

PVF Volunteer Guidelines

We would like to provide you with this volunteer guideline to allow you to quickly integrate into the Peace Villages community. This list is made to facilitate a peaceful living and working situation. We recognize that as volunteers come and go, needs will always change. Therefore suggestions are welcome.

Follow through with your commitments

To make sure all programs have the people they need and to make coordination of volunteers possible we make a Volunteer Placement Schedule for each volunteer every Friday afternoon at the coordination meeting. Therefore, we ask that you may consider attending other programs that may be in need of extra people and that you make any plans you might have at least **one week in advance** in order to comply with your schedule. This also requires that you follow through with any other commitments you have made, such as attending Spanish classes.

The emphasis of the work we do here is on **quality and excellence and not quantity**. It is far more effective for you, and the foundation, to commit to giving a minimum of 4 half days (16 hours per week), fully committed with energy, motivation and punctuality, than to feel obligated to do eight hours work, de-motivated, tired and unenthusiastic. Be reassured that there is neither judgment nor comparison to others. It is essential that you are able to balance your work commitments with the communal living needs and your own needs, especially within your first period of adjustment to the climate and this way of living. Please feel free to discuss your level of commitment at any time.

If you are working in the foundation grounds, you may work mornings, afternoons or both. However, we ask that if you work **mornings you start at 8am** and if you work in the **afternoons you start at 2pm**. This allows our local workers to depend on you and will make planning and explanation of tasks more effective.

If you are working on programs in town, it is essential to bear in mind that it takes 40 minutes to walk there.

When working morning programmes, we would request that **you are up by 7am**, to ensure that you can be ready to start your day in good time. It is important that you leave yourself enough time to clean up after yourself in the kitchen and bathroom before leaving to maintain harmonious living conditions for yourself and your fellow housemates. If you know you are someone who isn't great at getting up early, then we are happy to offer you a wake up call. We must point out though that after the call, it is up to the individual to motivate themselves from there!

Volunteer activities and absences

- Although it is volunteer work you are asked to commit to the minimum a week in advance to aid with planning
- Minimum commitment to mobile school and/or pre-school or your chosen project is 16 hours (4 half days) per week other than by prior arrangement
- Absences from volunteer work must be preapproved by the appropriate Coordinator
- The volunteer Coordinator must be made aware of any absence due to sickness as soon as humanly possible to aid with finding a replacement
- Any unexcused absences counts as one warning under the PVF 3 warning rule. (Third warning and you will be asked to leave PVF programs and grounds without refund)

In order to ensure that the programs are always equipped with volunteers who are fully committed, we do operate an attendance policy:

If three times during your stay you are late or do not show up for a program that you have previously committed to, you will be kindly asked to end your time volunteering with us.

Not showing up, or being late, demonstrates a lack of respect and consideration for those involved and this is not fitting with the ethos of Peace Villages. This policy is purely in place to protect the interests of the children we work with and the directors of programs. If you encounter problems with punctuality due to your volunteer schedule being too heavily committed, talk to the coordinator so that it can be reviewed and changed. You are also important to us, and we do not want you to spread yourself too thin and become burnt out!

Cooperative Living

Cooperative Living is a microcosm of the world in which we live. It is essential that we foster an environment of mutual respect, consideration for others, tolerance, patience and understanding within our "home". Cooperative Living is a living and breathing experiment of how individuals can co-exist in a peaceful and joyful way. It is a **space of learning** for all of us and is a new concept to many people that come to join us. For this reason, there is of course, room for mistake. A willingness to learn from the mistakes is all that is required. The focus on cooperative living should always be "**What is best for everyone**" not "What is best for me"? Please read also "PVF Coop Living Guide"

Open and Direct Communication

Of course, the reality of this learning process is that it does tend to occasionally push your buttons! It would be unrealistic to think that living and working so closely with others does not require effort and tolerance. The most effective way of maintaining a healthy emotional atmosphere is to create a space where individuals are free to express their needs and wishes, whether you are here for one week or six months. Therefore, we invite everyone to appropriately and kindly address issues concerning our undesirable behaviours. This should be done in a non-confrontational manner with those concerned, with sensitivity and no judgement towards the other person(s).

In our experience we have found that those who are most open to accepting a degree of constructive criticism benefit the most from the process. Interpersonal development is the gateway to caring for oneself and others on a deeper and more authentic level, and is a highly valuable part of volunteering for those who are willing to try it. Open and direct communication means being brave enough to address the issues as and when they arise and not allowing them to turn into resentments and slights on others' personalities. If everyone does this in a compassionate and respectful way, living harmoniously CAN become a reality. It is our aim to create a safe space for you to be honest with yourself and each other about your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. If you can think of ways that we can facilitate this better.....please let us know!

Another Option

We understand that committing to a cooperative lifestyle is not something which turns out to be agreeable to everyone. If at any point during your time at Peace Villages, either party feels that Cooperative Living is not best suited for you, there is the option of changing to **Independent Living**. This would involve staying at one of the local hotels in Santa Elena and self cater. It does not mean that the individual is not able to carry on with their volunteer work with guidance from the foundation.

Maintain an acceptable level of cleanliness

Respecting others starts with respecting yourself and the people you live with by maintaining a clean living space and keeping up with your commitments within the living arrangements. We can not emphasize enough that the work that you do within the house and the grounds is **just as important** as the work you do in the community. It is essential that when you are planning your weekly activities, you allow time to complete your daily and weekly household tasks. Cooking, shopping, cleaning can be a lot of fun if approached with the right attitude!!

Every volunteer and staff living in the Cooperative Living is assigned a respective household chore. Throughout the week, each person is in charge of making sure the area assigned is to be kept clean and once a week to do a deep cleaning of the area.

Each person has the responsibility to clean up after themselves. The guideline we use within the community is **no one should be able to notice that you used an area after you are done**. If they do, then please don't take offence if and when you are confronted.

House Meetings

Communication is an essential part of everyday life within a cooperative living environment. It is important for us to meet together at least once a week to discuss, reflect, inspire, problem solve, share and address issues that are temporal or ongoing. The meetings are a chance for us to take a look at how we can do things better. They are compulsory, therefore other arrangements and commitments should be made around it. Please feel free to talk to other volunteers and staff if you are unsure about anything.

For exact details of our living guidelines please read document "PVF Coop Living Guide" which has been developed by volunteers.