



CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF SONOMA COUNTY

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Welcome!

Dear volunteers of the Children's Museum of Sonoma County,

I am honored to welcome you to our Museum, where we strive to inspire curiosity and creativity in children of all ages. As the CEO and Founder, I am incredibly grateful for your dedication and willingness to donate your time and energy to support our mission.

Our Museum is a place where children can explore, learn, and discover in a safe and nurturing environment. With your help, we can continue to offer engaging exhibits, educational programs, and hands-on activities that foster a love of learning and a passion for discovery.

As a volunteer, you play an essential role in the success of our Museum. Whether you are greeting guests at the front desk, leading a workshop, or helping to maintain the facility, your contributions make a difference.

We are committed to providing you with a meaningful and fulfilling volunteer experience. Our team is here to support you and ensure that you have the tools, resources, and training you need to succeed. Thank you again for your generosity and dedication to the Children's Museum of Sonoma County. Together, we can make a positive impact on the lives of the children and families in our community.

Sincerely,

Collette Michaud

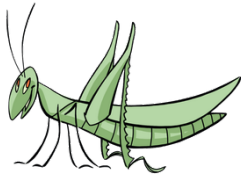
MISSION STATEMENT

The Children's Museum of Sonoma County
inspires curiosity and creativity through joyful,
transformative experiences.

Our mascot Mary & her friends



Mary



Salta



Abbey



Gus



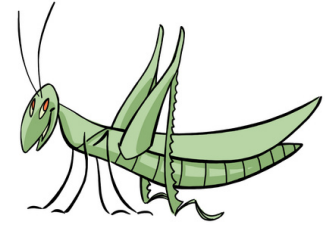
Ari



Cara



Museum History & Timeline



2005:

A group of Sonoma County mothers inaugurated plans for a children's museum, addressing the need for a local place for parents, grandparents, and teachers to provide children with enriched, learning experiences. Faced with increasing budget cuts to science and art programs within schools, this educated team established Children's Museum of Sonoma County (CMOSC) as a federal 501(c)(3) corp. Without funding from outside groups or donors, they launched the Museum-on-the-Go (MOG) mobile science and art outreach program.

2008:

The Junior League of Napa-Sonoma provided the first seed funding to officially sponsor MOG, expanding outreach across the county. CMOSC launched the Founding Family program – more than 100 families committed to the vision over the next three years.

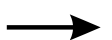
DECEMBER 2010:

The Museum signed a thirty-year lease for two existing buildings on 4.2 acres located at 1835 West Steele Lane, adjacent to the Charles M. Schulz Museum.

2012:

The Museum team launched an \$8.3M capital campaign, which included a state grant as well as additional funding to build the permanent Museum. The Ella Bisbee Foundation was the first major seed funder for the capital campaign when they approached the Museum about a legacy gift of an art room.

Continued



Museum History & Timeline

2014:

The Museum opened Mary's Garden to the public. This was the first phase of the capital campaign. "Mary's Garden" was named after the Spanish word "mariposa" which means "butterfly".

JUNE 2015:

The Science & Imagination Gallery opened to the public with indoor exhibits offering a variety of interactive experiences for children. This indoor area of the Museum was made possible by a generous \$1M stakeholder gift from the Ernest L. and Ruth W. Finley Foundation.

PRESENT:

The CMOSC campus includes over 7,000sq ft of existing interior space, coupled with 36,000sq ft of outdoor exhibits. All exhibits are devoted to science, art or nature, with a specific emphasis in Mary's Garden on environmental sustainability, water conservation and renewable energies. Construction of a new wing, to accommodate our growing community and funded through numerous contributions from that community, began in 2026 and is scheduled to finish in 2028



Museum Accolades

Named in “The Top 10 Museums in the Bay Area, According to Thousands of Reviews” in the San Francisco Chronicle 2026

**San Francisco
Chronicle**

Named in “The Best Children’s Museums in the U.S.” Conde Nast Travler

**Condé Nast
Traveler**

Voted “Best Children’s Museum” by the Northbay Bohemian 14 years in a row, 2010 – 2026

BOHEMIAN

Voted “Best Place to Take Kids in Sonoma County” by the Press Democrat, 2018, 2022-2026

The Press Democrat

Voted “Best Place in the World for Kids to Play That is not a Playground” by Landscape Architects Network, 2016

LAND
landscape architects network

Top Things to Do in Sonoma County with Kids, Sunset Magazine, 2018

Sunset

Voted “Best Children’s Education Center” and “Best Children’s Museum” by The Bohemian for 10 consecutive years



Voted “Top 3 Places to See in Santa Rosa” by Three Best Rated, 2019



WHO WE SERVE

The Children's Museum of Sonoma County serves families from all around the Bay Area.

Our experiences are designed for children ages 0-10 years of age, but many older children enjoy the Museum and our special events.

The Museum welcomes 200,000 visitors a year.



Museum Exhibits

The Museum site and programming allows us to facilitate and engage with the families that visit. Exhibits are focused on science, art, or nature. The outdoor exhibit garden has a specific focus on environmental sustainability, water conservation, and renewable energies.

Exhibits can be categorized into one of five main areas of the Museum:

Science and Imagination Gallery (SIG)

On June 20th, 2015 the Children's Museum opened the Ernest L. and Ruth W. Finley Foundation Science and Imagination Gallery. Interactive exhibits within this area of the Museum are designed for hands-on play, perfect for families with children ages 10 years and younger.



TOTopia

TOTopia is our interactive play space custom-designed for infants and toddlers 35" and smaller (2 ½ years and younger). TOTopia is a no shoe zone for safety reasons. The entry invites visitors to take off their shoes and store them neatly in the cubbies provided.



Ella's Art Studio

Children of all ages will find plenty of ways to express their creativity in Ella's Arts Studio. Artistic themes are presented, offering wonderful ways for children to create with and experience various media and materials. With an emphasis on collaboration, projects are simple and geared toward success and a feeling of confidence and accomplishment no matter what age or ability.



Mary's Garden

Mary's Garden opened in 2014 and acted as the main Museum campus for one year. It houses the Museum's sensory farm garden, an Imagination Playground (big blue blocks), water tables, Little Russian River exhibit, Megaflora, the Noodle Forest and our Mechanical Waterway.

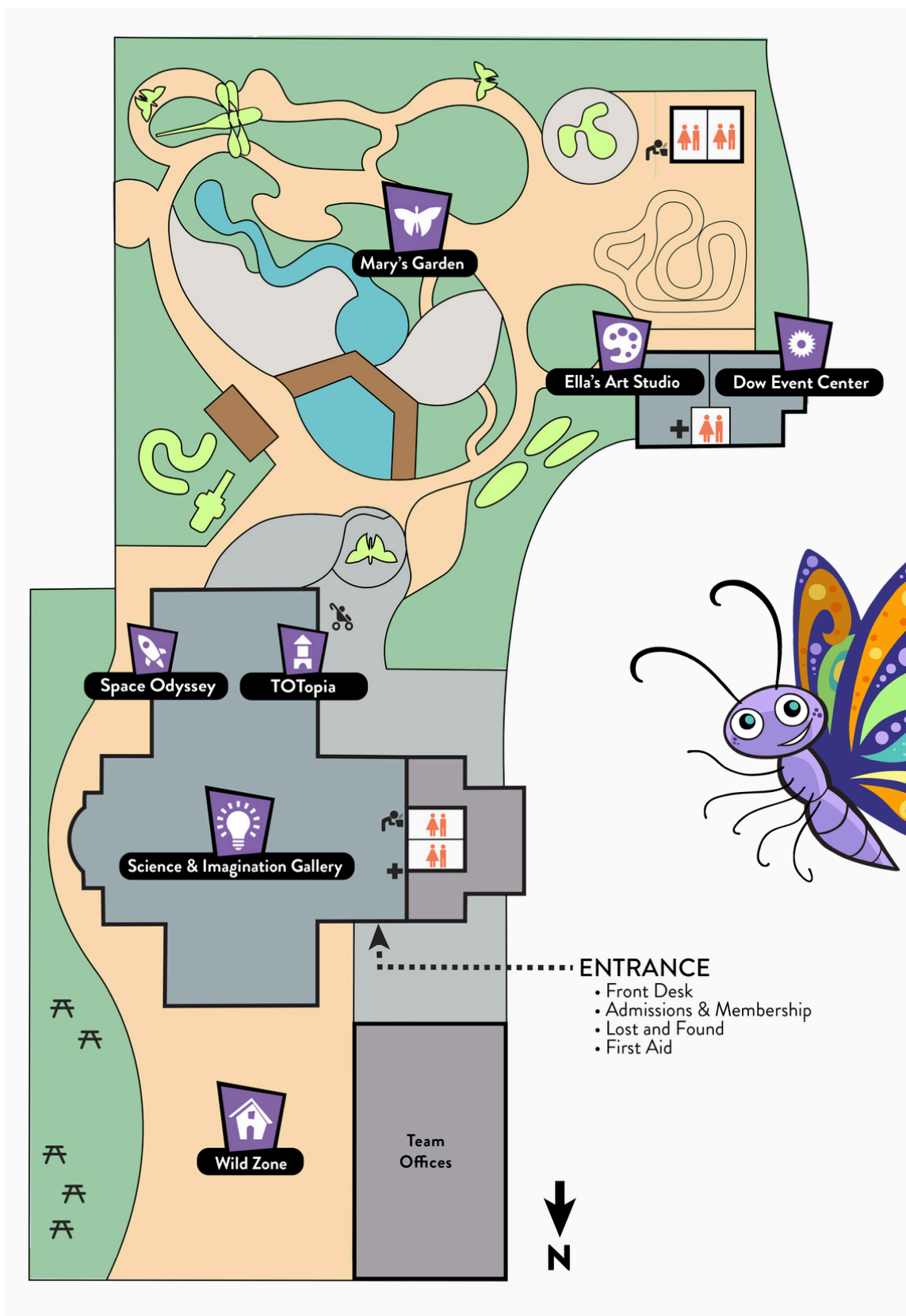


Wild Zone

The Wild Zone allows children to use natural and fabricated materials in this open ended playscape. They can discover the Mud Lab or set sail on an adventure in the Wonderstruck sailboat.



Museum Map



Rules and Operations

CMOSC rules are in place to ensure the Museum is a safe and happy place for visitors, volunteers, and our team.

Prohibited Activities

- Hate speech, slurs, and profane or obscene language are not allowed.
- Shoes and clothes are required to be worn. Clothing with objectionable material, including obscene language or graphics, and clothing inappropriate for a family environment, are not permitted.
- Wading in or drinking the water from the Little Russian River exhibit is not permitted.
- Food is only to be enjoyed at the picnic tables.

Prohibited Items

- Strollers and wagons are not permitted in SIG (Science Imagination Gallery) There is stroller parking located outside. *Special accommodations made for assistive devices.
- Balloons and sports balls.
- Large ice chests & coolers (small personal coolers are admitted), glass containers, or alcohol.
- Bikes, skateboards, hoverboards, segways, Heelies (wheeled shoes), and scooters.
- Weapons of any kind, including but not limited to, BB/pellet guns, slingshots, etc.
- Pets (trained service dogs, as defined by ADA, are allowed with restrictions.)

If you observe any of these activities or objects on campus, please report the incident to the Volunteer Manager or site supervisor.

The Museum Manager or Site Supervisor will handle these situations and may remove visitors from campus depending on the severity of the violation.



Hours & Admission

Regular Hours

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday-Monday

Closed Tuesdays (except school breaks, field trips, and Sensory Friendly Afternoons)

Closed on the Following Holidays

- New Year's Day
- Easter
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Annual Special Events

- Lunar New Year: January or February
- Annual Gala, Time to Wonder: April
- FUNtazmagoria: October

Admission

The Children's Museum of Sonoma County is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. As a result, we rely on the philanthropic generosity of our community and revenue from Museum memberships and daily ticket sales to present exhibits and programs encouraging curiosity and creativity.

We currently offer a \$1 discount when full-price tickets are purchased online. Tickets may be applied to the cost of a membership as long as the membership is purchased within two weeks from the day the tickets were used. Some restrictions may apply; ask at Front Desk for details.

Admission Prices

Adults - \$18.00

Youth ages 1 to 17 - \$18.00

Seniors/Teachers/Military - \$15.00

WIC recipients \$9

EBT recipients \$4

Infants - Free

Members receive FREE admission

***Prices are subject to change**



***Discounted admission available for those receiving WIC, EBT, Medi-Cal, ACM Reciprocal, teachers and members of the military through our Museum of All Access Program.**

Memberships

Each Children's Museum membership level allows a specified number of adult cardholders to be listed as named members:



You+Me

Daily Admission for 2, with 2 named adult cardholders

Fun Four

Daily Admission for 4, with 3 named adult cardholders

Super Six

Daily Admission for 6, with 4 named adult cardholders

Each membership **MUST** have at least one named adult member on each membership. We will refer to this adult member as the primary cardholder. Only the primary cardholder can make changes to the list of other named members.

Discounted memberships are available for those receiving WIC, EBT, Medi-Cal, ACM Reciprocal, teachers and members of the military through our Museum for All Access for All Program.

***Please speak with our Front Desk Coordinator for pricing details.**

Birthday Parties

There are many ways to host a group at the Children's Museum, including:

Picnic Table Parties

Picnic Table Parties include an area designated for your party and unlimited play at the Museum. Picnic Table Parties take place during regular hours and the public is present in the Museum during these times.

Private Playdates

Private Playdates allow you to exclusively reserve the entire Children's Museum of Sonoma County after-hours for two hours of fun.

The Volunteer Program

Volunteer Mission Statement & Vision

“As volunteers, we are part of the Children's Museum of Sonoma County team, helping to inspire joyful learning in a safe supportive community.”

We collaborate with Museum staff to spark curiosity in children and an appreciation for the arts and sciences through interactive play for all.

Volunteer Program Goals

The Volunteer Program goals reflect the goals of the Children's Museum of Sonoma County with an emphasis on fostering relationships with our guests and a connection to the Children's Museum mission.

Play

Consistently support Museum efforts to facilitate safe, inclusive and engaging play.



Community

Recruit and maintain a diverse group of interns and volunteers who are representative of the people of Sonoma County.

Team Work

Promoting a robust and sustainable volunteer program focused on meaningful, mission-driven opportunities.



Play Docent

CMOSC offers opportunities for a variety of ages and levels of involvement.



Floor Volunteer

An adult or teen volunteer trained to assist the floor team in engaging guests in safe, inclusive play in the Science and Imagination Gallery or Mary's Garden. They help to reset exhibits throughout the day, keep the Museum clean and enhance the experience of Museum visitors.

Floor volunteers might also:

- Gently remind guests of rules and answer basic questions.
- Assist the team with special programming.
- Explain the science/ideology behind exhibits.
- Collect information to help ensure that guests are enjoying their visit to the Museum.



Art Studio Docent

An adult or young adult volunteer trained to assist in Ella's Art Studio helps keep things fun, clean, and creative.

Art studio docent might also:

- Reset materials and clean the art studio
- May need to lift 15lbs.
- Help museum guests engage in creative play

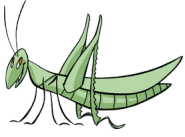


Event Volunteer

A volunteer able to serve for special Museum program days, community events and fundraising efforts.

Event volunteers might:

- Supervise specialized activities.
- Interact with guests on the Museum floor or in Mary's Garden.
- Set up and break down equipment and decor.
- Direct parking lot traffic.



Programs Docent

A programs volunteer is able to volunteer for specific daily/weekly/monthly programs (e.g. story time, sewing creations, toddler time etc.)

Program Docents might:

- Supervise specialized activities.
- Set up and break down equipment for specialized activities.
- Assist in planning future activities and programs.



Museum-on-the-Go Docent

Energetic and enthusiastic volunteers who join us in presenting the Museum at community events throughout Sonoma County. Volunteers must enjoy working with the public, with a focus on children.

Museum-on-the-Go volunteers might:

- Facilitate hands-on play activities with children and their caregivers
- Talk about the Museum and its activities
- Encourage volunteerism with the Museum
- Help with set up/break-down of the booth (may need to be able to carry 50 lbs or more)



Volunteer Groups

Groups of 5-30 that assemble for one-time, weekly, monthly or annual facilities or programming projects. Groups may also serve as extra help at special events.



Junior Volunteer (15 - 17 years old)

A youth or young adult volunteer able to serve under the direct supervision of a team member or accompanying adult. Junior volunteers can serve as any type of volunteer; however, adult accompaniment may be required for certain areas of responsibility. Volunteers under 15 are welcome; however, we require a parent to supervise alongside or special arrangements.

Volunteer Agreements, Benefits and Communication

Children's Museum of Sonoma County Volunteers agree to:

- Sign a release of liability form, media release, and handbook acknowledgement form. All are part of our online volunteer application.
- Abide by Museum policies and procedures set forth in the volunteer guide.
- Wear a volunteer lanyard or name badge while volunteering.
- Report promptly for scheduled events or shifts in your service areas.
- Make every effort to notify the team if unable to work your assignment.
- Notify the Volunteer Manager, in writing, of any change in contact information.

Volunteers will receive:

- A volunteer lanyard and name badge.
- Invitation to occasional training events.
- The training and support materials needed for designated service area(s).
- Opportunities to develop new skills, make new friends, and learn about childhood development/engagement and the local community.



Logging and Tracking Hours

When you arrive at the Museum for your shift, you will sign in on the "Volunteer Sign-In Sheet".

Your hours will be tracked monthly for administrative purposes. In addition, this will help determine your status as an "Active Volunteer" as outlined under "Volunteer Policies" portion of this handbook.

Museum Staff Communication Guidelines

Volunteers are encouraged to develop positive working relationships with all the Museum team. However, we ask that you please be mindful of their daily responsibilities and time limitations. The Volunteer Manager will be the liaisons for meetings, suggestions, or questions that you may have for any Museum team member.

We ask volunteers to put communication in writing (e-mail is encouraged) and the Volunteer Manager will forward your message to the appropriate team member. The Volunteers Manager will also see that you receive a prompt response to your message.



What to do in Case of an Emergency

In the event of an emergency, alert a paid team member either in person or via radio immediately. They will see to it that response to the emergency is both efficient and appropriate. The team will alert proper personnel and emergency services.

Lost Children

If you find a lost child, encounter someone looking for a child; please report this to a team member either in person or via radio immediately as a "Match Making Opportunity."

Stay with the individual or family until a team member arrives. When waiting for the team, please collect and communicate the following information about the missing child:

- Name
- Age
- Hair color
- Description of clothing
- Where they were last seen

Found Children

If you find a child, please report this to a team member either in person or via radio immediately. Stay with the child until the team arrives.

Minor First Aid

If you come upon someone in need of a band-aid, you may access the necessary supplies in the first-aid kits in each building throughout the Museum. Team members should not administer first aid; parents should do this. If the injury requires anything more than a band-aid or is a result of an accident that has just occurred, a team member must be contacted so an incident report may be completed.



Volunteer Policies

Background Screenings

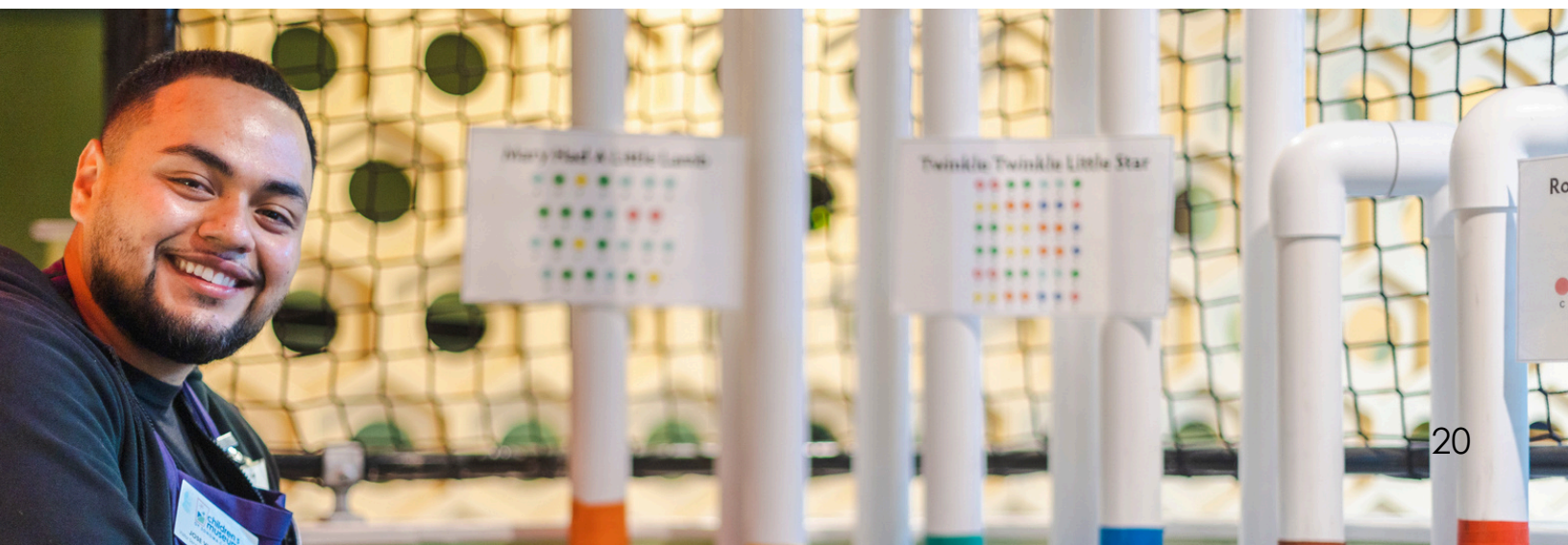
As part of the effort to provide a safe environment for children, the Children's Museum requires criminal background checks (investigative consumer reports) on all volunteers who serve in positions that may allow for unsupervised time with children or to whom responsibilities have been entrusted that may allow for unsupervised time with children. The Children's Museum complies with the Fair Credit and Reporting Act and all related regulations under California law.

Code of Conduct

Your personal conduct is vital to making the Museum a safe, inclusive friendly and fun place for all who visit and work here.

Volunteers will:

- Be approachable, friendly, helpful, and courteous when working with guests.
- Be flexible, cooperative, and supportive of all volunteers and team members.
- Work towards the goals of the Children's Museum mission.
- Be well informed and knowledgeable when presenting information to guests.
- Ensure the care and safety of all facilities, equipment and materials.
- Behave in a manner to bring only credit, honor and good repute to the Museum.



Prohibited Behavior

- Make false statements to a supervisor or other team members.
- Take unauthorized possession of property belonging to the museum, another volunteer, team member, or guests.
- Engage in offensive conduct or use profane or inappropriate language.
- Participate in physical confrontation or in any other conduct that may endanger the well-being of any guest, team member or volunteer.
- Use Museum materials or equipment for unauthorized projects including personal correspondence, etc.
- Release any confidential information regarding the Children's Museum, visitors, donors, volunteers, or team members to anyone (employee or non-employee) if the reason is not job related.
- Perform consistently unsatisfactory work.
- Have an excessive number of unexcused absences or be consistently late for service assignments.
- Use your cell phone in such a way that it interferes with your volunteer assignment.
- Use, possess, sell, purchase, or operate under the influence of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or other intoxicants while on duty or while representing the museum.
- Fail to take instruction from or perform reasonable duties assigned by a volunteer supervisor or team member.
- Perpetrate fraud, gamble, possess of weapons or explosives, or violate any criminal laws on Museum premises.
- Mistreat, harass or otherwise harm any person.
- Violate safety rules willfully or repeatedly.

Please note that any infraction other than those listed may also result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. We appreciate your understanding as we seek to create an atmosphere of trust and camaraderie within the Museum's volunteer program.

Dress Code

Volunteers should wear a name badge or lanyard to identify themselves at all times. The Museum will provide these items. Clothing should be comfortable, neat, clean, and tasteful. Shoes will be close-toed. Remember you will be moving around outside and inside, including bending over and walking around.

Please avoid:

- Clothing that can create a safety hazard (ripped, hanging pieces, large accessories etc.)
- Political, religious or otherwise controversial symbols or messages on clothing.
- Inappropriate designs or offensive language.
- Loungewear, sleepwear, sweatpants, or athletic tights.
- Revealing clothing - low-cut tops, short skirts or shorts (more than 5 inches above the knee) and mid-drift revealing t-shirts etc.

Attendance

The Museum depends on you to honor your commitment. Upon your arrival, check in with the front desk or the Volunteer Manager and log your start time. You are late if you arrive after the designated start time for your scheduled assignment. Attendance, late arrival and early departure will be tracked by the Volunteers Manager. Excessive absences, late arrivals and/or early departures will result in dismissal from the CMOSC Volunteer Program. Two absences without communication to the Volunteer Manager will result in immediate dismissal.



Active Volunteer

In order to be considered an "Active Volunteer" we ask that volunteers serve at least 8 total hours per month -OR- 96 total hours in a calendar year.

Cell Phone Policy

While it can be beneficial to carry a cell phone for safety reasons. Cell phone use should not interfere with volunteer duties. Volunteers are discouraged from making personal calls while in the public areas of the Museum. Please make personal calls during volunteer breaks or lunch periods in a private area.

Concerns or Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns with the Volunteers Manager. It would be ideal to present these concerns or complaints in writing.



Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination

The Children's Museum of Sonoma County is committed to providing a work environment free of unlawful harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Museum policy prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment including: discrimination or harassment on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles, including braids, locks, and twists), ethnicity, religion, color, sex (including childbirth, breast feeding, and related medical conditions), gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, uniformed services member and veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, age, protected medical condition, genetic information, disability, or any other category protected by applicable state or federal law.

The Museum's policy against harassment, discrimination, and retaliation applies to all employees, volunteers, and any other persons serving the Museum. The Museum prohibits employees and volunteers from harassing co-workers and other volunteers. Any such harassment will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment: Sexual harassment includes a broad spectrum of conduct including harassment based on sex, gender, gender transition, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. By way of illustration only, and not limitation, some examples of unlawful and unacceptable behavior include:

- Unwanted sexual advances;
- Offering an employment benefit (such as a raise or promotion) in exchange for sexual favors, or threatening an adverse action (such as termination or demotion) for a person's failure to engage in sexual activity;
- Visual conduct, such as leering, making sexual gestures, and displaying or posting sexually suggestive objects or images;

- Verbal sexual advances, propositions, requests, or comments;
- Electronically sending or posting sexually-related text messages, videos, or images;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal comments about an individual's appearance, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, and suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- Physical conduct, such as touching, kissing, groping, assault, or blocking movement;
- Physical or verbal abuse concerning an individual's gender, gender transition, gender identity, or gender expression; and
- Verbal abuse concerning a person's characteristics such as pitch of voice, facial hair or the size or shape of a person's body, including remarks that a person is too feminine or too masculine.

Other examples of what constitutes prohibited harassment: In addition to the above listed conduct, the Museum strictly prohibits harassment concerning any other protected characteristic. By way of illustration only, and not limitation, such prohibited harassment includes:

- Racial or ethnic slurs, insults, and any other offensive remarks based on a protected characteristic;
- Jokes, whether written, verbal, or electronic, that are based on a protected characteristic;
- Mocking or ridiculing another's religious or cultural beliefs, practices, or manner of dress;
- Threats, intimidation, horseplay, or other menacing behavior that are based on a protected characteristic;

If you have any questions about what constitutes prohibited harassing behavior, ask the Volunteer Manager, Director of Operations, or the designated Human Resources representative.

What You Should Do If You Feel You Are Being or Have Been Harassed or Discriminated Against

If you feel that you or anyone else are being or have been harassed or discriminated against on any basis prohibited by this policy, you should immediately report it to the Volunteer Manager or the Human Resources representative, the Director of Operations, or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as soon as possible after the incident.

In addition, if you observe harassment by another volunteer or employee, please report the incident immediately as indicated above.

Your notification of the problem is essential to us. We cannot help to resolve a harassment problem unless we know about it. Therefore, it is your responsibility to bring your concerns and/or problems to our attention so we can take appropriate steps to address the situation. The Museum takes all complaints of unlawful harassment seriously and will not penalize you or retaliate against you in any way for reporting a harassment problem in good faith.

All complaints of unlawful harassment which are reported to management will be investigated as promptly as possible by an impartial and qualified person and, upon conclusion of such investigation, appropriate corrective action will be taken where warranted. The Museum prohibits employees from refusing to cooperate with internal investigations and the internal complaint procedure. All complaints of unlawful harassment reported to management will be treated as confidentially as possible, consistent with the Museum's need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Infractions of Code of Conduct or Policy

The Museum has established standards of performance and volunteer behavior necessary for effective and enjoyable service. In case of misconduct, unprofessional behavior, unsatisfactory service performance, or failure to meet minimum requirements, appropriate corrective actions may be taken. These actions may range from counseling to warning to dismissal. All discipline is taken in management's discretion. The Museum reserves the right to terminate Volunteer Agreements at any time, with or without notice or reason.

A volunteer will have the opportunity to present their side of the alleged violation when the volunteer meets with the manager. Volunteers are responsible for following Museum rules and for performing in accordance with the corrective action set forth by the Volunteer Manager.

Voluntary Departure

While our hope is to enroll volunteers who intend to commit to a long-term role at the Museum, we understand that not every volunteer who becomes a part of our team can continue their service for an extended period of time. If a volunteer needs to end their regular service for a short period of time or indefinitely, they must notify the Volunteer Manager via email or in writing. Ideally, we would appreciate receiving one-two weeks notice prior to any departure. Upon exiting our volunteer program, you will be asked to complete a short "Exit Survey". The information you provide will help us improve our program moving forward.

Volunteer Reinstatement

Reinstatement of a volunteer after an absence is at the discretion of the Museum team and may require additional training or resubmission of a volunteer application and supporting documentation.

Thank You!



As we come to the end of this handbook, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude.

Thank you for being the heart of the Children's Museum of Sonoma County. Your dedication and enthusiasm will enrich the experience we offer here at CMOSC. Your willingness to give your time, creativity, and passion to our mission is what makes the Children's Museum a place of wonder, discovery, and joy. We can't wait to see the incredible moments you'll create and the lives you'll touch in the future.

Unwavering support and dedication from volunteers like yourself has shaped CMOSC into the vibrant and inspiring space it is today. The impact you will make reaches beyond the walls of our Museum. You touch the lives of families, our team, and our entire community. The commitment you have made to the youth of Sonoma County is truly awe-inspiring. Your smiles, patience, and willingness to engage with every child who walks through our doors will make a world of difference and we are truly excited to continue this journey together.

On behalf of the team here at CMOSC, we are deeply grateful for your contributions. Here's to many shared adventures and discoveries ahead.

Let's get started!

