to our support of adults working to develop and upgrade reading, writing, numeracy and computer skills.

This handbook is designed to provide you with a quick reference to information about volunteering with TVLA. It includes a summary of agency policies and procedures related to volunteers. The complete agency policy and procedure manual is available upon request.

Thank you for becoming involved as a volunteer. We trust you will find your volunteer experience rewarding.

The Trent Valley Literacy Association Team,

Lesley

Lisa

Mike

Susanne

**TVLA would like to thank you for your interest in volunteering with our organization. Contact us to complete an application and get started.**

### **TVLA Mission**

TVLA is a non-profit agency formed to help adults in Peterborough city and county to acquire the literacy, numeracy and computer skills needed to live and work successfully in the community.

## Customer Service Charter

### Best Practices:

- We ensure that all programs and services of our literacy agency are offered using a learner-centred model of delivery.
- We offer an outcomes-based, flexible, supportive, and respectful learning environment based on adult learning principles.
- We provide quality instruction by skilled instructors and tutors who deliver effective programming that meets the needs, motivation and goals of learners.
- We offer literacy instruction to learners in a variety of formats that best meet their individual needs and goals.
- We ensure that students have the opportunity for direct input into how we deliver our services.
- We work hard to address the barriers to learning faced by adult students.
- We provide a safe learning environment free from risk, harm and harassment for students, staff and volunteers as guided by the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

## Personal Property/Lost and Found

*Please keep your valuables by your side at all times.*

**TVLA** is not responsible for lost or stolen property. If you see unattended items in one place for an extended period of time, please bring them to the front desk. If you lose personal belongings, please ask at the front desk in case they have been brought to us!

## TVLA's Smoking Policy

We require all students, staff and volunteers to follow our smoking policy:

- ✓ **No smoking on TVLA property, inside or out.**
- ✓ Stay at least 9 metres (30 feet) away from any entrance.
- ✓ Throw butts in a can only (ask for one if you don't see one nearby) and NEVER on the ground.

1. TVLA staff may ask you to **switch machines or stop** for the day at any time.
2. **Sign out** (also called a “log out”) **of every online account** you have signed into whenever you leave your computer – even if you’re just going to the bathroom.
3. **Shut down** (don’t just log off) of a computer when you’re finished with it. If you do not know how to shut down the computer, please ask.
4. If you get an error message or think you are being asked to download anything, **please tell a staff member**. Do not touch the computer until he or she has a look at it!

## Children at TVLA

**TVLA** is an adult learning environment. Our tutors and students are all 19 years of age or older. We understand that many of our students are parents and need to find child care, but **TVLA** is **not an appropriate place for children** and does not provide child care. If your learner needs help finding day care to participate in **TVLA** programs, please let us know. We may be able to refer them to an agency that can help and help offset the costs.

## The Right to Volunteer

TVLA accepts the service of all people who volunteer with two conditions: first, tutors must complete our intake/tutor training program; second, when they choose to participate, they agree to respect the rights of and meet the literacy needs of their student. TVLA may end any volunteer’s relationship with the Association on the basis of the same policies and procedures which apply to paid staff. Volunteers have the right to training, formative evaluation and performance review.

The success of learning opportunity depends on sustained support and continuity for learners. Tutors are required to share this commitment and to work independently and creatively in providing support. All volunteer applicants may not be suited to tutoring. The staff reserves the right to place some volunteers in positions other than tutoring or suggest volunteers to seek alternative work if:

The volunteer cannot meet the time commitment or level of support required.

Circumstances suggest that the volunteer would need a high level of support that the staff cannot provide.

The volunteer demonstrates insensitivity or attitudes that might interfere with a positive relationship with a client.

## General Requirements

**Age:** Volunteers must be aged 19 years or older. Please note that you will be working with adults ages 19 and older from a wide variety of backgrounds. TVLA is an adult education organization.

**Education:** Volunteers do not need any particular type of formal education, but should have the knowledge to perform their duties with minimal additional training. TVLA will provide training for special tasks, including literacy and basic skills instruction. Volunteers should be confident in any skill they wish to instruct.

**Police Background Check:** All volunteers must submit a new or current CPIC. This check will note any criminal convictions. There is a small fee payable to the police force where the CPIC is conducted. TVLA can provide you with a letter stating that you are volunteering with TVLA which will reduce the cost.

**Confidentiality Agreement:** In accordance with the Privacy Act and other applicable legislation, TVLA requires all volunteers to sign an Oath of Confidentiality. All information about clients and other matters must be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Many adult learners wish to have their attendance or information kept private.

**Health and Safety:** TVLA aims to ensure that the health and safety of clients, volunteers and staff. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to make the agency aware of any health issue that may impact the ability to carry out their tutoring duties.

## Computer Use

TVLA maintains computers and Internet access for students and tutors. If you're not sure where to start, please ask for help.

The following activities are **COMPLETELY BANNED**:

- Viewing porn, gore or disturbing content
- Downloading pirated software, media (music, videos) or file sharing programs.
- Visiting gambling or dating sites
- Using these computers for buying, selling or any movement of money.
- Looking at or sending racist, sexist or other discriminatory content in any form.

If you engage in a banned activity, you will be asked to leave and may not be allowed to come back.

- ✓ **No food or drink** around the computers.
- ✓ **Please sign in at the Front desk, when using the Computer Room.**
- ✓ **Do not listen to audio** (sounds) on the computer **without headphones.**
- ✓ Do not touch the monitor screens.
- ✓ **Ask permission before** printing. Personal printing normally costs 20 cents per page.

## An Environment of Respect

- ✓ We expect volunteers to treat students, staff members and other volunteers with respect.
- ✓ Use positive, encouraging language
- ✓ Do not gossip about student challenges and achievements. Respect their privacy.
- ✓ If you have a conflict with anyone at TVLA, please contact a member of the staff.
- ✓ Keep your phone on vibrate or turn it off. All calls, texting and other phone use must take place away from learning areas.
- ✓ Put all trash and recycling where it belongs.
- ✓ Please keep noise down around the building.
- ✓ Please don't swear in or around TVLA property.
- ✓ TVLA does not tolerate threatening or harassing behaviour, or discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic group, creed or sexual orientation.
- ✓ Treat people the way you'd like to be treated.
- ✓ Our outlined policies are to be followed

## General Requirements Cont'd

**Harassment:** TVLA does not tolerate workplace harassment of any kind. Any volunteer who feels that they are being subjected to workplace harassment should report the incident to the Program Coordinator who will investigate the complaint accordingly.

**In an Emergency:** Anticipate your response to potential emergency situations. When you are trained, you will be shown all exit routes and emergency supplies on hand.

Remain calm. Do not attempt any remedial treatment for which you have not been trained; e.g. only apply CPR if your certification is current.

Call 911. While you seek assistance, do not leave the client alone if at all possible.

**Work Environment:** TVLA takes all precautions not to knowingly expose volunteers to any potentially hazardous health/safety situations.

**Incident Reports:** Any incident resulting in personal injury to volunteers or clients, occurring during the provision of service, must be reported immediately to the Program Coordinator. Record the details of what occurred, the date of the occurrence and submit to the Program Coordinator within 24 hours. The Executive Director will establish a follow up action if required.

## **Volunteer/Client/Staff Relationships**

### **Volunteer/Client Relationship**

The volunteer/client relationship is expected to have the same boundaries as those of paid staff. Where the client may be considered vulnerable, the volunteer may be considered in a position of power and is responsible to operate in a professional manner. The volunteer notifies the Program Manager whenever the nature of the relationship with a client is in question.

### **Volunteer/Staff Relationship**

Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in supporting the mission and programs of the agency. Each partner is expected to treat the other with trust, respect and courtesy.

## **Volunteer Conduct**

Volunteers committing any of the following infractions will be reported to the next level of authority so that appropriate action can be taken.

- ✓ The wilful physical or abuse of another volunteer, staff member or student of TVLA.
- ✓ Neglect, wilful abuse or destruction of Association property.
- ✓ Reporting for tutor or group sessions while under the influence of or suffering from the effects of alcoholic beverages, other intoxicants, or illegal drugs.
- ✓ Possession and/or consumption of alcohol and/or illegal drugs while on Association owned or rented property.
- ✓ Unauthorized use of Association property, equipment or supplies.
- ✓ Fighting or intentionally causing, or threatening to cause bodily harm to another volunteer, student or staff member.
- ✓ Theft.
- ✓ **Volunteers, students or paid staff of TVLA will maintain a professional relationship.**