



Charity registration number: 1175288

Volunteer Policy documents for Learn to Love to Read (L2L2R)

These policies state 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 Founder and the Head of Operations and Impact.

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 but will depend on the school's timetable.
- Undertake L2L2Rs 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
- 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.

Other information

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. However, given the nature of the project, we do not foresee any circumstances where a volunteer would need to use their own finances. We are unable to pay travel expenses but will always endeavour to allocate volunteers to a school that is convenient for them.

Confidentiality

We ask all volunteers to understand that on occasions they may be privy to confidential information regarding children, including educational needs and assessment results. We expect all volunteers to maintain confidentiality at all times.

2 Date of approval 26/4/23 Signature  Date for review April 2024

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 this Volunteer Policy and the Volunteer Agreement, 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 and to provide the details of two referees. This form will also ask for permission to use and store their data in line with data protection rules.

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 also 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 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.

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.

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 nearby. 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 Learn to Love to Read. 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 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 may affect volunteering and other L2L2R events taking place in school. The L2L2R Helpline will also 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
- 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.