



VOLUNTEER TASK DESCRIPTION

Volunteer Role:	Education Befriender - SMILE Project
Section:	Children's Section
Reports to:	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Time Commitment:	Minimum one meeting a week for 12 months (possible evenings and weekends depending on client needs)

Context

SMILE Project

The Supporting and Mentoring in Learning and Education (SMILE) Project is a project funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and is part of the Children's Section of the Refugee Council. It is based in Yorkshire & Humberside, the West Midlands and London.

The project consists of three volunteer co-ordinators, a project manager and a research and web officers.

The project will recruit volunteers to support refugee and asylum seeking children, both unaccompanied and in families, to support them in their school or college placement, and to enable them to learn life skills and enjoy their learning.

There are three volunteering roles within the project – these are mentoring, befriending and school talk volunteers.

Volunteer Befriending role:

To volunteer with one young person for 12 months in order to support them in identifying school activities and other groups to enable them to increase their educational attainment and to enjoy their learning

Volunteer role:

To identify with the young person the assistance they require

To devise a support action plan, with the assistance of the volunteer co-ordinator

To accompany the young person on visits to the school or college

To undertake office based duties related to the young person's support, if and when necessary

To liaise with education and service providers involved in the young person's support

To have weekly meetings with the young person to monitor their progress

To enable and encourage the young person to make informed decisions about their education and leisure activities

To provide emotional support to the young person supported

To advocate on behalf of the young person, if and when necessary

To identify leisure activities and assist the young person in accessing them

To assist the young person in planning outings with the project, and accompany them if possible

To have fortnightly contact with the volunteer co-ordinator to feed back progress with client

To maintain links with workers from different organisations involved with the young person

To keep accurate records of action and progress made

To submit the volunteer activity record form to the volunteer co-ordinator on a regular basis

To communicate as a matter of urgency any child protection and health & safety concerns to the volunteer co-ordinator

To cooperate with the project researcher, as and when required

To research resources for the young people to access and disseminate this information to other volunteers and volunteer co-ordinator

To attend training sessions to support the befriending role as and when required

To feed back experience of the befriending role to the SMILE project

Person Specification

It is **essential** that volunteers within this role have:

- Some experience of working with or supporting young people
- Awareness around the needs of young people, especially separated children, and willingness to enhance it through training
- Awareness around child protection and willingness to enhance it through training
- Self-confidence and the ability to approach and talk to young people
- An ability to understand and abide by the Refugee Council lone working procedure
- A commitment to the work and values of the Refugee Council
- An understanding and commitment to equal opportunities in practice
- Effective communication skills, and a good level, and understanding of spoken and written English
- Ability to work as part of a team, as well as on their own with clients outside the office
- An understanding of the need to provide a quality service without becoming over-involved with individual clients
- Ability to access appropriate resources for young people.
- Basic IT skills – use of the internet and email.
- An understanding of confidentiality, impartiality and non-directive approach when working with clients.
- Must be able to use private or public transport in and around the project's area
- Must consent to and provide all relevant documentation for an enhanced disclosure by the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau)

Skills and experience likely to be gained from the role

- An understanding of the specific needs of asylum seeking and refugee children in the UK around educational attainment.
- Knowledge of the work of the Refugee Council Children's Section
- Knowledge of the British education system
- Knowledge of Child Protection and Health & Safety related to young people
- Experience of providing direct support to young people on a one to one basis
- Skills in developing personal boundaries and understanding the importance of maintaining these

Volunteers are reminded to:

1. Adhere to the principles of confidentiality, for example do not discuss your client's details out in the public domain including your own home environment.
2. Adhere to the principles of equal opportunities, for example by providing appropriate, sensitive and impartial services and being accessible to all asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of their personal circumstances
3. Adhere to clear boundaries, e.g. do not give out your telephone number; do not give any gifts however small or second hand they may be; and never lend, give or accept any money.

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