

## CODE OF CONDUCT - VOLUNTEERS

### Introduction

We as volunteers in the community of Taizé recognise that due to our presence in the community and the nature of our work, we will come into contact with people of different ages, countries, and backgrounds. In order to ensure safety and wellbeing for everyone that comes to Taizé, it is important that volunteers know which guidelines to follow. The intention of this document is not to impose a sense of control or observation, but to promote pastoral concern, encourage action where necessary, and to outline volunteers' responsibilities. Volunteers are often leaders of groups, and therefore have an influence, both positive and negative, on whomever they are working with. It is important to be aware that even when acting with good intentions, some behaviour can still be harmful. In addition to this code of conduct, volunteers are required to be aware of safeguarding reporting procedures.

### General Behaviour Guidelines

As volunteers, we are seen as representatives of the community of Taizé. Volunteers must contribute towards an atmosphere in which all, regardless of their background, culture, or age, are treated with respect. Some behaviours, while not illegal, are inappropriate for this setting.

- It is important to keep the health of the overall community in mind at all times, ensuring that everyone's emotional safety is respected.
- Create a healthy working environment in which tasks are not imposed. Be ready to explain the work, and give participants the ability to perform tasks they are comfortable with.
- Take seriously others' opinions and treat them with respect and empathy. Do not initiate, allow, or ignore instances of bullying, peer pressure, or humiliation.
- Try to always be in view of others and avoid being alone with someone in closed spaces like fridges and vehicles.
- Use appropriate language for the ages with which you are working.
- Sexist, racist, and violent words or actions are not tolerated in any way.
- Do not use sexually suggestive language or be sexually suggestive towards or about anyone. Do not tolerate any behaviour of this kind.
- Avoid practices such as smoking or drinking alcohol during the times of sharing and working. Illegal substances have no place in Taizé at any time.
- Definitions of appropriate physical contact can vary between different cultures. Always ensure that everyone is comfortable in the way you interact physically, being mindful of others' boundaries and consent.
- The use of violence or physical punishment is never acceptable.
- Social media should be used responsibly, making sure that nobody feels pressured to share their contact information. Ensure all the persons present in a picture, video, or recording are aware and have given their consent, even if it is not intended to be shared online.

If there are situations or conflicts that cannot be resolved yourself, don't hesitate to bring up the issue to a group leader or the Brother/Sister/employee responsible.

### **Minors (people under the age of 18)**

As volunteers, we may be seen as role models and should keep that in mind while working with minors. Therefore, additional guidelines apply:

- It is especially important to try to always be in view of others when interacting with minors.
- Touch should be generally initiated by minors and not the volunteer. Ask before you touch someone.
- Never seek or initiate a romantic or sexual relationship with minors.
- Do not take pictures or videos of minors with your personal devices. Do not upload photos or videos of minors to social media.
- Do not ask for or accept any e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, social media/instant messaging usernames, numbers, handles etc. belonging to a minor. Do not make or accept invitations on social media.

### **Brothers, Sisters, Employees**

The General Behaviour Guidelines above apply to interactions with Brothers, Sisters, employees and those working in Taizé in a professional capacity.

- Volunteers recognise that the Brothers and Sisters in Taizé have made a commitment to celibacy and a monastic life. It is important that volunteers respect this commitment.
- Recognise that young Brothers and Sisters are no longer volunteers and they should be given the appropriate space to develop their role in the community.
- Brothers, Sisters, and employees also have a responsibility to the volunteers. It is important that a relationship of mutual respect is maintained. Volunteers have the responsibility to report any concern, whether it has to do with them personally or with anyone else.

### **Volunteers and Community Life**

The General Behaviour Guidelines above also apply to interactions between volunteers. Volunteers share daily life with one another and will form deeper friendships and community. In this context, it is still important to be considerate of one another.

- Living in this community is an opportunity for many to distance themselves from attitudes towards use of alcohol, drugs, and sexual relationships that may be common outside of Taizé. Please be considerate of them when discussing these topics.
- We recognise that romantic relationships may form between volunteers. Pursuing romantic relationships should not be the focus or intention of your stay, and it is important to keep the common life at the core of living in Taizé. Intimate physical contact is not acceptable without explicit consent of both parties.
- Over time, a joke can be hurtful if it's directed repeatedly to the same person. Be attentive that no bullying takes place in any group.
- Make sure to deal with personal issues with other volunteers in a friendly way. Rumours, public shaming or gossiping can lead to unhealthy group dynamics.

*I have read and understood this document. I have shown to the brothers/sisters in charge of the volunteers a Police Records Check OR a Recommendation letter OR the completed Confidential Declaration Form.*

*I wish to share in the responsibility for keeping Taizé as safe a place as possible for all who live, work and visit. I agree to live and behave in this way during my time as a volunteer for the Taizé Community.*

Name:

Signature:

Date and place: