



Waterville Creates Volunteer Manual



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Thank you for supporting Waterville Creates' mission: arts experiences for all. Whether you are performing in a Waterville Opera House theatre production, volunteering as an usher at a concert or the Maine International Film Festival, or assisting with community programs like Art in the Park, we could not do this work without the generous support of our volunteers.

In this packet you will find our volunteer general information and guidelines. Please note that there may be additional, specific program and guidelines associated with a theatre production, performance, or event. If you have any questions, please speak directly to the WC Event + Volunteer Coordinator or to your supervisor.

On behalf of all of us at Waterville Creates, the Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, and Ticonic Gallery + Studios—thank you for your time and effort supporting the arts in Waterville.



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Business Ethics and Conduct

The successful business operation and reputation of WC is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees and volunteers. WC's reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of WC is dependent upon our partners' trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Volunteers will interact with patrons in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

WC and its volunteers will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

Criminal Background Checks

Background checks are conducted on all volunteers who will interact with children under the age of 18. Background checks will include:

- **Social Security Verification:** validates the applicant's Social Security number, date of birth and former addresses.
- **Criminal History:** includes review of criminal convictions and probation. The following factors will be considered for applicants with a criminal history:
 - The nature of the crime and its relationship to the position.
 - The time since the conviction.
 - The number (if more than one) of convictions.
 - Whether hiring, transferring or promoting the applicant would pose an unreasonable risk to the business, its employees or its customers and vendors.

The following additional background searches will be required if applicable to the position:

- **Motor Vehicle Records:** provides a report on an individual's driving history in the state requested. This search will be run when driving is an essential requirement of the position.

Volunteers must complete a background check authorization form and return it the Vice President. Once the signed release is received, WC will use a third-party service to perform the criminal background check. Negative information obtained from the background check may include:

- Theft or embezzlement
- Child endangerment, assault, or pornography

WC reserves the right to modify this policy at any time without notice.

Volunteer Conduct and Work Rules

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, WC expects volunteers to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that could result in immediate dismissal from the volunteer core:

- Violation of policies
- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Smoking in prohibited areas
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace
- Excessive absenteeism or unexcused absences
- Unauthorized use of telephones, mail system, or other employer-owned equipment
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Violation of volunteer policies
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

Volunteering with WC is at the mutual consent of WC and the volunteer, and either party may terminate that relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

Workplace Harassment, Sexual Harassment + Violence Policy and Complaint Procedures

WC is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination, unlawful harassment and violence. Therefore, ***WC prohibits and will not tolerate any form of harassment.*** This includes all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and violent threats whether direct, indirect, or conditional. We strive to provide an environment that is free from violence and will not tolerate abusive and/or bullying behavior of any kind.

We have implemented policies and procedures that promote appropriate conduct at WC and prohibit unwanted or hostile verbal or physical interaction, including degrading or humiliating jokes, physical or

verbal intimidation, slurs, rudeness, or other offensive conduct (such as non-verbal innuendo, verbal affront, undermining, withholding information, sabotage, failure to respect privacy and broken confidences) which shows disrespect towards another.

Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ancestry, national origin, mental or physical disability, or status as a veteran will not be tolerated. Improper interference with the ability of volunteers to perform their responsibilities will not be tolerated.

Volunteers are responsible for adhering to an environment free of discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise. It is important to remember what one might not find inappropriate or offensive, another might. Volunteers are responsible for respecting the rights of their fellow volunteers and WC staff and respecting all backgrounds. Threats of violence, bodily harm or physical intimidation by employees or individuals outside WC will not be tolerated. Any physical assault or threat made by a volunteer while on WC's premises, during working hours, while at a WC-sponsored social event, or while using WC resources such as telephones, mail, e-mail, the Internet, voicemail, or other forms of electronic communication/information systems is a serious violation of WC's policy. Volunteers found to have violated this policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

It is critical that should a volunteer find another's behavior or comments inappropriate or offensive, they should let the person know directly, appropriately and clearly. If unable to directly talk with the offender, the volunteer should inform their supervisor/program leader of the inappropriate behavior. Once an individual has been informed that their behavior is unwelcome, intimidating and/or offensive, such behavior must immediately cease, or corrective action will be taken.

Any volunteer who feels that they are a victim of workplace harassment/violence should immediately follow the complaint procedure below established by WC to enforce its firm belief in zero-tolerance. If a volunteer feels harassed, they should report immediately to their supervisor/program leader.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and is illegal under both Federal and Maine law. Sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of volunteer misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the workplace environment, and is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other like verbal, visual or physical conduct that results in submission being expressed or implied. It is also defined as a conduct that interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

WC has established a zero-tolerance policy regarding any form of sexual harassment, and therefore prohibits unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and all other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or otherwise offensive nature, especially where:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

- Flirtations, propositions and comments which are unwelcome and unsolicited.
- Comments about appearance or clothing which are graphic or degrading.
- Sexual jokes, gestures, and lewd remarks.
- Physical contact which is unwanted and inappropriate, such as touching, hugging, fondling, or kissing.
- Retaliation for complaining about sexual harassment.

WC will not tolerate any form of harassment or inappropriate behavior towards its employees by management, co-workers, volunteers, the public, or other business contacts, including non-employees such as vendors, contractors, temporary agency employees, consultants, and/or customers. If a volunteer feels sexually harassed by a non-employee of WC, they should report it immediately to the supervisor/program leader or Vice President.

Any volunteer who feels that he or she is a victim of harassment, sexual or otherwise, should *immediately* follow the established complaint procedure established by WC to enforce its firm belief in zero-tolerance.

Waterville Creates Workplace Harassment Complaint Procedure

1. Any volunteer who feels that he or she has been the victim of harassment, including sexual harassment, should *immediately* inform the Vice President/President of the incident. This initial report may be oral or written, but a written and signed statement of the complaint must be submitted by the complainant within two (2) days of the initial report before an investigation may proceed.
2. Upon receipt of the written and signed complaint, WC will immediately initiate the investigation by contacting the alleged offender, informing them of the nature of the complaint, and providing them an opportunity to respond to the allegations in a written and signed statement within two (2) days of this initial contact.
3. Upon receipt of the written response, WC will conduct a thorough investigation, maintaining the highest degree of confidentiality that circumstances will allow. Once the investigation is satisfactorily completed, the Vice President will review the summary of the complaint, the response, the facts as they can be determined, and the investigator's recommended action. Upon review, subject to additional investigation including personal interviews of all involved parties, WC will decide the final steps to bring the process to resolution.
4. If it has been determined that the complaint of harassment or sexual harassment is substantive, appropriate corrective action up to and including the termination of the offender's relationship with WC will be taken. Any corrective action taken at this time will be based upon the individual circumstances of the incident, and such action will be final.
5. Should a volunteer fail to follow this policy, this shall be deemed waiver of any action by WC.
6. Should an alleged offender fail to follow this policy through responding to the complaint as required, it will be considered admission of guilt and the appropriate corrective action steps will be taken.
7. WC expressly prohibits any form of retaliation against any volunteer for filing a complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation.

Standards of Conduct with Students/Participants

WC serves a variety of young people in many different capacities. All volunteers are considered to have a professional responsibility for these young people. For purposes of this document, all young people served by WC in any capacity are referred to as “participants.”

All volunteers of WC are expected to maintain the highest professional, moral, and ethical standards in their conduct with participants. Interactions and relationships between WC volunteers and participants should be based upon mutual respect and trust. Volunteers must understand the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Volunteers should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the mission of the schools and other partners. It is understood that volunteers may interact with and have friendships with participants’ families outside of school. This policy is not intended to prohibit such interactions and friendships, provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

The appearance of impropriety can also arise from excessive fraternization between volunteers and participants. Excessive fraternization includes both in-person contact and contact through technology and/or social media.

Violation of this policy by a volunteer is considered a breach of professional ethics and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the volunteer relationship with WC.

Prohibited Conduct Examples of unacceptable conduct by volunteers that is expressly prohibited includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with participants or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under WC policy on harassment or sexual harassment;
- Singling out a participant(s) for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal volunteer/participant relationship;
- Encouraging participants to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a participant initiates such discussions, volunteers are expected to be supportive but to refer the participant to the appropriate guidance/counseling staff person for assistance;
- Sexual banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos with participants;
- Asking a participant to keep a secret;
- Disclosing personal, sexual, family, or other private matters to one or more participant;
- Addressing participants with terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly-friendly manner;
- Permitting participants to address you in an overly-friendly manner
- “Friending” undergraduate participants on social networking sites;
- Communicating with participant about non-WC matters via computer, text message, phone calls, letters, notes, or any other means.
- Being alone with individual participants out of public view;
- Inviting or allowing participants to visit the volunteer’s home (unless the participant’s parent or guardian approves of the activity, such as when a participant babysits for a staff member);
- Visiting a participant at home, unless on official business known to the parent of a participant;

- Socializing or spending time with participants (including, but not limited to, activities such as going out for meals or movies, shopping, and recreational activities) outside of WC-sponsored events or organized community activities.

WC volunteers are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with participants. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss issues with their supervisor whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

Reporting Violations

Volunteers must notify their supervisor and the President, Vice President, and/or Board Chair if they believe a teacher or other volunteer, employee, (or contractor for WC) may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of the policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, the District Attorney, and/or law enforcement.

Corrective Action/Discipline

In many cases, a problem with a volunteer's conduct or performance will not result in immediate termination. A volunteer with a performance or conduct problem will normally be given some form of warning so that he/she will have an opportunity to correct the problem and improve his/her performance.

Except in cases of serious misconduct, WC will try to work with the volunteer to resolve the problem before it reaches the suspension/termination stage. At the same time, there are certain circumstances that are of such a nature that we reserve the right to immediately suspend and/or terminate an volunteer relationship because we believe that continuing the relationship would not be in WC's best interest. Nothing in this policy is intended to alter in any way volunteer rights or WC's right to terminate the relationship at any time, with or without advance notice, and with or without cause.

Attendance and Punctuality

Volunteers are responsible for notifying their supervisor at least one hour before the start of their workday if they are unable to report for their volunteer timeslot as scheduled and expected. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other volunteers, employees and on WC. A volunteer who is frequently absent may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination from the volunteer core.

Since attendance and punctuality are important elements of the volunteer's responsibilities, absenteeism or tardiness that is unexcused and excessive in the judgment of WC may lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of the relationship.

Personal Appearance

Our workplace, as with others, has transitioned into a more business casual environment. Personal choice/business casual is intended to make us more comfortable and a bit more relaxed yet maintain our desired professional appearance.

Our first and foremost objective is still to project a professional appearance in personal choice for business attire.

Customer expectations always come first. When a volunteer meets with patrons, attire should agree with the meeting setting for that customer. Appropriate business attire will be determined by workplace requirements. We expect everyone's dress to reflect our high performance, professional environment. Our intention is to have our team represent the highest level of professionalism that defines WC.

Emergency Evacuation

It is WC's intent to provide a safe workplace for all volunteers, staff, and patrons. If the emergency alarm system is activated, all volunteers, staff and patrons are to immediately evacuate the building. *In the event of an alarm test or emergency drill, an appropriate announcement will be made prior to the test/drill over the intercom system.* If no such announcement is made, you must assume that the alarm was sounded for an actual emergency. In this instance, the senior manager in the building should immediately call 911.

In the event of an actual emergency, everyone should *immediately* stop what they were doing, remain calm and leave their work area. Under any circumstances, please remember that *safety to life should always come first.*

Evacuation Procedures

If you are working with a visitor, please assume responsibility for escorting the individual to safety. If the visitor has a disability, ask an employee for assistance in leading the disabled individual to safety.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event of an emergency, you should calmly and quickly take the safest and most direct route to safety.