



Saint Patrick's Cathedral Dublin



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Volunteering at Saint Patrick's Cathedral

Saint Patrick's Cathedral welcomes and values the contribution made by volunteers. Volunteers perform a multitude of tasks which help in the running of the Cathedral. Many of these tasks (such as bell ringing) form an integral part of the on-going life and history of the building. Volunteers add value to the Cathedral as a place of worship, as a cultural and heritage site and as a major tourist destination.



Saint Patrick's Volunteer Policy

The Volunteers are a crucial aspect of the life and work of the Cathedral. On a broad level the contribution they make in helping to engage with our visitors and ensuring that they have a fulfilling visit is immeasurably important and in commercial terms their input is impossible to quantify. . The Cathedral is committed to supporting the work of its volunteers. It is the Cathedral's responsibility to ensure that the high standards expected from our volunteers is matched by equal levels of support in areas such as training, day-to-day management and recognition. This Guide is intended to help clarify this commitment made by both volunteer and institution.

Volunteer Roles

Welcome team

It is of vital importance that everyone who enters the Cathedral (regardless of purpose) receives a warm and engaging welcome. Our visitors do not distinguish between people who work in the Cathedral and therefore it is the responsibility of all who work in the Cathedral to contribute to this important job. The Cathedral's welcome team assists at the front desk and ensures that all visitors feel welcome, and are given the information they need to ensure an enjoyable visit.

Guided tours

Our guides are responsible for directly engaging with our visitors through the provision of daily guided tours. This interaction is of vital importance in helping our visitors to engage with the content of the Cathedral. Guides receive training from our Education Officer and are also expected, on an on-going basis, to learn about the life and history of the Cathedral.

Education Department

The Education department facilitates learning in, and about, the Cathedral through the provision of tours, talks and workshops. Education volunteers help to deliver education sessions to visiting schools and community groups. These volunteers receive training from the Education Officer and must also undergo Garda vetting.

Bell ringers

Bell ringing is one of the oldest traditions in the Cathedral's history. Today a group of volunteers, Saint Patrick's Amateur Society of Change Ringers, preserve this heritage. The Society meets weekly on an evening for practice and all necessary training is provided.



Categories of Volunteer

Some volunteers might elect to choose a combination of types, eg. Seasonal/Part time

Part-time

The majority of our volunteers work one morning or afternoon per week. This is the minimum level of participation to which we ask candidates to commit.

Seasonal

The Cathedral's visitor numbers are seasonal. Between the end of March and the start of September the Cathedral becomes very busy. As a result we have a greater need for volunteers during this tourist season. Volunteers can commit to working during this period if they wish.



Event

The Cathedral hosts a number of evening concerts, recitals, talks and re-enactments. These events often require a greater level of available staff. External organisations occasionally recruit for volunteers to work at events which Saint Patrick's is hosting. In these circumstances all responsibility for these volunteers resides with the external organisation.

Recruitment, Induction and Training

Eligibility

- Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age.
- Volunteers must go through the application, screening and induction process. (Extra training may be required depending on role.)
- The Cathedral reserves the right to look for qualities/skills which are appropriate to the role being filled.
- The Cathedral operates an equal opportunities perspective and accepts volunteers from all walks of life and backgrounds.

Recruitment

- Recruitment takes place on a continuous basis in order to fill positions which are vacated by others.
- An advertisement for new volunteers will take place in February/March each year in order for new volunteers to be trained prior to the commencement of the new tourist season.
- New volunteers will be recruited based on defined roles.
- Some positions will require screening and Garda vetting.
- Potential volunteers will go through an informal interview process with either the Volunteer Co-ordinator or the Education Officer (or both) and will be asked to fill in an application form
- All information provided by potential volunteers during the application process is strictly confidential.
- Once the volunteer has been accepted he/she will sign a volunteer agreement and be given a copy of the Volunteer's Handbook

Volunteer commitment

Commitments vary depending on role. Most positions require one morning or afternoon per week, Bellringing and the Education Department require a greater investment in time owing to the level of training which they must receive. All volunteers are initially asked to commit for at least 6 months and at most 1 year. After 1 year they formally commit again on a yearly basis.

Training and induction

- All Volunteers will receive a short induction into working in the Cathedral and are expected to familiarise themselves with some of the basic details relating to the history, life and work of the Cathedral.
- Volunteers who are recruited on the basis of conducting formal guided tours must complete a short training course and deliver a trial tour to an appropriate member of staff before commencement of tours with members of the public.
- Volunteers who are recruited on the basis of delivering education sessions to schools and other education groups must complete a short training session and induction period where they will shadow existing education staff members.

Role Description

All volunteers will be provided with an outline of the tasks which they will be asked to perform.

Volunteers will be encouraged to take up one of the existing defined roles; however, volunteers may agree on a bespoke role in consultation with the volunteer Co-ordinator or the Education Officer.

Day to day Management

Volunteer Support (point of contact)

There are two main points of contact for a volunteer:

The Volunteer Co-Ordinator (who represents the Volunteers), and

The Education Officer (who represents the Cathedral)

Volunteers should contact either person if they require support or if an issue of concern has arisen in the course of their volunteering. Their choice of contact may depend on the nature of the issue. Volunteers will be informally “checked in with” on a regular basis. The Cathedral manager is the day-to-day manager of all staff and non-staff on site.

Facilities on site

- Volunteers may avail of the same facilities as staff members.
- A staff canteen is available for use during breaks and lunchtimes.

Accepting gifts/money

Occasionally visitors offer “tips” or other forms of gift in return for guided tours or other services.

Volunteers are not allowed to accept any form of gift and any visitors who would like to provide a tip should be asked to make a donation to the Cathedral.

Health and safety (Insurance)

Volunteers are covered by the Cathedral’s insurance policy. Health and safety training is mandatory for volunteers who deliver formal guided tours to the public.



Holidays and leaves of absence

Volunteers should give as much notice as possible for any planned absences.

- Volunteers may request a prolonged period of absence and in certain circumstances a temporary volunteer can be asked to cover an absence.
- Planned leave should always be noted in the volunteer diary.
- Any volunteer who cannot attend due to sickness, or any other reason, is expected to inform the Cathedral. This message can be left with the Cathedral office or front desk.

Recognition

The Cathedral appreciates the effort and input made by all volunteers and would like to recognise their efforts. The most suitable form of this recognition will be decided through consultation between the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the volunteers.

Social Events

Cathedral Volunteers are entitled to 2 seats for the Christmas Eve Service every year.

There is an annual social evening for the volunteers which gives the opportunity for the Cathedral formally to thank the volunteers for their efforts during the year.

Volunteer conduct

All volunteers are expected to abide by a defined code of conduct as outlined in the non-staff handbook. Volunteers who fail to adhere to this code of conduct may be given a warning. The Cathedral reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave his/her position in cases where there has been either:

- A. a serious breach of the code of conduct, OR
- B. an on-going failure to comply with these rules.

How to Apply

Current information on volunteering in the Cathedral will be live on the website at www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/volunteering.aspx including an application form and point of contact.