

learn to

love to

read

Charity registration number: 1175288

Volunteer Handbook for Learn to Love to Read (L2L2R)

This handbook states clearly and simply how Learn to Love to Read (L2L2R) operates its services. The principles on which they are based will act as a guide for future decision making.

The policy documents have been approved by the Board of Trustees and are updated annually by the Head of Volunteering and the senior leadership team.

Contents

1. Volunteer Role Description
2. Volunteer Policy (NCVO)
3. Volunteer Agreement
4. Problem-solving Process (NCVO)
5. Health and Safety Policy (HSE)
6. Incident/Accident form
7. Data Protection Policy (ICO)

Note:

The Safeguarding Policy (NSPCC) is maintained as a separate document.

As indicated, these policies have been based on guidance and templates from the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations), the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) and the HSE (Health and Safety Executive), the Charity Commission and the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office).

1. Volunteer Role Description

Reports to

Head of Volunteering

DBS requirement

Appointment to this role is subject to L2L2R obtaining a satisfactory enhanced UK DBS check.

Purpose of the role

To support children in our partner schools with their reading (weekly sessions, generally with three children) or to support children virtually with their reading using Zoom (weekly sessions, generally with one or two children).

Duties and responsibilities

- For in-school volunteers - Work with three children in one of our partner schools on a one-to-one basis every week for one school year. Children are in Years 1, 2 or 3 and between the ages of 5 and 8. They have been selected for support by our partner schools.
- For virtual volunteers - Work with one or two children on a one-to-one basis every week for one school year. Children are in Years 1, 2 or 3 and between the ages of 5 and 8. They have been selected for support by our partner schools or other partner organisations.
- Commit to one regular afternoon a week during the school term for up to 90 minutes for a school year (apart from occasional holidays or appointments). This is usually between 1pm and 3pm for in-school volunteers (but will depend on the school's timetable) and between 4pm and 6pm for virtual volunteers.
- Undertake L2L2R's initial training for the role and annually refresh safeguarding training.
- Follow L2L2R's policies at all times – please especially note the Volunteer Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

As a L2L2R reading volunteer, you will need to:

- Commit to a full year in order to provide stability to the children we support.
- Be punctual and timely in order to fit in with the school's timetable.
- Be regular – children come to expect you and you are letting them down if you fail to attend (except for occasional holidays or appointments).
- Keep in regular contact with the L2L2R Head of Volunteering or the Helpline as required.
- Be flexible – sometimes schools need to change timetables at the last minute.
- Complete the online register each week and annual feedback forms on the children's progress.
- Complete annual safeguarding refresher training.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times regarding any information regarding children, including educational needs and assessment results.

2. Volunteer Policy

The Law

Volunteering can be defined as the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) a person's family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.

Our Commitment

L2L2R is enormously grateful for the time and energy our reading volunteers contribute. This volunteer policy will help to:

- show L2L2R's commitment to volunteering and our volunteers
- ensure we treat all volunteers with fairness and make consistent decisions
- show volunteers what to expect from L2L2R
- show volunteers where they can turn if they feel things are going wrong
- make sure everyone understands the role volunteers play in the organisation and why.

Reading volunteers will be directed to the L2L2R website to read the latest Volunteer Handbook, so they are clear what is expected of a volunteer and the support a volunteer can expect from L2L2R.

Becoming a Reading Volunteer

L2L2R follows a recognised Safer Recruitment Process. All potential volunteers – both in-school and virtual – are required to complete an online Volunteer Application Form, complete a self-disclosure form if necessary and provide the details of two referees. This application form will also ask for permission to use and store their data in line with data protection rules. If an applicant is required to complete a self-disclosure form, they will be asked to bring it to interview in a sealed envelope and given the opportunity to discuss the contents at interview if they wish.

Applicants will be interviewed and two suitable written references will be sought. All applicants will be treated with fairness and equity. If volunteers have any specific access requirements this will be discussed during the application and interview process and L2L2R will make every effort to ensure arrangements are made to accommodate those requirements, e.g. selecting a school with easy disabled access, or allocating children from a specific class so a volunteer does not need to use the stairs.

Before being accepted, potential volunteers must undergo an enhanced UK DBS check organised by L2L2R and attend a training session run by L2L2R. That training will include safeguarding training and certain safeguarding documents must be read and understood before volunteers can start their work in a school. Volunteers who have lived overseas for more than three months since the age of 16 may also need to obtain police checks from those countries where possible, in accordance with Wandsworth's policies. L2L2R can provide support for these overseas police checks but they must be carried out by potential volunteers themselves.

Once volunteers are fully checked and trained, they will be matched with suitable children from a partner school. L2L2R will ensure that a L2L2R or school staff member or an experienced volunteer accompanies new in-school volunteers to their first session. For virtual volunteers, initial introductions and regular support will be provided by the L2L2R Helpline. Our Head of Volunteering will oversee ongoing support for all volunteers and is available by email to answer any queries as required. There will also be regular opportunities for volunteers to meet as a group to learn from and support each other.

3 Date of approval 26/06/25 Signature



Date for review July 2026

Volunteer Behaviour

L2L2R expects all volunteers to adhere to the charity's volunteer behaviour policies while on partner organisation premises, working virtually or when attending other L2L2R events. All volunteers and staff must:

- Follow the necessary signing in procedures for the venue.
- Dress appropriately, e.g. in a manner that is similar to members of staff within the partner organisation or venue. This also applies when working virtually.
- Be aware of the demands and pressures on staff in partner organisations and other venues and ensure that communication with them takes account of this. All communication must show friendliness and respect and represent the charity well.
- Not take any photos during volunteering time unless specific permission has been given.
- Not record virtual reading sessions over Zoom.
- Adhere to the safeguarding and health and safety procedures of L2L2R and the partner organisation where they volunteer.
- Not sell or promote any services or goods to schools and their families, L2L2R staff or other volunteers.

Should any volunteer wish to make a complaint, they should refer to the Problem-Solving Process included in this policy pack. Volunteers should also refer to the Health and Safety Policy included in this policy pack.

Expenses

L2L2R does not reimburse volunteer travel expenses but will always endeavour to allocate volunteers to a school that is local to them. L2L2R will carry out a UK DBS check for potential volunteers free of charge but does not generally reimburse any costs entailed in carrying out any necessary overseas police check, though in certain circumstances it may be possible to make a small contribution to those costs, e.g. where a volunteer in need of financial assistance expects to remain with the organisation long-term and the cost of the check is extremely high.

Confidentiality

All volunteers are required to preserve the confidentiality of any information regarding L2L2R and its partner organisations, including but not limited to information about individual staff members, volunteers, parents and children. This obligation shall continue indefinitely. Information can be shared only if it is in the interests of the child in a safeguarding situation. A breach of this requirement will be regarded as gross misconduct and the volunteer will be required to cease volunteering.

Mobile Phone / Camera Use

L2L2R asks that volunteers do not use mobile phones during their volunteering time. At no point should a mobile phone be left on display in front of children. L2L2R understands that, in an emergency, volunteers may need to be contacted during volunteering time. In such instances, volunteers should return the child to the classroom and find a public space where they may receive or make a call if necessary. Photographs are not to be taken while on partner organisation premises. Official photographs can only be taken by L2L2R when permission has been given by the staff and by the child's parent or guardian. This permission will make it clear where the photographs might be used – printed material, websites and social media.

3. Volunteer Agreement

Reading volunteers are an essential and valued part of L2L2R. L2L2R respects all its volunteers and works hard to ensure they feel supported in their role. To ensure the experience as an L2L2R volunteer is rewarding and enjoyable, this Volunteer Agreement sets out what a volunteer can expect from L2L2R and what L2L2R asks of its volunteers.

Our Commitment

Equality and diversity

L2L2R is committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of its work, ensuring that no volunteer, employee or contractor is discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, parental status, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

Role description

A full description of the volunteer role is part of this Volunteer Handbook.

Induction and training

- L2L2R will provide initial training to ensure volunteers can perform their role well.
- For in-school volunteers L2L2R will ensure that a member of L2L2R or school staff or an experienced volunteer is at school on the first day to make introductions and give directions.
- For virtual volunteers L2L2R Helpline staff will make the initial arrangements and link volunteers up with the family they will be working with.
- Ongoing support will be provided by the L2L2R Head of Volunteering and the L2L2R Helpline as appropriate.

Feedback and communication

The L2L2R Head of Volunteering will be volunteers' main point of contact. They will communicate regularly, usually via email, about term dates, events at school which we are made aware of that may affect volunteering and other L2L2R events taking place in school. The L2L2R Helpline will be a regular source of support for virtual volunteers. L2L2R also publishes a regular newsletter with updates on our work.

L2L2R welcomes feedback from volunteers which can be given at any time via the Head of Volunteering and through our volunteer surveys.

Ongoing support

L2L2R holds an event at least once a term where volunteers can give and receive feedback, as well as meet other volunteers. Once a year, L2L2R also holds a social evening event for volunteers, trustees, supporters and staff. To ensure volunteers feel they can develop their skills, L2L2R runs follow-up training sessions and workshops as required.

Resolving problems

L2L2R will always try to deal with problems as quickly as possible and resolve complaints in a fair manner, following L2L2R's Problem Solving Policy.

Health & Safety

L2L2R will carry out a risk assessment for any activities undertaken by volunteers and ensure they are able to operate in a safe and healthy environment.

Insurance

L2L2R will provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst carrying out their approved and authorised volunteering roles.

Safeguarding

L2L2R will ensure volunteers are made aware of the policies designed to promote the welfare of children and keep them safe, and to protect volunteers from the risk of unfounded allegations. Full information can be found in our Safeguarding Policy and in our Volunteer Policy.

Confidentiality

As part of their role, volunteers may be privy to confidential information, including information about children, parents, teachers and staff members. This information can be shared only if it is in the interests of the child in a safeguarding situation and L2L2R will take breaches of confidentiality very seriously.

Our volunteers' privacy is also important to us and, to ensure L2L2R meets GDPR guidelines, we ask for written consent on communication preferences. For full information about how we use your personal data, please read our Data Protection Policy.

Expenses

L2L2R values our volunteers and wants to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. However, given the nature of the project, L2L2R does not foresee circumstances where a volunteer would need to use their own finances. L2L2R will always endeavour to place volunteers in schools local to them and are unable to pay travel expenses.

The Volunteer's Commitment

- Always carry out your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- Be reliable and punctual for your reading sessions
- Commit to one regular afternoon a week during the school term for up to 90 minutes for a school year
- Undertake L2L2R's training for the role and safeguarding training
- Refresh L2L2R's safeguarding training annually and confirm that you have done so
- Attend any necessary ongoing training and team feedback sessions, as well as read our communications
- Update the online register each week to show which children you have read with either in school or online
- Complete the feedback forms on the children's reading ability and confidence as requested at the start and end of each academic year
- Give L2L2R as much notice as possible if you are no longer able to volunteer
- Follow L2L2R's policies at all times.

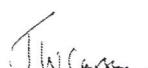
What L2L2R needs from you

- Enable us to secure sufficient references
- Undergo an initial check and regular re-checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Obtain police checks from any countries where you have lived for more than three months since the age of 16
- Inform us of any new convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings within two weeks of the offence
- Advise us of any changes to your health that could affect your volunteering within two weeks of diagnosis.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This agreement is binding in honour only; it is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. No employment relationship has been created either now or at any time in the future.

7 Date of approval 26/06/25 Signature



Date for review July 2026

4. Problem-solving Process

The Law

Employers must follow a full and fair procedure in line with the ACAS Code of Practice for any discipline or grievance case. The ACAS Code of Practice applies to anyone legally classed as an employee or a worker. The procedure an employer follows and an employee's actions will be taken into account if the case reaches an employment tribunal.

Volunteers do not have a contract of employment, so do not have the same rights as an employee or worker. The Volunteer Agreement that sets out what they can expect from the organisation they're volunteering for is included in this handbook. This does not form a contract between the volunteer and the organisation. This policy applies to those working for L2L2R in a voluntary capacity, including the trustee board.

Our Commitment

Procedure where an issue has been raised about a volunteer

Introduction

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that if anyone (e.g. L2L2R staff, trustee, partner school staff, parent/carer) has concerns regarding the way in which a volunteer performs their role, the volunteer will be treated in a fair and consistent manner, using a clear process.

All concerns will be treated confidentially and only discussed among those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue.

It is hoped that most problems will be sorted out satisfactorily through informal discussion, but if that is not possible, the procedure below is available to ensure volunteers have their case heard.

The procedure

If L2L2R has an issue with a volunteer, or an issue is raised by a third party (e.g. another volunteer, partner school staff or parent/carer), an investigation should be carried out by a senior member of L2L2R staff or a trustee to determine if there is a case to answer. If there is, a senior member of L2L2R staff or trustee will meet with the volunteer to raise this with them informally.

Notes will be made of this meeting, including a time scale within which improvement will be monitored. This is an informal stage and does not form part of the raising concerns procedure.

Where a complaint has been raised by a third party, they will also be kept informed of the steps L2L2R is taking to rectify the situation.

Stage one of the raising concerns procedure

At the end of this monitoring time the L2L2R staff member or trustee will meet the volunteer again. At the end of this meeting, if there has been sufficient improvement, then the matter will be closed. If there has not been sufficient improvement the volunteer will be given an oral warning, which will include an appropriate time limit within which improvement should occur. This will be noted on the volunteer's file. This forms the first and formal part of the raising concerns procedure. The staff member or trustee will seek to identify goals to help the volunteer fulfil their role, offer extra support, supervision and training where necessary, or suggest the volunteer may need a break from their volunteering role.

Where a complaint has been raised by a third party, they will also be kept informed of the steps L2L2R is taking to rectify the situation.

At the end of this agreed improvement time, the L2L2R staff member or trustee will meet the volunteer again. If at the end of this meeting they are satisfied that improvement has occurred, the raising concerns procedure will not continue.

Stage two of the raising concerns procedure

If there has not been sufficient improvement the volunteer will be given a written warning, which will include an appropriate time limit within which improvements should occur. This will be noted on the volunteer's file. At the end of this agreed improvement time, the L2L2R staff member or trustee will meet the volunteer again. If at the end of the meeting following the written warning, they are satisfied that improvement has occurred, the raising concerns procedure will not continue but a plan of regular individual supervision will be implemented to support the volunteer in continuing their volunteering role.

Stage Three of the raising concerns procedure

If there has not been sufficient improvement; the volunteer will be given written notice terminating their voluntary placement from L2L2R. At this stage the volunteer has a right to appeal to the L2L2R Chair of Trustees who will meet with the volunteer and L2L2R staff member or trustee who has been dealing with the issue. The Chair's decision is final.

Cases of Serious Misconduct

If a volunteer is suspected of serious misconduct, L2L2R reserves the right to suspend their role at L2L2R temporarily while the case is being investigated.

An investigation will be carried out by a senior staff member or trustee. The volunteer will have the right to put his/her case to senior representatives of the L2L2R staff and the Chair of Trustees and to be accompanied by a colleague or friend.

L2L2R will aim to keep in touch with the volunteer regularly whilst the investigation is ongoing.

Examples of offences which will be regarded as serious misconduct are as follows:

- Gross insubordination
- Gross negligence
- Blatant and persistent refusal to obey a reasonable and proper instruction
- Serious or wilful breaches of safety rules in such a way that the individual endangers himself/herself or others
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs to such a degree that the individual is a danger to himself/herself or to others
- Theft of, or malicious damage to, property belonging to L2L2R, L2L2R staff, partner schools or children and their families.
- Sexual offences or sexual misconduct
- Physical assault or fighting
- Serious breach of equal opportunities practice.

Procedure for a staff member, trustee or volunteer who wish to raise a concern

Introduction

Anyone who has concerns about how L2L2R works is asked to please raise those concerns promptly. L2L2R will always try to offer the best possible experience to staff, trustees and volunteers, but where necessary it is important for L2L2R to identify issues and understand what can be improved.

If an issue is raised, L2L2R will ensure:

- those raising the concern are treated equally and do not suffer discrimination as a result of raising the concern
- those raising the concern are able to ask someone to support them in that process - it could be a friend, family member or an advocate
- that concern is treated seriously and dealt with in a timely manner
- all concerns are treated confidentially and only discussed among those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue
- issues are treated with an open mind and investigated without prejudice.

How to raise a concern?

The first step is to talk to a senior staff member or trustee as appropriate. For volunteers this is L2L2R's Head of Volunteering; for staff members this could be any senior staff member; for trustees, an experienced member of the board. Concerns can be raised either on the telephone, via a Zoom meeting, or if preferred, by making an appointment to meet in person. The matter may be able to be resolved immediately.

However, if the issue is not completely resolved, the complainant should put their concern in writing in an email and send it to the senior staff member or trustee with whom the discussion was held.

Correspondence will be acknowledged within three days of receipt. Concerns will be investigated and a reply sent within 14 days.

5. Health and Safety Policy

The Law

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in the UK. Key objectives of the Act are:

- Securing the health, safety and welfare of persons at work;
- Protecting persons, other than persons at work, against risks to health or safety arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at work.

Our Commitment

L2L2R undertakes to:

- put in place measures to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- manage health and safety risks for our staff, trustees and volunteers
- provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure employees and volunteers are competent to do their work
- consult with our employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety
- maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- review and revise this policy regularly.

A risk assessment of current L2L2R activities has been carried out by the Head of Operations and is available for staff, trustees and volunteers if requested. Prior to any new activity being undertaken, L2L2R will undertake additional risk assessments and pass on that information as appropriate. Input from staff, trustees and volunteers will be taken into account. Any necessary health and safety training will be given and relevant instructions shared.

Staff and volunteers must abide by any specific requirements of L2L2R's partner organisations when working with them or on their premises.

If a volunteer or staff member who has recently visited a school is sick with a communicable disease, such as chicken pox or shingles, they must inform both that school and the appropriate member of the senior management team (Head of Volunteering or Head of Operations) and wait for advice.

L2L2R will take out appropriate insurance annually to cover staff, volunteers and trustees while they are engaged in supporting the charity.

Accident / Incident reporting

If a staff member, trustee or volunteer is involved in an accident while engaged in any L2L2R activity, our Accident / Incident Form should be completed as well as any form required by the partner organisation or venue. A blank L2L2R form can be found below. Please scan and return to our Head of Operations, Matilda Tuke, matilda@l2l2r.org.

6. Incident/Accident form

Name of person completing form: _____

Date _____ Time _____

Location of incident _____

Time and Date of incident: _____

Persons involved in incident: _____

Description of incident:

Immediate action taken following incident:

Any follow up action required:

Date RIDDOR informed if required _____ Incident Number _____ Name _____

Signature of person involved in incident: _____ Date: _____

Signature of L2L2R Head of Operations: _____ Date: _____

7. Data Protection Policy

The Law

Personal data is information relating to individuals which allows them to be identified. Identification can result either directly from the information in question or from that information in combination with other information. Personal data includes such information as name, email, phone number, address as well as material such as photographs and video.

The processing of personal data is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 along with the General Data Protection Regulation - the GDPR - and other legislation relating to personal data and rights such as the Human Rights Act 1998. Processing means anything that you do with data such as collecting, storing, using, analysing, disclosing or deleting it.

Our Commitment

As a data controller, L2L2R will comply with all of its legal obligations, including those not to collect or retain excessive amounts of data; to store personal data securely; keep personal data up to date and to destroy it safely when it is no longer needed. L2L2R will also comply with all of the rights of individuals with regards to the data it holds.

Some of our personal data will relate to children under the age of 11, e.g. photographs and reports on the progress of children who are part of our programme. Photographs will only be used when permission has been given by a parent or guardian. Other information will only be shared with those who need it to perform their job effectively.

Printed personal data must be stored securely. Digital personal data is mostly stored using Dropbox and Google. Access to this Dropbox folder and Google are password protected. All staff mobile devices by which personal data can be accessed must be password protected – e.g. phones, laptops and iPads.

All email and mobile contact lists must be regularly checked and all personal details which there is no current legitimate justification to hold must be deleted. When we wish to communicate with individuals about aspects of our work beyond what is needed for them to carry out their specific role, consent to store and use their details will be sought.

A personal data breach must be reported to the ICO without delay, but not later than 72 hours after L2L2R becoming aware of it, if it could lead to significant risks to the rights and freedoms of individuals, i.e. volume or sensitivity is high. If the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, L2L2R will also inform those concerned directly and without undue delay. If a decision is made that the breach does not need to be reported, L2L2R will still retain a record of the breach and the decision made.

The Head of Operations, Matilda Tuke (matilda@l2l2r.org), is the designated point of contact for Data Protection matters and she is also responsible for recording any breaches that occur and reporting them when required.

The type of personal information we collect

Information currently collected and processed by L2L2R includes the following information:

- names, addresses and contact details for staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries (for example, name and contact details)
- DBS details and records of overseas police checks
- ID details
- educational information about beneficiaries
- photographs of staff, trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries
- employment data for staff.

Most of the personal information we process is provided to us directly for one of the following reasons:

- as part of the safer recruitment process for working for or volunteering for our organisation
- as part of the UK DBS checking process
- to allow us to track our services and measure the impact of our work
- to help us communicate with our beneficiaries
- to enable us to manage our HR functions, e.g. payroll
- as visual records of our work, used for reports, websites, social media and to facilitate grant funding.

Legal bases

Under the GDPR, the lawful bases we rely on for processing this information are:

- Individual consent. Consent can be removed at any time by contacting our Head of Operations, Matilda Tuke (matilda@l2l2r.org)
- We have a legal obligation
- We have a vital interest
- We need it to perform a public task
- We have a legitimate interest.

Rights

Under data protection law, everyone has rights including:

- right of access - the right to ask L2L2R for copies of your personal information
- right to rectification - the right to ask L2L2R to rectify personal information believed to be inaccurate and the right to ask for information to be completed where it is believed to be incomplete
- right to erasure - the right to ask L2L2R to erase personal information in certain circumstances
- right to restriction of processing - the right to ask L2L2R to restrict the processing of personal information in certain circumstances
- right to object to processing - the right to object to the processing of personal information in certain circumstances
- right to data portability - the right to ask that L2L2R transfer the personal information provided to another organisation or to an individual in certain circumstances.

Nobody is required to pay any charge for exercising these rights. If anyone makes a request, L2L2R will respond within one month at the latest.

How to complain

If anyone has any concerns about L2L2R's use of their personal information, complaints should be raised with our Head of Operations, Matilda Tuke (matilda@l2l2r.org).

15 Date of approval 26/06/25 Signature



Date for review July 2026