

## Volunteer Policy

### 1 Definition of a volunteer with the British Jesuit Archives

A volunteer is a person who freely agrees to give their time and skills to support the activities of the British Jesuit Archives.

They work within clearly defined roles to complement and enhance the activities offered by the service and to add value to the service already provided by paid staff.

### 2 The importance of volunteers to the British Jesuit Archives

By giving their time, energy and skills, volunteers make a valuable contribution to the overall aims of the British Jesuit Archives. Equally, volunteer working can also bring benefits to the volunteers themselves, by enabling them to gain or improve skills, develop interests, and provide enjoyment and social interaction.

### 3 The relationship between the British Jesuit Archives and volunteers

The relationship of a volunteer to the British Jesuit Archives is one of trust, mutual understanding and benefit. Time is given freely and willingly, without expectation of financial reward by the volunteer. It is not a contract of employment.

No enforceable obligation can be imposed on the volunteer to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. Likewise, the British Jesuit Archives cannot be compelled to provide regular work.

The relationship is based on the principle that volunteers add value to the work of the British Jesuit Archives by performing a wide range of roles, and by contributing specialist skills and a flexible approach.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

### 4 Principles for volunteer management

The British Jesuit Archives will always aim for fair and equal treatment for all volunteers.

The British Jesuit Archives aim to match volunteers with suitable projects in line with the overall goals of the Archives and the personal benefit of volunteers.

For volunteers envisaging postgraduate training in Archives and Records Management, the British Jesuit Archives aim to follow the relevant parts of the [guidance issued by FARMER](#)

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(Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research) to organizations providing work experience.

Volunteer work will complement, not replace, the work carried out by employees.

The product of any volunteer work will be the copyright of the British Jesuit Archives, who will have the right to publish the product of any volunteer work in order to further its aim of improving access to the collections.

The British Jesuit Archives when appropriate may provide opportunities for volunteers to work remotely. In such cases, the general principles set out in this policy apply, and particular provision for supervision and contact is made according to circumstances.

A volunteer supervisor will be responsible for providing the necessary induction, training and ongoing development, so that volunteers can be effective in their role.

In return the British Jesuit Archives expect that volunteers will provide their time.

This policy is relevant for all current and potential volunteers, as well as members of staff concerned with supervising volunteers.

### 5 Selection of volunteers

The British Jesuit Archives may take on volunteers who wish to gain work experience in the archive profession, or those who wish to volunteer for other reasons, such as wishing to contribute to the work of the archives. Selection in these instances, which are largely open-ended arrangements, will be applied on a first-come-first-served basis, and according to staff resources. In some instances, the British Jesuit Archives may seek to recruit a volunteer(s) to carry out a specific project with a defined timescale.

Potential volunteers will be invited to a preliminary discussion with the Archivist prior to any volunteer work being offered. This provides an opportunity for informal assessment on both sides and for a consideration of possible options.

Wherever possible, placements will match the volunteers' skills, talents and interests with the voluntary work to be carried out.

Volunteers will be required to sign a volunteer agreement. This will outline the commitment of British Jesuit Archives to the volunteer, and the volunteer's commitment to the service.

The British Jesuit Archives reserves the right not to accept a volunteer, or to terminate an arrangement.

The decision to take on a new volunteer ultimately rests with the major superior of the Jesuits in Britain.

Personal information recorded about volunteers will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality, and will be destroyed at the end of its retention period.

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### 6 Review period

The Archivist will review the placement with the volunteer after 2-3 months, in order to evaluate the arrangements in place. Following the review, the arrangements may be extended, or modified, or ended.

### 7 Support and supervision

The Archivist will be available to answer any questions, concerns or worries that volunteers might have.

The Archivist will discuss progress with volunteers on a regular basis in order to monitor both the progress of the project and the well-being of the volunteers.

Should a volunteer feel unable to discuss questions or concerns with the Archivist, they can contact the Socius (Assistant to the Provincial of the Jesuits in Britain).

### 8 Expenses

The British Jesuit Archives offer a maximum of £15 per day to reimburse travel costs. Copies of all relevant receipts must be provided for accounting purposes.

### 9 Health and safety

The British Jesuit Archives are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of volunteers, and aim to provide them with the information, instruction, supervision and training required.

### 10 Equal opportunities and diversity

The British Jesuit Archives recognise the importance of encouraging diversity and achieving equality among volunteers, as well as employees and users.

Acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role will be made on merit, the sole selection criteria being an individual's suitability to carry out the specified task(s) subject to the needs and restrictions of the location, and their availability in line with the needs of the project. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for a volunteer with a disability.

In general, volunteers should be over the age of 18. On occasion, volunteers under 18 may be recruited for tasks not subject to any legal minimum age. Such volunteers will always be supervised; and written permission from a parent/guardian will be required.

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There is no upper age limit for volunteers. Older volunteers often provide valuable knowledge and experience. However, the British Jesuit Archives would be irresponsible if it permitted volunteers to continue beyond a point where volunteering is detrimental to their own or other people's health and safety.

### 11 Safeguarding

The British Jesuit Archives take the wellbeing of all visitors and workers in the Archives seriously, and abide by the requirements of the overarching [Jesuit Safeguarding Policy](#). Any concern that arises regarding the safety or well-being of an individual while volunteering will be treated seriously, and in accordance with the policy.

### 11 Conduct of volunteers

Whilst volunteering with the British Jesuit Archives, volunteers should follow the rules and procedures of working, including health and safety and equal opportunities set out in the following sections of the Staff Handbook that is made available during induction: § 1.2 of the *Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy*, and § 6 of the *Health and Safety Policy*.

Any serious breach of these policies will result in the volunteer placement being reviewed and potentially discontinued.

### 12 End of volunteering

Voluntary positions should not extend beyond 12 months unless agreed by the British Jesuit Archives and the volunteer at a review at this stage.

Both the volunteer and the British Jesuit Archives have the right to terminate the Volunteer Agreement. While there is no employment relationship and no contractual obligation exists, volunteers should inform the Archivist of their intention.

On occasion it may be necessary for the British Jesuit Archives to end a volunteer's involvement with the service. This may be because the role is no longer needed, or the volunteer is no longer suitable for the role. When this happens the British Jesuit Archives will give due notice.

**Review:** This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Created by Mary Allen, September 2020

Approved by Archives Advisory Committee, October 2020

Next review due in autumn 2023