

# Volunteer Policy

## Values of the Doorstep Library Network

### We are committed to the following:

- Doorstep Library Network will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff;
- For volunteers to have a defined place in the structure of the organisation;
- For volunteers to be integrated and treated equally as part of the team;
- To recognise the individual skills each person brings to the organisation;
- For volunteers to feel supported and valued in their role through an induction to Doorstep Library and on-going supervision and support;
- Encouraging volunteers to develop and build on existing skills and knowledge through sharing good practice within Doorstep Library and training.

## Recruitment

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. The applicant will have to complete an application form and provide two references. The applicant will be interviewed by the Volunteer Recruitment Officer and if this is successful the two references asked for will be taken up.

## DBS check

An enhanced disclosure criminal records check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be made for every Home or Online Reading volunteer. This must come back *before* commencing volunteering, including trial sessions. This must be renewed every 3 years to continue volunteering. Any disclosures that do not come back clear may result in the volunteer's application not being taken any further. We will not accept applicants where there is a conviction relating to any violent or sexual offences, regardless of the time elapsed since conviction. Any spent or unspent convictions less than five years from the volunteer's application date will be reviewed, extra verification checks put in place if necessary, and a risk-based decision made by the Safeguarding Team." All decisions are at the discretion of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, CEO and Board of Trustees.

## Training

All volunteers will receive training including an induction to Doorstep Library and all information necessary for their placement before being confirmed as a volunteer. There will be on-going training for all volunteers as appropriate. On completion of initial training all volunteers will receive copies of all policies relevant to their role including:

- Volunteer policy
- Safeguarding
- Online Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Personal Safety
- Equal opportunities and Diversity
- Complaints Procedure

There will be a trial period of 3 sessions to give the organisation and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. This forms part of a selection process and we

reserve the right to decline volunteers a placement at any stage. A review will be made at the end of the trial period before the volunteer is confirmed in their placement. Volunteers will be required to sign a Volunteer Commitment Form to be confirmed in their placement.

Volunteers will be asked to re-take our training programme every 3 years, and be re-trained in safeguarding annually.

### **Feedback**

During the trial period we will request feedback from the volunteer the person is paired with. These are a standardised set of questions to ensure the quality of our service to families and the wider volunteer team. If you are asked to provide feedback, we would appreciate receiving this as soon as you are able.

### **Personal phone numbers**

We require you to share your personal mobile phone number with other volunteers and staff, for emergency purposes whilst conducting sessions. This is to protect volunteers should a situation arise where help is needed, and should only be used for such purposes unless you have gained consent from the volunteer in question. We require volunteers to store all relevant numbers in their phone when asked by their Team Leader/Project Coordinator, and tell us immediately should your number change.

Additionally, Online Reading Volunteers may need to call the families they read with in order to assist them accessing the sessions. Phone calls between volunteers and families must only ever happen during the volunteer shift, for the purposes of the session, and in line with our Online Safeguarding Policy and training. Volunteers may withhold their number, however we ask them to discuss this option with their Team Leader first.

### **Expenses**

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All pre-agreed out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel or parking, within the limit of £20 per session. In order to claim expenses, receipts must be kept and given to the Team Leader, or sent directly to the Finance Manager for reimbursement. Travel expenses must be claimed within a month of travel.

### **Support**

The Programme Manager, Project Coordinators, Team Leaders and other volunteers will offer support to the volunteers. There will be regular briefing and de-briefing sessions. Two group sessions of evaluation with the volunteers will be organised every year. Home Reading Volunteers will have an individual yearly supervision session, and Online Reading Volunteers termly. An interim meeting can be called in between if needed by either side. The Project Coordinators or Team Leaders will support all volunteers and will be available for individual contact to discuss any problems or issues that may arise as needed.

### **References**

Doorstep Library is happy in most instances to provide references to those who have been volunteering with us for over 3 months / 12 volunteering sessions, within the last 2

years. However, this is at the discretion of the Project Coordinators or Programme Managers.

### **Illness**

We would appreciate being given a minimum of 24 hours' notice wherever possible in order to arrange a stand-in volunteer to cover, or as early as possible if the illness is on the day.

### **Notice Period**

Doorstep Library aims to provide the highest level of consistency for our beneficiaries as possible. Therefore, we ask that you provide us with a 4-week project-based notice period in order to replace you and allow for a smoother transition for the families.

### **Volunteering from abroad**

Online Reading Volunteers must reside in the UK in order for Doorstep Library to process a DBS check before commencing placement. If a volunteer moves or spends time abroad during their placement and wishes to continue volunteering, the following criteria apply:

- You must be able to make and receive phone calls with no additional costs incurred to the organisation, volunteers or families, for either outgoing or incoming calls. You must provide proof that this is the case.
- Any time difference must not impact your ability to volunteer according to the UK time zone (GMT).
- If you are not based in the UK when it is time to renew your DBS check, you will not be able continue volunteering with us.

### **Insurance**

The organisation has a valid insurance policy.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

The Management Committee, volunteers and staff, are all obliged to adhere to the Doorstep Library Confidentiality policy.

### **Image and Video Use of Volunteers**

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) became law across Europe. Under this legislation, photographs/videos where individuals can be identified are considered 'personal data' and must be treated as such.

By signing Doorstep Library's Commitment Form Request you have given permission and are aware that any images or recordings of you that occur during your time volunteering with Doorstep Library can be used for the following:

- Advertisements, leaflets and other print promotional materials
- Fundraising and publicity purposes

- Online marketing including the Doorstep Library website and across our social media channels (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube)
- Training and educational purposes

All images taken by Doorstep Library will be used in a manner respectful of our Data Protection Policy. This means that images and videos will be processed:

- Be obtained lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Be obtained for a specific, explicit and legitimate purpose
- Be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- Be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- Not be held longer than necessary;
- Be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data

We will always ask permission before taking any images or recordings, and you may opt out at any time. If at any point during your time volunteering with Doorstep Library you wish images or recordings that have been taken of you not be used in the aforementioned ways, then please let your Team Leader know as soon as possible.

### Image and Video Use of Families

Any images or recordings (both visual and audio) taken by volunteers of families without prior permission or guidance from a Doorstep Library staff member is strictly forbidden for the safeguarding of both our families and volunteers.

On the rare occasion that you are asked to photograph or record a family by a Doorstep Library staff member, you will need to obtain a consent form from your Team Leader. Once this has been signed by the parent/carer, you will need to send the images/recordings directly to your Team Leader via email and delete them from your device during that week's project. Your Team Leader must see you do this. You may not store any images/videos of families or children on your device.

### Resolving Problems

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any employment contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service (see Appendix 1, Person Specification, as well as the Doorstep Library [Code of Conduct](#)) to the beneficiaries who use it, and it is important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the organisation's standards, it will be dealt with as follows:

1. An initial meeting or phone call with Project Coordinator/ Team Leader who will explain the concerns and offer support/ training to resolve the issue;
2. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Programme Manager will be convened;
3. At the discretion of the Programme Manager a date for reviewing your services may be agreed.

At all times you will be able to freely state your case and request an acquaintance/colleague to accompany you at any meetings.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your volunteer work with us you should:

1. Initially discuss your dissatisfaction with a Project Coordinator/ Team Leader;
2. If that does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Programme Manager should be convened;
3. If after this, your dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve your grievance, then it may be inappropriate for you to continue to be a volunteer with Doorstep Library.

Doorstep Library reserves the right to stop using your services at any time without further explanation and without notice.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It is reviewed on an annual basis.

### Appendix 1: Person Specification: Skills and attitudes required

We look for volunteers with particular characteristics because of the complex and sensitive nature of the role. The characteristics we are looking for are listed in the following person specification. It may happen that the organisation considers that the volunteer is not meeting this specification. In such cases:

- if the potential volunteer is still in their trial period, they will not be accepted as a volunteer;
- if already trained and volunteering regularly, the volunteer will be asked to meet with a staff member to review the situation, and their placement may be terminated.

- ✓ **Enjoy spending time with children** and believe in education for all
- ✓ **Comfortable fluency** in English
- ✓ **Non-judgemental and respectful** of a variety of lifestyles and children's learning
- ✓ **Excellent communication skills** – listening to families and communicating efficiently with Team Leaders (including via text/emails/calls with Doorstep Library staff)
- ✓ **Note taking** – ability to accurately and regularly complete records and reports
- ✓ **Organised** - multi-tasking in a multi-faceted role comprising of much more than solely reading to children
- ✓ **Time management** – when managing your visits and attending the project
- ✓ **Reliable** – *always* attending a pre-agreed session and giving plenty of notice in advance of absences
- ✓ **Friendly** – to build good relationships with families, your volunteer partner and the rest of the team
- ✓ **Confident** – to lead the round or mentor a new volunteer
- ✓ **Patience, persistence and flexibility** – tailoring your approach to each family's needs