

Reading Volunteer roles at Doorstep Library



What does Doorstep Library do?

Doorstep Library is a community-focused charity dedicated to bringing the magic of books and the joy of reading directly into the homes of children across London who need our support.

We use books to fuel children's natural love of stories, fire their imaginations, and encourage their appreciation of reading. Our unique home-based service means we are there in person or online, finding the most appropriate books for every child we visit and building a relationship with the whole family. Our projects not only improve literacy and confidence in children, but also increase family wellbeing and bonding through the joy of sharing stories. Our volunteers encourage both parents and children to read for pleasure together from a young age. This kind of tailored support enables us to help prepare children for school and broaden their opportunities in life.



What do our Reading Volunteers do?

Doorstep Library Reading Volunteers visit the same families at home, online, or on their doorstep, every week with backpacks full of books and two little stools to share their love of reading with the children they visit.

Our volunteers don't just read stories though; they do silly voices, handpick the books, and give special recommendations for each child. And, at the end of the session, they leave behind a selection of books for the children to borrow for the week.

Through our long-term approach, our volunteers build trusting relationships with families, helping to connect them with the community and signposting to additional sources of local support. Whether in person, or online, we are there to support children and families who need us most.

Why volunteer with Doorstep Library?

- It's incredibly fun! You get to explore your inner child and share your passion for books and reading.
- You will be a part of the Doorstep Library community of families, volunteers and staff members.
- You can make a real difference to the lives of others.
- You give back to the community you live in or the community you visit every week.
- You build your confidence and improve your self-esteem.
- You will develop skills and enhance your C.V.



What will I be doing?

If this sounds like something you would enjoy, below you will find an outline of our two volunteering roles.

Home Reading Volunteer:

- You can volunteer on either a **Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday** during school term time **starting at 4.30pm and finishing at 7.00pm** or starting at 3:45pm and finishing at 6:30pm depending on the project. There are plenty of holiday breaks throughout the year as well as volunteers being entitled to 2 absences per term.
- You will volunteer at one of our projects in either Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Camden or Lambeth.
- You volunteer with the same volunteer partner each week and read with **five families** for 20 minutes each.
- We visit families either inside their homes or on the doorstep, depending on family preference.
- You will be **responsible** for arriving at the project base on time, choosing books and preparing for the sessions with your regular volunteer partner. Then visit families who live nearby at the agreed time, and completing post-visit records after your visits back at the project base.



Online Reading Volunteer:

- You can volunteer on either a **Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday** during school term time **starting at 4.30pm and finishing at 6.30pm**. There are plenty of holiday breaks throughout the year as well as volunteers being entitled to 2 absences per term.
- You will volunteer with the same volunteer partner each week and read with **three families**.
- Each reading session with the family lasts 20 minutes and will happen over **Zoom from your own home and device via the Doorstep Library database and Zoom account**.
- You will be **responsible** for joining the sessions at your agreed time and day, preparing for the session with your regular volunteer partner before visiting families. You will also contact the family should they be running late or need help with tech, and completing post-visit records after your visits.

What to expect from Doorstep Library?

- You will be **fully trained** in all aspects of becoming a Reading Volunteer so that you feel confident before starting sessions with families.
- You will receive regular contact with Doorstep Library staff members so that you are fully supported throughout your volunteer journey, especially during your trial period.
- You can receive additional training opportunities to develop your skills.
- We celebrate and recognise your time volunteering with us.



I can't commit on a weekly basis. Can I still get involved?

Of course! Whilst regular volunteers see the same families on a weekly basis, Stand-in Volunteers help to cover sessions when the regular volunteers are on holiday, unwell or for whatever reason are unable to make their usual reading session. We have both Home and Online Stand-in Reading Volunteer options, which do not require a weekly commitment but are essential to the smooth running of our service.

As a Stand-in Volunteer you will still volunteer on the same days as regular volunteers, either on a Monday, Tuesday or Thursday **starting at 4.30pm and finishing at 7.00pm for Home Reading Volunteers** and **starting at 4.30pm and finishing at 6.30pm for Online Reading Volunteers**.

Stand-in Volunteers get contacted in advance with the available slots, leaving you to volunteer on a day and at a location which is most convenient to you. From time-to-time regular volunteers may cancel their session at short notice. In these instances we may send you a text message asking if you are available to volunteer that day or next day, but in most cases you will receive plenty of notice.

We ask that you volunteer 12 times or more across the academic year between September and July. Some volunteers like to volunteer once a month while others prefer to volunteer multiple times across three months followed by a quieter period.

Why be a Stand-in Reading Volunteer

It's flexible: You can pick and choose the dates and locations that work best for you depending on your schedule. You don't have to volunteer on the same day and at the same location each time you volunteer.

It adds spontaneity to your weekly schedule: It mixes up your weekly schedule and allows you to do something new and exciting with your week.

It adds variety: Every project at Doorstep Library has its own unique feel. Becoming a stand-in provides you with a chance to work with a wide variety of families and a different volunteer partner each time you volunteer. As well as discovering new book choices and meeting lots of different staff members.

You are **incredibly valuable:** If we did not have Stand-in Volunteers, our projects simply would not take place. Stand-in Volunteers are a crucial part of our service.

What are the next steps?

Book into one of our virtual Information Sessions to find out more about what we do, and about all of our volunteer roles.

Email us at volunteer@doorsteplibrary.org.uk for more details.

Visit <https://volunteer.doorsteplibrary.org.uk>

We hope to see you there soon!



Reading Volunteer Specification



To become a Reading Volunteer you should:

- Be able to make a regular weekly commitment during school term time of at least 9 months
- Be compliant with our safeguarding procedures, complete an Enhanced DBS and Child Barred List check and provide two references
- Enjoy spending time with children and believe in education for all
- Have comfortable fluency in English
- Be non-judgmental and respectful of a variety of lifestyles and children's learning
- Have excellent communication skills - be able to listen to families and communicate efficiently with Team Leaders (including via text/emails/calls with Doorstep Library staff)
- Be able to make accurate and regular notes
- Be confident in using technology – for connecting with families via Zoom (Online Reading Volunteers) and completing records (both roles)
- Be organised - be able to multi-task in a multi-faceted role comprising of much more than solely reading to children
- Have good time management when managing your visits
- Be reliable - always attending a pre-agreed session and giving plenty of notice in advance of absences
- Be friendly - to build good relationships with families, your volunteer partner and the rest of the team
- Be confident - to lead the session or mentor a new volunteer
- Be patient, persistent and flexible - tailoring your approach to each family's needs.