

## **The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation Volunteer Policy**

The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation (the 'Foundation'/'we'/'us') is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales, number 1161513. This policy covers individual volunteers acting 'for' and 'on behalf of' The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation.

### **Our Contact Details**

Our registered and main trading address is Unit 9, 5-7 Wells Terrace, London N4 3JU.

For queries, please contact us by email at [team@wilbur-niso-smithfoundation.org](mailto:team@wilbur-niso-smithfoundation.org) or by post at: Unit 9, 5-7 Wells Terrace, London N4 3JU. If you are currently volunteering, you will have a named contact at the Foundation.

This Volunteer Policy will be reviewed annually. It was last updated on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

### **Introduction**

The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation places great value on the involvement of volunteers and their contribution to our work in various ways, including:

- helping to deliver services to meet the needs of our beneficiaries
- providing skills and individual perspectives
- helping to run events
- providing administrative support

Volunteers are vital to our work, helping us to achieve the Foundation's mission of supporting writers, promoting literacy and advancing adventure writing as a genre. Volunteers enhance the range and quality of services we provide, by giving their time, skills, knowledge and experience.

### **Aims of the Policy**

We are committed to best practice in the recruitment, support and management of volunteers. This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and given a clear and specific role.
- We expect that trustees and staff will work and interact positively with volunteers, actively seeking and listening to their opinions.
- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and will help volunteers do their work effectively.

### **Recruitment**

All volunteers are welcome, subject to meeting the mandatory requirements for the role. We are committed to equal opportunities and believe that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or background that does not create a risk to any vulnerable individuals or groups we work with, including, for example, children and young people.

If a volunteer has a special need or disability that makes their involvement difficult, every effort will be made to involve them. An explanation will be given if this is not possible. We use social

media, our partnerships and working relationships to ensure we widely advertise volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers are asked to submit basic demographic information, as far as they are comfortable, along with an expression of interest. Information recorded about volunteers is stored securely and only for as long as necessary, as outlined in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Volunteers are selected for particular roles based on their suitability to carry out agreed tasks, and in some cases, based on our need for a broad range of experience.

### **Support, Supervision and Recognition**

Volunteers will be briefed about the activities they will undertake and given all the necessary information and training to enable them to perform with confidence. A member of the Foundation team is assigned to each individual volunteer as their first point of contact, throughout their volunteering period.

Most volunteer roles are on a project basis. Annually, we recruit a volunteer panel of librarians and library staff for the Best Published Novel award, and a volunteer panel of readers and reviewers for the Author of Tomorrow award. In addition, we recruit volunteers to support at events and occasionally, with administrative work. The majority of voluntary work takes place online, with some in-person meetings. We cannot supply the digital equipment needed to undertake the work, including for example kindles, laptops, or e-readers, and rely on volunteers who have access to their own.

Volunteers can provide support for multiple projects in line with our guidelines for each role. No volunteer, for example, can retain a seat on the Best Published Novel panel for more than three consecutive years and must apply each year. After a year out, they can reapply.

Volunteers are not required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. While volunteering, no individual is directly in communication with those responsible for writing or submitting the work (whether adult or a minor under 18 years old) that the volunteer is assigned to.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers will have access to confidential information regarding the project they are working on, including for example:

- Copies of novels submitted for the Wilbur Smith Adventure Writing Prize (including some that are yet to be published).
- Opinions and scores relating to the novels submitted for the awards.
- Early knowledge of longlists and shortlists.
- Access to young writers' short stories submitted for the Author of Tomorrow.

Volunteers do not have access to any sensitive information the Foundation holds. If a volunteer is concerned about the level of access they have been granted, they should immediately contact their designated member of staff at the Foundation.

Volunteers must not share any documents or information they are privy to in their volunteer capacity. Documents are often protected by the submitter and will be traceable if shared externally.

We encourage volunteers to communicate with each other, and us, on social media and celebrate the work we're doing together, without sharing confidential or embargoed information.

### **Expectations**

We recognise that our volunteers make a substantial time commitment and we are committed to making the experience an engaging, fun and impactful opportunity for everyone who donates their time to us.

We expect volunteers to be reliable and complete the work they have committed to. We understand things sometimes take longer than anticipated, or priorities change, and if this is the case, we ask that volunteers tell us as soon as possible so that we can make alternative arrangements.

We encourage feedback and volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions (although this is welcomed at all times) with the charity's trustees and staff. Volunteers are actively encouraged to ask questions or register any concerns with us about their volunteering or our charity in general.

We expect all volunteers to adhere to our code of conduct which can be read [here](#).

### **Governance**

We are a charity and therefore our board of trustees also give their time to us voluntarily.

We have clear distinctions between the roles that volunteers play in the organisation and those of paid staff. However, our aim is to approach the treatment of both staff and volunteers similarly - respectfully and equitably.

If a volunteer has a complaint against a member of staff or another volunteer, we will deal with it appropriately and fairly. We do not prioritise a staff member's concerns over those of a volunteer or vice versa.

Volunteers are encouraged to raise any problems with their designated staff member at the earliest opportunity, so that issues may be resolved promptly.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to our code of conduct, and remember the Foundation's values to uplift, inspire and educate in all they we do. We reserve the right to dismiss a volunteer and, if appropriate, take further action if it is established that they are in breach of our volunteer or another organisational policy.

### **Expenses**

We aim to limit barriers to involvement as much as possible. The reimbursement of expenses, including for example, required travel, will be outlined in the volunteer role description, and if an honorarium is offered, details will also be included.

Volunteers will be given clear guidance on what expenses can be claimed from us, and how these should be calculated. To reduce environmental impact, we encourage the use of public transportation where possible. Travel expenses will be reimbursed with a named limit per project. Volunteers must submit receipts as evidence of expenses incurred, which will have been agreed with the Foundation prior to purchase.

Expenses will be signed off by a member of staff and reimbursed within a 14-day period.

**Insurance**

Volunteers are covered by the Foundation's Public and Employer's Liability Insurance. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with our:

- Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Policy