



छोकनी गेछ्याक लिङ
Tsoknyi Gechak Ling

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Tsoknyi Gechak Ling Nunnery provides equitable opportunities to women for higher study and training in Buddhism.

Tsoknyi Gechak Ling Nunnery regards volunteers as a valuable resource and encourages volunteers to get involved.

We aim to support our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

1. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

1.1 Purpose of policy

The purpose of this volunteer policy is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering at Tsoknyi Gechak Ling (TGL) Nunnery. It does not constitute a binding contract. These procedures apply to all volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf of and at the direction of TGL.

1.2 Responsibility

TGL is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers at the Nunnery are expected to facilitate this process.

1.3 Eligibility

TGL will consider involving a wide range of people with the appropriate skills and experience, as volunteers. Individuals will have to be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aim of TGL and will only be placed at TGL if the needs as a volunteer match the needs of TGL. No person who has a conflict of interest with TGL will be accepted as a volunteer.

1.4 Relationship with paid staff

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of staff and other workers at the nunnery, not as a substitute for them. Clear roles are established to differentiate between staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.

1.5 Working conditions

Volunteers are treated as valued members of the TGL. Volunteers will have access to the same space, equipment and facilities as other staff.

1.6 Working times

Working times are negotiated between TGL and the volunteer. Generally, for teaching volunteers, the class times are between 9am and 4pm Mondays to Fridays. Volunteers

may also be asked to teach evening classes. Classes and times will be worked out with each individual volunteer.

1.7 Appropriate behaviour

As representatives of Tsoknyi Gechak Ling, volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive image of the nunnery to the outside world. TGL is funded entirely on donation and engages in ongoing fundraising. All Staff and volunteers are prohibited from making direct individual requests to existing or potential donors.

Volunteers are NOT allowed to buy gifts or give money to an individual nun. If they want to support the nuns, they can donate to the Tsoknyi Nuns Welfare Foundation office or coordinate with the captain nun.

They are also NOT allowed to bring nuns inside their rooms.

When there are nunnery events, we advise volunteers NOT to rely on student nuns' invitation but ask the management team members. For example, ask the captain nun regarding nunnery and Shedra related events and ask school principal or vice principal for the school related events.

Volunteers are also NOT allowed to give medicine or any kind of medical aids directly to student nuns without acknowledging the management team members. The nunnery has its own residential nurse and its best care through professional.

Volunteers are also NOT allowed to take student nuns outside of the nunnery without the permission from the Gyeko/captain.

1.8 Representation of TGL

Volunteers will seek prior approval from Tsoknyi Gechak Ling nunnery senior management (Khenpo la, Captain Nun or the School Principal) before undertaking anything that might affect the nunnery. This includes, but is not limited to, fundraising, social media posts (such as Facebook, Instagram, X, WeChat, WhatsApp, etc.), statements to the press, joint initiatives with other organisations and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

1.9 Regulations on Photos, Videos and Social Media Posts

In general, volunteers are allowed to take photos or video of any public events hosted by the nunnery for their own keepsake. When taking photos or videos, volunteers need to make sure the student nuns have their robes on properly. If the volunteers want to make posts on public platforms with the photos or videos, they need to ask for permission either from the School Principal or Shedra Secretary or the members of the Nunnery Management.

NO photos or video of the following are allowed even for personal keepsake: nuns singing, dancing or bathing, and private areas such as dormitory and dining hall.

1.9 Confidentiality

TGL respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering at TGL.

1.10 Records

A system of records is maintained on all volunteers, including their application in full, timetable and assigned duties while at TGL. Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as staff and other records at the nunnery.

1.11 Service at the discretion of TGL

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of TGL and based on the needs of TGL. Accordingly, TGL may at any time for any reason change its volunteer requirements and reduce or increase volunteer involvement at the nunnery.

2. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

2.1 Role descriptions and person specifications

Volunteer specifications are clearly outlined in our application package. Once a prospective volunteer has submitted an application form, they will be guided with a clear role description.

2.2 Applications

Volunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis by means of social media along with other publicity avenues both nationally and internationally.

Volunteer English teachers are required to complete a detailed volunteer application process which includes filling an application form, providing 2 references, signing a volunteer waiver and completing a police background check (according to the criteria of their home country). The returning volunteers do not need to go through the application process.

Volunteer Chinese teachers are also required to complete a detailed volunteer application process which includes filling an application form, signing a volunteer waiver and completing a police background check (according to the criteria of their home country). The returning volunteers do not need to go through the application process.

2.3 Interviews

There may be times when applicants are shortlisted and suitable candidates may be contacted through means of interview whether in person or via zoom/google meet to ascertain their interest in and suitability for a volunteer teaching role. Records of all communications are kept. All unsuccessful candidates are thanked for applying.

2.4 Checks for suitability

TGL houses children, teens and adults and in some instances vulnerable adults and as a result all volunteers who could potentially come in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults as a result of their role are required to go through a Police Vetting process. Volunteers are required to provide a police background check as part of their application process.

References are always requested when completing application forms for volunteer English teachers. Health certificates (mental and physical) may also be requested for all volunteer candidates and other checks may also be required (for example, ascertaining professional qualifications).

2.5 Appointment to volunteer role

Volunteer appointments are made only after the application process has been completed, the role description has been agreed, and all necessary checks have proved acceptable.

3. Volunteer Induction

All volunteers receive induction from the management team when they begin their work with the nunnery. This consists of a general introduction to the nunnery as well as a specific orientation on their living space, their work, timetable and the class groups and teachers they will work with. Volunteers generally team-teach with a local teacher(s).

4. Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

4.1 Working conditions

All volunteers should have the competency, training and skills to carry out their volunteer role. Volunteers will be expected to work on their own initiative and as part of a team and will be expected to show commitment and dedication to meet the requirements of the task that they are performing. Volunteers will be provided with support as is deemed necessary for the role.

4.2 Mentoring & Support

All members of the management team will be available to receive feedback or respond to any difficulties volunteers are encountering throughout their stay.

4.3 Duration

The duration of volunteering period is agreed before volunteers assume their role. If volunteers for whatever reason are unable to complete their volunteering commitment, they should at the earliest opportunity communicate their situation to the management committee in a written format. Should the situation at TGL change so TGL is no longer able to accommodate volunteers, TGL will communicate with the volunteer in writing at the earliest convenience.

4.4 Dismissal

In the unlikely event of a volunteer not adhering to rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments to a satisfactory standard, the volunteer may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with the Management team. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of students and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by TGL policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

4.5 Concerns and grievances

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the management committee. The management committee will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a written complaint and take appropriate action.

4.6 Exit Interviews

Where possible, informal exit interviews are held with volunteers at the end of their stay. This interview should determine how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve volunteering at TGL. A volunteer may also request a personal reference for future employment etc.

5. Volunteer Support and Recognition

5.1 Support

TGL endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work.

5.2 Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to the nunnery, the benefits of which are numerous. All volunteer efforts are therefore recognised and greatly valued by TGL.

5.3 Expenses

Accommodation and food are provided by the nunnery for the duration of the volunteers volunteering period. Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge and all travel, visa and other expenses incurred by the volunteer, will be met by the volunteer themselves.

5.4 Insurance

Volunteers must have their own medical and travel insurance.
