

## TIPS FOR WORKING IN SCHOOLS STUDENT-LED VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

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Many of our Student-Led Projects work with schools – if that includes you, please familiarise yourself with these guidelines. There are a number of issues about working with schools that you'll need to be aware of if your project is to be a success.

### COMMITMENT

- Be reliable and consistent. The school will be relying on you to turn up on time each week. The children will be let down if your programme is cancelled, even if it's just for one week. Cancelling will also disrupt the momentum of your programme and may lead to children losing interest and dropping out.
- Make sure you complete a **PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FORM** so that both you and the school are clear about what has been agreed. This form can be downloaded from the [Project Leader Resources webpage](#).
- Be clear about when you are available for the entire length of the project and consider when students will be unable to volunteer during exam and holiday times.
- Deliver what you promise. Be clear about what you can deliver and what support and supervision you will need from the teacher.

### PREPARATION

- Preparation is key to delivering a successful programme. Make sure your sessions are well planned and all volunteers know what they will be doing. Have a pre-session meeting or, at the very least, send an email confirming your plans.
- You should draw up a lesson plan. You can obtain blank copies from the Project Leader Resources webpage.
- Develop a partnership with your supervising teacher and meet with them at the beginning to discuss your programme. The teacher will be able to give you guidance to ensure your programme is age appropriate, engaging and relevant.
- You and your volunteers must complete our Online Volunteering with Children course before you start volunteering.

### COMMUNICATING WITH THE SCHOOL

- Keep in close contact with the supervising teacher. Establish the most effective way of contacting them e.g. mobile phone/text/email etc.

- Remember that teachers are very busy and the best times to contact them are 8.25 - 8.45am in the lunch-break (usually 12 - 1pm), or after 4pm
- When emailing the supervising teacher always copy in your Project Supervisor.

### **BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE**

- Know the school discipline policy and talk to your supervising teacher about how to deal with behaviour problems.
- Set boundaries and rules in the first session and don't be afraid to apply the school's disciplinary procedures.
- Maintain boundaries and act professionally. You are a role model for the children, not their peer.
- Do not use inappropriate language with each other or with the children.
- If you are delivering a session without the teacher present, you must know how to contact them if there is a problem.
- Avoid laughing at comments children make, unless it's clear that they intend a joke.

### **PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

- For in-person sessions, make sure there are at least 5 volunteers per class of 25-30 (this allows for 1 volunteer per table if you are working in groups).
- Make sessions interactive and focus on group work rather than lecture style.
- Use the children's names from the start. Use name stickers for yourselves and the children, if delivery in-person.
- Be aware of different cultures/backgrounds and don't assume a child has previous knowledge about your topic.
- Use clear and simple language when giving instructions. Use large print when giving written instructions and provide extra support to the children who have difficulty reading.
- Give lots of praise and encouragement and develop a reward system to acknowledge the children who have achieved or have tried hard.