

Guidance to Online Reading Volunteers for Signposting



Signposting is a way to further support the families we visit by directing them to local events and services for children, parents or the whole family. They're likely to be local, free or low cost, and aimed at connecting families to their community or advertising a service that may be helpful to them.

For our Online families, we will be sending out a newsletter via email twice a term. This might include borough-specific activities and resources happening in families' local areas, or general information relevant to anyone, regardless of the family's location.

We are asking for your support to help share this information with families during their reading sessions. Our years of signposting on the ground have shown us that **a conversation has a far greater impact than simply being handed information**. In an online context, this means making some time either at the start or the end of the session to tell families about the activities/resources they have been sent. We will always share the newsletter with you one week in advance of sending to families, so that you can prepare to share the relevant information with your families, according to which borough they live in (or the general/online signposting if their borough isn't listed).

To do this, we ask that you:

- **Thoroughly read through the newsletter beforehand.** If any questions arise, you can contact your Team Leader. If you're worried the signposting might not be appropriate for a particular family you are visiting, please speak to your Team Leader about it and they'll be able to advise.
- **During your session, have the newsletter open ready and screen-share with your families the relevant resource** (either borough-specific, or general if the borough they live in is not listed). You will be able to find the Borough your family is in listed on the 'family information' page on the Dashboard. Please make sure you click 'View this email in your browser' at the top of the newsletter, so that you are not screen-sharing any personal information from your email account.
- Record this on your visit notes. There will be a tick-box selection in the notes form to confirm you've spoken about signposting to your families.
- Please discuss this within the subsequent two sessions of the newsletter going out. The tick-box selection will only appear in the notes for two weeks.

Some helpful tips and rules on sharing signposting:

- If a Parent/Carer is not usually present onscreen, **ask the child if they can get them just so you can have a quick chat** about e.g. ‘something fun that’s happening in your area’, or ‘a service that may be useful’. Remember that with children aged 0-5, a parent should always be on-screen throughout the session, and with children above 5, you should always be checking in at the start of the session to check they are home, and happy for the session to take place. So, the opportunity to have this chat could come up quite naturally when you’re saying hello or goodbye to the parent.
- If you are unsure how to initiate the conversation, some examples could be “I’m not sure if you’ve seen this term’s newsletter?”, “Doorstep Library sent you an email about this local event/service and I wanted to check that you received it”, or “I just wanted to share some information we have that might be useful”, and then screen-share the newsletter with them. **Go through the details of the event/service with them.**
- **Never assume a family needs a particular service** unless they have asked us about it explicitly. We usually recommend saying – this has been sent to all our families in case of interest, so that it avoids them feeling targeted.
- As you’ll remember from your training, **boundaries are key**. Never arrange to meet a family at an event, even if you’re local and might be planning to attend yourself. If a parent would like additional help to access a service, you should always pass this on to your Team Leader who will assess how to best support this family. **You should never be in contact with your families outside of your volunteer shift**, unless this has been approved by Doorstep Library.
- If you happen to know of an event or service which you think might benefit our families, please share it with your Team Leader – we would love to know about it! We will then look into it and decide whether it’s appropriate to share with families.
- If a Parent/Carer asks you something you’re unsure of, let them know you’ll find out and get back to them next week, or their Team Leader will contact them about it.
- We welcome any feedback you may have about the signposting process, its content, or any feedback you may receive from parents, as it helps shape our service going forward and understand whether we’re on the right track. Our aim is to make the process straightforward, and we will always welcome feedback on how we can improve this.

We hope you enjoy sharing local information with your families! Any questions, please just ask your Team Leader. And as always, thank you for your support!