



## Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities - January 2023

### Background

Pigweed Food Co-operative, trading as Thoughtful Foods, relies on the time and efforts of volunteers. The following rights and responsibilities apply to volunteers at Thoughtful Foods.

### Rights

As a volunteer for Thoughtful Foods, you have the right to:

- Appropriate orientation and training relevant to your role
- A healthy, safe, and welcoming workplace
- Appropriate and adequate insurance coverage
- A well-defined job description, or well-defined description of tasks
- Appropriate support and management
- Access policies pertaining to volunteers and your role
- Access information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures
- Be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the co-op if negotiated and approved prior to expenses being incurred, and
- Be advised on opportunities to participate in co-op decisions.

### Responsibilities

As a volunteer for Thoughtful Foods, **you must:**

Firstly, ensure your membership is current (i.e., renew by the end of the grace period) and log your volunteer hours promptly (at the end of your shift or completion of your project task).

**Be considerate**

You will be working as part of a team of volunteers. Your work will be used, and influenced, by other people. Any decision volunteers take may affect shoppers, members and volunteers and the team should take those consequences into account when making decisions.

**Be respectful**

Thoughtful Food's volunteers and members treat one another with respect. Everyone can make a valuable contribution. Volunteers may not always agree, but disagreement is no excuse for poor behaviour or poor manners. It's important to remember that a community where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not a productive one. Thoughtful Foods expects volunteers to be respectful when dealing with people.

**Be collaborative**

Collaboration is central to our work. This collaboration involves individuals working with others in teams within the co-op, and working on other internal and external projects. This collaboration reduces redundancy, and improves the quality of our work: we should always be open to collaboration.

**Be responsible and reliable**

Thoughtful Foods is a food co-op that aims to provide for the community that we are in. To be able to safely do so, it is important for all volunteers to attend all necessary training as well as to adhere to Thoughtful Foods policies. Volunteers must not make decisions about offers, products, membership, etc. outside of Thoughtful Foods policies and procedures (any queries should be referred to Directors).

Additionally, to ensure the smooth running of Thoughtful Foods, it is important for all volunteers to attend their rostered shifts and/or complete their assigned tasks on time. Otherwise, it is important for the volunteer to self-arrange, in consultation with the Volunteers and Training Coordinator, a replacement. Volunteers should also allow sufficient time (at least a week, or at least 24 hours in exceptional circumstances) to arrange for a replacement. It is also important to respond to messages from the Volunteers and Training Coordinator in a timely manner.

**Resolve differences gracefully**

In most cases, disagreements should be resolved directly and respectfully. In cases where that is not possible, the Thoughtful Foods Grievance Policy should be followed. It is your responsibility to contact a member of the Grievance team if you require the assistance of the formal process.

For more detailed information about the formal process of Grievance resolution, our current Grievance Policy can be found on the Thoughtful Foods website under 'Policies.'

**If unsure, seek assistance**

Projects occasionally go off the rails because individuals feel embarrassed to ask for help. Even if you think your question seems stupid or that you should know the answer, please ask. Asking questions avoids many problems down the road, and so questions are encouraged. If someone asks you a question, be responsive and helpful.

We have a Volunteer Whatsapp group. Please contact this group if you need help while on a shift, need someone to replace you on a shift, or have other questions related to volunteering.

**Step down considerately**

Members of every project come and go. When somebody leaves or disengages from the project, in whole or in part, they should do so in a way that minimises disruption to the project. This means they should tell people they are leaving and take the proper steps to ensure that others can pick up where they left off, which may include returning keys and any other materials in your possession which belong to Thoughtful Foods.

If you are no longer able to keep volunteering regularly, you must give the Volunteers and Training Coordinator no less than two weeks advance notice. Additionally, you should give appropriate notice to any other Coordinator who is overseeing your work.

**Data confidentiality**

The data maintained by the Co-op in its offices and its systems is sensitive. You should accept that your access to Thoughtful Foods data and other systems will be limited on a strictly need-to-know basis. If you are given access to confidential material you must maintain its confidentiality, even after you have left the organisation. It is your responsibility to keep your login details private, and ensure you log in and out of systems when exiting a space.

**Developing procedures and related issues**

Even if it's not obvious at the time, your contributions will impact on the work of others. Making changes to procedures, computer systems, infrastructure, policy and documentation without appropriate consultation and implementation planning may negatively impact on the work of others. If you have ideas about improving procedures, bring them to the appropriate meeting (coordinator/director) for discussion and approval before making any changes.

Endorsed by:

Amy Geddes, Belinda Xie, Monika Baumann, Zenah Bradford-Hartke

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Signature Directors

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