

THE MUSTARD SEED

STREET CHURCH

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO THE MUSTARD SEED



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Hello Everyone,

Welcome, and thank you for being here.

Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another season, we are truly grateful that you have chosen to be part of The Mustard Seed community. Your presence matters. The time, care, and compassion you bring are what make this work possible each and every day.

At the heart of who we are is connection. Connection to one another, to the community we serve, and to the shared belief that everyone deserves dignity, care, and a place to belong. As a volunteer, you are a vital part of that connection. You help create spaces that are welcoming, safe, and rooted in respect.

Across our teams, there is always something in motion. From daily services to special events, from quiet moments of support to large-scale community initiatives, this work is carried forward by people who show up with intention. You are now part of that story.

We know that volunteering is more than just giving time. It is choosing to be present, to listen, to support, and to stand alongside others. It takes heart, and it takes commitment. We do not take that lightly. We are deeply thankful for the role you play in helping us serve our community with compassion and purpose.

As you begin or continue your journey with us, we hope you feel supported, informed, and connected. Take time to get to know the people around you. Ask questions. Share your experiences. This is a community built together, and your voice is part of it.

There is meaningful work ahead, and we are glad you are with us for it.

Thank you for being part of The Mustard Seed.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel Martel". The script is cursive and fluid.

Samuel Martel
Volunteer and Event Manger

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amaral Neto". The script is cursive and fluid.

Amaral Neto
Volunteer and Event Officer

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with The Mustard Seed! We hope you find it as fulfilling as we do, and that you feel welcomed and loved by everyone you meet here. Nothing that we do could happen without volunteers like you, and we couldn't be more excited to have your help in nurturing faith, hope and love throughout the Greater Victoria community.



Since the Mustard Seed was founded over fifty years ago, we have been working tirelessly to fight hunger and restore faith of all kinds to people living in poverty in the Greater Victoria area. Our mission would never have gotten off the ground without the support of generous community donors and volunteers. Today, The Mustard Seed has the privilege of serving thousands of individuals every month through a wealth of programs, including our food rescue, food bank, hospitality, and weekly church services.

This handbook is intended to answer any questions you may have about volunteering at The Mustard Seed and has been developed to help you familiarize yourself with The Mustard Seed as an organization and to provide you with general information about things like working conditions and key policies and procedures.



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Our Vision, Mission, & Values

At The Mustard Seed, our vision, mission, and values are deeply rooted in our faith and commitment to serving others. Outlined below, these three principles drive us to always bring the best of ourselves to the work we do, in the hope that our example will help others do the same.

Our Vision

As followers of Christ, we envision a compassionate community where the cycles of poverty have been broken and lives restored.



Our Mission

Our mission is to build community and maintain relationships, providing essential and transformative services to those in need.

Our Vision, Mission, & Values

Our Values

Christianity: Knowing that love comes from Christ and redemption is the way of God's Kingdom, we serve and lead as a response to that love, shared with our neighbours, a love that pervades everything that we do and are.

Integrity: Knowing that trust is key in all relationships, we act ethically, lead with transparency and are accountable.

Collaboration: Knowing that we are part of a system of care for those we serve, we lead and partner with others to achieve our vision, honouring others' work and bringing our best to those we serve.

Empowerment: Knowing that we are capable of transforming our community for the better, we support those we serve in doing their part, invite our staff and volunteers to create solutions, be adaptable, and take action while respecting and inviting everyone's capabilities.

Safety: Knowing that we are entrusted with precious lives and the health and wholeness of those we serve, we commit to preventing injury, danger, or loss for all in our community.



Programs

The Mustard Seed's programs work together to support individuals and families experiencing food insecurity across Greater Victoria. Through the dedication of volunteers, community partners, and staff, our services provide food, essential supplies, and opportunities for connection, dignity, and care. Over the past year, **2.8 million pounds of food, beverages, hygiene products, and essential items** were distributed, supporting **more than 65,000 individuals each month** through food programs, hospitality services, and hampers. This work is made possible through the generosity of volunteers, who contributed **27,441 hours of service, representing an estimated \$740,907 in community impact.**



Whether preparing meals, sorting food, welcoming guests, or supporting seasonal programs, volunteers play a vital role in ensuring individuals and families facing hardship can access support in a welcoming and respectful environment.

Hospitality Program

From Monday to Friday, our Hospitality Program offers a welcoming space where members of the street community, people accessing our food bank, and anyone in need can receive coffee, snacks, lunch, and a genuine human connection. In 2024, the Hospitality program distributed **over 74,000 pounds of food as hot meals and snacks**, alongside **more than 62,000 cold drinks and countless cups of coffee and tea**, meeting immediate needs while fostering dignity and belonging. Beyond nourishment, the Hospitality Program offers opportunities for **relational and spiritual connection**, recognizing the importance of being seen, heard, and valued. The team facilitates movie nights, art activities, and other community-building events that foster a sense of belonging and joy. Volunteers are encouraged to serve with compassion, integrity, and attentiveness, understanding that consistency, presence, and respect are central to this work. In addition to food and beverage service, the program offers a **free clothing boutique** that supports comfort, dignity, and personal choice.



Volunteer Impact: Your presence helps create a safe, welcoming environment where people are treated with dignity, respect, and genuine care.

Food Bank

The Mustard Seed's market-style Food Bank operates five days a week, offering choice-based access to food for individuals and families across Greater Victoria. In 2024, the Food Bank distributed **over 650,000 pounds of food, drinks, and hygiene products**, supporting household food security with dignity and respect. This distribution equates to an average of **1,511 meals per day**, reflecting the scale and consistency of need in our community.



Clients with kitchen facilities may access the Food Bank once per month, while those without kitchen access may visit twice monthly. The market offers rescued produce, dairy items, baked goods, bread, meat, seafood, packaged foods, and canned goods, with quantities tailored to family size. When available, hygiene products are offered, and children may select books and toys, supporting both physical well-being and healthy development.

Volunteer Impact: You help ensure families can access food in a respectful, choice-based setting that supports dignity and stability.

Food Rescue & Distribution Centre

The Food Rescue and Distribution Centre plays a critical role in reducing food waste while strengthening food security across the region. In the past year, the program distributed a total of **2.8 million pounds of food, beverages, hygiene items, and essential goods** across Mustard Seed programs and partner organizations throughout the region. These efforts supported **70+ social service agencies** across Greater Victoria, allowing partner organizations to focus their time and resources on direct program delivery

Food and essential items are sorted and packaged at the Esquimalt warehouse and distributed to The Mustard Seed's Queens Avenue location and over 60 community partners. Volunteers support food sorting, packaging, and creative food preservation projects, while the warehouse kitchen prepares daily meals for the Hospitality Program. Through its efforts, this program rescues and redistributes more than **1.1 million pounds of edible surplus food each year**, helping reduce waste while strengthening food access across the region.



Volunteer Impact: Your work helps reduce food waste while extending the reach of food security services across the entire community.

The Fair Start Program supports children and families as they prepare for the new school year, helping ensure students begin September with confidence, dignity, and the supplies they need to succeed. In 2024, Fair Start provided **600 children** with essential back-to-school support, including **new, high-quality shoes, grocery gift cards, and school supplies**. Volunteers are essential to this program, assisting with sorting supplies and shoes, preparing the venue, and supporting families during distribution. Registration opens in the summer months, with distribution in late August. Fair Start is made possible through the generosity of community donors and local businesses whose financial and in-kind contributions help remove barriers for families across Greater Victoria.



Volunteer Impact: You help children start the school year feeling prepared, confident, and cared for.

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Christmas Hamper Program (Seasonal)

The Christmas Hamper Program brings warmth, dignity, and relief to individuals and families during the holiday season. In 2024, the program delivered **gifts, toys, and food items to 1,842 people**, ensuring families could celebrate the holidays with less stress and greater joy.



Families register in early fall, allowing for thoughtful planning and smooth distribution ahead of Christmas. Volunteers support every stage of the program, from sorting donations and preparing the space to assisting families during the event. Through donor generosity and volunteer commitment, the program creates meaningful moments of care and connection during a season that can be particularly challenging for those experiencing financial hardship.

Volunteer Impact: You help ensure the holiday season is marked by dignity, generosity, and belonging for families in our community.

Christmas Celebration (Seasonal)

Our annual Christmas Luncheon officially kicks off the holiday season in November with energy and celebration. In partnership with the Bay Street Armoury, we transformed the space into a welcoming pop-up restaurant, complete with live performances that created a warm and festive atmosphere for our guests. Over the course of the celebration, **more than 900 meals were served**, guests enjoying a traditional holiday meal, live music, and festive activities made possible through volunteer support. Volunteers played a vital role in every stage of the celebration and will continue to have meaningful opportunities to get involved by assisting with food preparation in the days leading up to the event and by serving and welcoming community members during the luncheon itself.



Volunteer Impact: You help ensure the holiday season is marked by dignity, generosity, and belonging for families in our community.



The Community Engagement Program reflects The Mustard Seed's commitment to building meaningful relationships throughout the Greater Victoria community. This work extends beyond our walls, creating opportunities to connect with individuals, businesses, schools, and community partners while raising awareness and strengthening support for our mission.

Activities vary throughout the year and may include supporting fundraising initiatives, participating in parades and public events, assisting with donation pickups, helping with school or community presentations, and supporting food and supply drives. Volunteers may also assist with event setup, logistics, and representing The Mustard Seed at community events.

Through outreach and engagement, volunteers help strengthen partnerships, increase awareness of our work, and foster goodwill across the broader community

Volunteer Impact: Your involvement helps build community awareness, strengthen partnerships, and generate the support needed to sustain programs that serve individuals and families across our region.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



At The Mustard Seed, we are committed to fostering a community where all individuals are welcomed, respected, and treated with dignity. We do not discriminate against staff, volunteers, or community members based on race, religious affiliation, skin colour, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or any sensory, mental, or physical ability.

We recognize that every person brings unique experiences, perspectives, and strengths. By valuing and honouring these differences, we cultivate an environment rooted in mutual respect, collaboration, and shared understanding. This commitment supports meaningful connection, strengthens our service to the community, and reflects our responsibility to create a safe and inclusive space for all.

Discrimination, exclusion, or disrespectful behaviour **is not tolerated** and will be addressed in alignment with our professional boundaries and safety expectations.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers Have the Right To:

- Work in a **safe and healthy environment**, including the right to be informed of hazards and to refuse unsafe work
- Be treated with **respect, dignity, and fairness** in all interactions
- Receive **clear role expectations**, training, and meaningful opportunities to contribute
- Have their **voices, ideas, and feedback valued** in relation to their role or program
- Give and receive feedback in a **constructive and timely manner**
- Ask for and receive **guidance and support** from their supervisor when needed
- Be **reasonably accommodated** for ability needs to safely and effectively complete assigned tasks

Volunteers Have a Responsibility To:

- Act with **respect and compassion** toward the people we serve, fellow volunteers, staff, and community partners
- Conduct themselves with **integrity, accountability, and professionalism**
- Carry out the duties of their role as outlined in the position description, reliably and to the best of their ability
- Follow all **organizational policies, procedures, and safety guidelines**
- Communicate promptly with their supervisor if they are unable to attend a shift or fulfill assigned responsibilities
- Contribute to a culture of **collaboration and continuous improvement** by sharing suggestions or concerns when appropriate

These shared rights and responsibilities help create a safe, welcoming, and effective environment where everyone can contribute to the work of caring for our community.

Code of Conduct

The Mustard Seed is more than a place of service. It is a faith-rooted community united by a shared commitment to compassion, dignity, and care for our neighbours. Our work reflects God's love in action and is expressed through respectful relationships, responsible service, and professional conduct.

As a volunteer, you agree to uphold the following standards:

Compassion & Community

- Treat all community members, volunteers, and staff with kindness, humility, patience, and respect
- Foster unity and contribute to a welcoming, inclusive environment
- Honour the dignity and lived experiences of those we serve

Respect & Integrity

- Use professional and appropriate language at all times
- Follow the dress standards outlined in this handbook
- Maintain confidentiality regarding all personal and organizational information

Safety & Boundaries

- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all interactions
- Support a safe physical and emotional environment
- Abstain from drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances while serving
- Do not have relationships with clients

Collaboration & Accountability

- Receive direction and feedback with openness and professionalism
- Work cooperatively with staff and fellow volunteers
- Communicate promptly when support or clarification is needed



Code of Conduct

Commitment & Reliability

Volunteers play an essential role in program consistency and community care. We ask that volunteers make all reasonable efforts to:

- Arrive on time for scheduled shifts
- Serve for the full duration of their commitment
- Notify their supervisor if they expect to be late

If unable to attend a shift due to illness or emergency, volunteers should contact their supervisor as soon as possible. **A minimum of 24 hours' notice is appreciated whenever feasible.**

Consistent attendance supports both the team and the community we serve. If a volunteer misses three consecutive scheduled shifts without notice, they will be transitioned out of their assigned role and moved into an All-Rounder role, supporting areas of greatest need.

Volunteers in the All-Rounder role may be assigned to different tasks or locations based on daily operational priorities. Those who wish to return to a consistent, scheduled role are encouraged to reconnect with their supervisor or Volunteer Manager.

We recognize that unexpected situations can arise and encourage open communication so we can best support both our volunteers and our programs

Representation

Promote a positive and respectful image of The Mustard Seed

Act in ways that reflect our mission, values, and commitment to service

There is **NO smoking/vaping on the MSSC premises**. Designated areas will be shown when requested.

By upholding this Code of Conduct, volunteers help ensure The Mustard Seed remains a safe, respectful, and compassionate community for all.



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT PREVENTION

Workplace

The workplace includes any space where Mustard Seed work is carried out, including Mustard Seed property, partner locations, and public spaces during organized activities. All professional boundaries and behavioural expectations apply whenever volunteers or staff are acting in their role.

Workplace violence includes:

- The use or attempted use of physical force against a volunteer, staff member or community member
- Threatening statements or behaviours that a reasonable person would interpret as a risk of physical harm are considered **verbal violence**

Any behaviour that compromises physical safety must be taken seriously and reported to a supervisor immediately.



Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of who they are. This can be intentional or unintentional and may include creating barriers, adding extra challenges, or limiting access to opportunities or support. Discrimination does not have to be the only reason for a decision. It only needs to be one part of it.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT PREVENTION

Harassment

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment or bullying is **any behaviour, comment, or action** that is known, or should reasonably be known, to be unwelcome and that creates an intimidating, humiliating, or unsafe environment. This may include verbal, physical, or non-verbal behaviour. Harassment and bullying are **not permitted** by anyone on Mustard Seed property, including community members, volunteers, staff, donors, or members of the public. Volunteers are encouraged to address concerns when safe to do so or to report them to a supervisor if they are uncomfortable addressing the situation directly.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome behaviour, comment, or action of a sexual nature that creates discomfort, intimidation, or an unsafe environment. This includes verbal, physical, or non-verbal conduct. Sexual harassment violates professional boundaries and will be addressed promptly and seriously.

Discrimination and Inclusivity

The Mustard Seed is committed to respect and inclusivity.

Discrimination or unequal treatment based on personal characteristics is not acceptable. All individuals are to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect, regardless of background or identity.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT PREVENTION

Your Role as a Volunteer

Volunteers play an important role in maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

This includes:

- Always upholding professional boundaries
- Using respectful, appropriate language and behaviour
- Reporting violence, harassment, bullying, or discrimination to a supervisor
- Supporting a culture where people feel safe to speak up

Creating a safe environment is a **shared responsibility**, and support is always available through supervisors and the Volunteer Management Team.

Procedure if Harassment Occurs

The Mustard Seed is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all volunteers, staff, and community members. Concerns related to harassment, bullying, discrimination, or boundary violations are taken seriously and are addressed **case by case**, with care, fairness, and confidentiality.

1. Address the Behaviour (If Appropriate)

If you feel safe and comfortable, you may address the behaviour directly and communicate that it is unwelcome. This step is encouraged but not required, particularly if doing so feels unsafe or inappropriate.

2. Report and Seek Support

If the concern cannot be resolved directly, or if you prefer support, report it to your **supervisor or the Volunteer Manager** as soon as possible. Early reporting allows for better support, clearer documentation, and more effective resolution.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT PREVENTION

Informal Resolution

Some concerns may be addressed through an **informal process**, depending on the nature and severity of the situation.

- Typically expressed **verbally**
- Focuses on clarification, guidance, mediation, and boundary-setting
- Aims to restore a respectful environment
- **Does not involve a formal investigation**

Informal resolution is appropriate when safety is not immediately at risk and when education or facilitated conversation may resolve the concern.

Formal Complaint Process

If the concern is serious, ongoing, unresolved informally, or if the complainant chooses to proceed formally, a formal complaint may be submitted.

- Must be provided in writing
- Initiates a formal investigation
- Involves information gathering from relevant parties
- The individual named in the complaint will be informed and given an opportunity to respond

Formal complaints should be submitted as soon as possible, ideally within the first week of the most recent incident. Whenever the report is made, we will handle it with the same care as we do with immediate reporting. The sooner the incident is reported, the better we can support you.

Confidentiality

All concerns, whether informal or formal, are handled with strict confidentiality and shared only with those directly involved in addressing the matter. Maintaining confidentiality protects everyone involved and supports a fair process.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Minimum Age

Volunteers **must be 16 years of age or older to serve independently**, particularly in roles involving direct engagement with vulnerable community members. Individuals under the age of 16 may participate in age-appropriate volunteer opportunities when accompanied by a parent or guardian and serving within supervised roles that align with safety and professional boundaries expectations. Participation for younger children and teens is typically limited to organized school groups or special events where appropriate supervision and structure are in place.



Record Keeping

All volunteers are required to sign in and out for each scheduled shift. Department supervisors will provide instructions on the appropriate process.

Accurate record keeping supports:

- Resource planning and program coordination
- Impact measurement and reporting
- Grant and funding requirements
- Volunteer recognition and appreciation
- Legal compliance, transparency, and accountability

GENERAL VOLUNTEER POLICIES



Dress Code

While there is no formal uniform, volunteers are expected to maintain a casual yet professional appearance that reflects respect for the community and the organization.

Volunteers are encouraged to wear:

- Comfortable, informal clothing suitable for active service
- Attire appropriate for working in environments where clothing may become dirty

Please avoid:

- Short skirts, very low-cut tops, tank tops or revealing clothing (holes or sheer)
- Clothing with inflammatory imagery or language
- Strong scents
- For safety purposes, closed-toe shoes **are required in designated service areas.**

These policies help ensure a safe, respectful, and values-aligned environment where volunteers can serve with integrity, dignity, and care.

Speaking on Behalf of The Mustard Seed & Social Media Guidelines

Speaking on Behalf of The Mustard Seed

Volunteers may not act as official spokespersons for The Mustard Seed unless formally designated by the **Development Director or Executive Director**. Volunteers are welcome to speak positively about their volunteer experiences in informal settings, such as conversations with friends and family.

However, participation in the following requires prior staff awareness and authorization:

- Media interviews
- Public speaking engagements
- Formal presentations or panels
- Statements representing organizational positions or data



If a volunteer is invited to speak in a formal capacity about their involvement with The Mustard Seed, they must notify the **development director** in advance. The director will provide guidance, key messaging, and relevant information, such as program updates, current initiatives, and fundraising priorities, to ensure accuracy and alignment.



Speaking on Behalf of The Mustard Seed & Social Media Guidelines

Social Media Guidelines

Social media can be a meaningful way to raise awareness, inspire involvement, and highlight community care. However, in our work here, we want to ensure nothing online affects our reputation or our standing in the community. Volunteers are required to use good judgment while posting on any social media platform related to or about MSSC.

Volunteers may:

- Follow and engage with official Mustard Seed social media accounts
- Share general positive volunteer experiences
- Tag official pages where appropriate
- Post event photos that meet consent and privacy guidelines

Volunteers must ensure that all content shared:

- Protects the dignity and confidentiality of community members
- Does not include identifying information without consent
- Reflects professionalism and respect
- Aligns with The Mustard Seed's mission and values

Photography & Media Consent

All photos, videos, or recorded stories must follow The Mustard Seed's Photography & Media Consent Policy. Volunteers may not capture or share images or media involving community members without prior consent and organizational authorization. Protecting personal information is a shared responsibility and essential to maintaining a safe, respectful, and values-aligned community.

Privacy & Personal Information Policy

Collection & Use of Personal Information

Personal information may be collected and used for the following purposes:

- Volunteer application and recruitment
- Screening for suitability to work with vulnerable populations
- Scheduling, communication, and shift coordination
- Notifying volunteers of training and new opportunities
- Statistical reporting (detached from personal identifiers where possible)
- Accommodation of disabilities, illnesses, or injuries
- Training, development, and program support
- Volunteers provide consent for the collection and use of their personal information as part of their engagement.

Consent & Disclosure

Consent will be requested for any new or additional use of personal information.

Information will only be disclosed:

- To meet funder reporting requirements (in aggregate or anonymized form where possible)
- When legally required (e.g., subpoena, warrant, court order, or government request)

No personal volunteer information will be shared with external organizations or companies without prior explicit consent.



Privacy & Personal Information Policy

Storage & Retention

Personal information is securely stored:

- Digitally within the Better Impact volunteer management system
- Physically (when legally required) in locked files managed by the Volunteer Manager

Access is limited to authorized personnel and only when necessary.

Volunteer records are retained in accordance with legal requirements.

After the retention period, records are securely destroyed or anonymized for statistical purposes.

Volunteer Responsibility & Confidentiality

Volunteers may have access to confidential information related to:

- Community members
- Staff and fellow volunteers
- Programs, meetings, and training content
- Organizational or financial information

Volunteers are required to protect this information, maintain confidentiality, and uphold all related agreements and professional boundaries.

Volunteers may occasionally be invited to support storytelling efforts that share the impact of The Mustard Seed's work and engage donors or the broader community.

In these situations:

- Permission must always be obtained before sharing a community member's story, image, or experience
- Participation must be voluntary and informed
- No identifying details may be shared without organizational approval
- Respecting privacy while sharing impact is essential to preserving dignity and trust.

Resignation, Dismissals & Complaints

Resignation

Volunteers who wish to resign are encouraged to provide as much notice as possible, preferably 2-weeks. Advance notice allows supervisors to plan for coverage, recruit and train replacements, and maintain service continuity for the community.

While we understand that personal circumstances vary, volunteers are asked to communicate their resignation directly to their supervisor as soon as they are able. Any notice provided is appreciated and reflects respect for the shared work and commitments of the organization.

As part of the offboarding process, volunteers may be invited to participate in an **exit interview**. Exit interviews help The Mustard Seed better understand the volunteer experience, identify opportunities for growth, and strengthen future volunteer engagement practices. Participation is voluntary, and all feedback is received in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Supervisors remain available to support volunteers through the transition process and answer any questions related to the conclusion of their service.

Suspensions / Dismissals

The Mustard Seed reserves the right to suspend or dismiss volunteers whose actions do not align with organizational policies, professional boundaries, or role expectations, or the organization's mission and vision. Volunteer supervisors and the Volunteer Management team are responsible for ensuring volunteers understand expectations, behavioural standards, and potential consequences for misconduct or boundary violations.

Resignation, Dismissal & Complaints

Immediate Grounds for Dismissal

The following actions may result in immediate termination:

- Illegal, violent, or unsafe behaviour
- Theft or misuse of organizational funds, property, or equipment
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while volunteering
- Any behaviour that causes harm to community members, volunteers, or staff

Immediate dismissal may occur without prior warning due to the seriousness of these violations.



Review Period

All volunteers after an incident will serve a probationary period of 4 shifts. By the fourth shift, a follow-up may not be needed or may not apply. Depending on the severity of concerns, volunteers may receive limited or no warnings before dismissal.

Resignation, Dismissal & Complaints

Progressive Accountability

(Applies outside probation and immediate dismissal cases)



1. Verbal Conversation

Concerns related to conduct, performance, or boundaries will first be addressed through a verbal conversation with the department manager. This provides an opportunity to discuss the situation, understand any contributing factors, and work toward a positive resolution.

2. Formal Warning

If concerns continue, a written warning may be issued and placed in the volunteer's file. Volunteers will be informed by the department supervisor and may submit a written or email response to the Volunteer Manager and department supervisor within one week of receiving the notice.

3. Accountability Meeting

Volunteers are typically provided opportunities to improve following feedback. If concerns persist, a meeting with the department manager and Volunteer Manager will be arranged to review the situation and determine next steps. These may include an improvement plan, role adjustment, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

Resignation, Dismissal & Complaints

Returning to Volunteer

We understand that life circumstances change, and volunteers may need to step away from service.

Volunteers who have been away for more than three months are encouraged to reconnect with the Volunteer Management team to explore current opportunities and next steps for returning.

In some cases:

- A doctor's note may be requested when returning from a medical leave
- Volunteers returning following accountability concerns may be asked to sign an improvement plan and participate in a check-in after three shifts to support a successful transition

We are committed to supporting volunteers as they re-engage in a way that is both positive and sustainable.

Complaints & Reporting Procedures

The Mustard Seed is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and accountable environment. Volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns in good faith without fear of retaliation or reprisal. All complaints are handled confidentially, with information shared only as necessary to address and resolve the concern.

Complaints found to be made in bad faith may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Please review our "Procedure if Harassment Occurs" section for reporting complaints.



PARKING & BELONGINGS

Queens Ave

We recommend leaving valuables at home. Your supervisor can advise you on secure places to store your belongings. There is no designated parking area for volunteers at the Queens Ave office, but there is an abundance of free 2-hour street parking available both on Queens Ave and behind the building on Princess Ave. There is also paid parking along Government St. Furthermore, our offices are a short walk from many bus stops.



Viewfield Rd

There is a small parking lot in front of our Viewfield Rd warehouse available for volunteer use on a first-come, first-served basis. Most volunteers at Viewfield keep their belongings tucked away in a cupboard or shelf near the station where they work. The front door to the building is always locked, making the building quite secure. You are also welcome to keep your belongings in the lunchroom at the Viewfield warehouse, and lockers are available for your use (volunteers who wish to use the lockers are responsible for providing their own locks). We recommend that you leave any valuables at home and check with your supervisor if you have any uncertainty about storage or security.

Volunteer Care, Support & Benefits

Care & Support

Volunteers can expect to be treated with fairness, respect, and compassion. Supervisors and the Volunteer Management team are available to provide guidance, encouragement, and support, including helping volunteers access resources, navigate challenges, and feel equipped to serve. We recognize the importance of relational and spiritual care within our ministry.

Volunteers may request prayer or pastoral support at any time, in alignment with individual comfort levels. Where appropriate, volunteers may be invited to participate in individual check-ins to reflect on their experience, identify support needs, and explore opportunities for growth. For rest during your shift, volunteers are encouraged to use designated break spaces, including the **Breakroom at Viewfield Rd** and the **Volunteer Lounge at Queens Ave.**

Priority Access to Opportunities

Active volunteers receive first access to sign up for special events and seasonal service opportunities. This includes community celebrations, fundraising initiatives, outreach events, and holiday programs. Priority sign-up ensures volunteers have early access to meaningful, high-impact service opportunities across our ministry.



Volunteer Care, Support & Benefits

Training & Development

Volunteers may have access to various training that strengthens skills, confidence, and service capacity. Training opportunities may include role-specific learning, safety practices, and community care approaches aligned with our values.



Meals & Hospitality

Volunteers serving at Queens Ave and Viewfield Rd are invited to enjoy meals prepared through our hospitality programs.

Fresh lunches are available daily, prepared by our kitchen team. Breakfast sandwiches are often available for Viewfield Rd morning volunteers. These shared meals provide nourishment and foster community among volunteers and staff.

Volunteer Care, Support & Benefits

References

To support volunteers in their personal and professional development, The Mustard Seed may provide: Hours certification letters confirming service contributions and outlining role impact. Requests can be made by emailing the Volunteer Manager following an established period of service.



Heart of the Community and Anniversaries

We seek to recognize and honour volunteers who demonstrate exceptional commitment and care in their service through our “Heart of the Community” recognition. This bi-monthly acknowledgement highlights individuals who consistently show up with reliability, contribute with a positive and collaborative spirit, take initiative, go above and beyond in their role, and represent The Mustard Seed with professionalism and integrity. Recognized volunteers will be featured in our volunteer newsletter, celebrating their meaningful impact within their teams and across the broader community. We also take time to recognize service milestones, honouring the ongoing dedication and commitment of volunteers throughout their journey with us.



Volunteer Care, Support & Benefits

Volunteer Food Support

The Mustard Seed recognizes that volunteers may at times require food assistance. When resources allow, eligible volunteers may access a food hamper in a manner that reflects dignity, fairness, and responsible stewardship of donated goods.

Eligibility

Volunteers must complete 40 hours of service before accessing a volunteer hamper.

To request support:

- Queens Ave volunteers may connect with Shyloa
- Viewfield Rd volunteers may connect with Erin
- Volunteers in other areas may speak with their supervisor for introduction and guidance

Designated staff will provide orientation on availability and hamper guidelines.



Stewardship Expectations

All volunteer hampers must:

- Be approved by a supervisor or designated lead
- Follow current hamper-building guidelines
- Use only items identified as available for volunteer access

Priority for all donations remains with Food Bank guests and Food Share Network partners.

- Volunteers must not take food from trucks or donation bins, pallets, warehouse storage, sorting stations, or inventory designated for partner organizations.
- **Do not take any donated non-food items without staff approval.**

Through care, recognition, nourishment, and shared support, we honour the vital role volunteers play in advancing The Mustard Seed's mission and serving our community with compassion and integrity.

Volunteer Care, Support & Benefits

Mental Health Support

Support is available to all volunteers through Sparrow's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This service provides access to mental health resources and support when you need it.

How to Register

1. Download the Sparrow app from your app store or visit mysparrow.ca and select Sign Up
2. Choose Through an employer or organization
3. Enter the organization code:
SPARROWEAP
4. Complete the registration process as prompted
5. Once registered, you will have access to Sparrow's mental health services.



Confidentiality

Sparrow is completely private and confidential. Any information you share through the platform is secure and will not impact your role as a volunteer.

CONTACT AND ROLE INFORMATION

Here at The Mustard Seed, you'll report to the primary supervisor of your program. Please find their contact information below. For general concerns, or if you can't contact your supervisor, contact Sam Martel or Amaral Neto, volunteer manager and coordinator, at volunteer@mustardseed.ca or 778-677-23033.

Food Security & Distribution Centre (Viewfield Warehouse)

Erin Black

erin@mustardseed.ca

Chef Chris Hammer

foodrescue@mustardseed.ca

Trevor Premack

trevor@mustardseed.ca

Guest Services & Market Place

Shyloa Holmes

shyloa@mustardseed.ca

Hospitality

Rhiannon Porcellato

rhiannon@mustardseed.ca

Mandy Wilson

mandy@mustardseed.ca





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