

Becoming a school reading volunteer

Volunteering

If you are someone who is passionate about helping young people in Hastings to develop a lifelong love of reading and improve their literacy skills then you might think about becoming a school reading volunteer. You'll be making a real difference in the lives of the next generation, supporting them to develop the skills they'll need to achieve their potential.

What is school reading volunteering and why is it important?

A school reading volunteer is someone who volunteers at a local school to listen to pupils read one-to-one on a regular basis. Reading like this can help pupils to have more fun reading, develop their confidence and skill in reading, encourage them to read more and help them to overcome any challenges they face. Studies have also shown notable improvements in reading ability for children who read with an adult reading volunteer.

Benefits of volunteering

Benefits for the pupils

Pupils benefit by developing a positive relationship with volunteers who will support them with their reading. This helps develop their confidence and ability, and increase their long-term enjoyment of reading.

Benefits for the school

By becoming a school reader, you are providing the school with a valuable way of improving the attainment of underperforming pupils, offering rewarding one-to-one reading time which schools may be unable to offer themselves.

Benefits for the volunteer

You will gain pleasure from knowing that you are making a real difference in a child's life by helping to develop their literacy and interpersonal skills. You will also get the opportunity to see this progress first hand as you will often work regularly with the same children. You will also add valuable skills to your CV.

Where and when

If this is something that appeals to you then you might want to think about which school to volunteer at. Bear in mind that not all schools need, or are able, to host volunteers. You should also think about your availability and when you can volunteer. Speak with the school to find an arrangement that works for both sides. It may be that you volunteer weekly,

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fortnightly or monthly. It is likely that the school will want you to visit on a planned and regular basis, as this will help them with timetabling and provide the best support for the pupils.

Other things to consider

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly Criminal Records Bureau, CRB) – you may have to undergo a DBS screening and you will also need to agree to the school's volunteer and safeguarding policies
- It may take time to place you – each school will have different demand for school readers and may wish to recruit at a specific time of the year so it may take time for you to start

Next steps

- Get in touch with your local schools via email on their website
- Get in touch with Get Hastings Reading Hub manager if you have any questions about the process or need support getting up and running

Top tips to encourage reading enjoyment in pupils

- Offer praise when the pupil makes progress, the more specific the better
- Talk with your tutee about why they like reading
- Talk about what they are reading at the moment – what is their favourite part so far? Can they guess what will happen next? Which character do they like the best?
- Recommend reading materials that they have enjoyed in the past and encourage them to choose books themselves
- Support all forms of reading encouraging your partner to read and talk about magazines, comics, and websites, as well as fiction and non-fiction books
- Show an interest and ask questions about their reading choices
- Ask their teacher or school librarian for suggestions on what your tutee might like to read next
- Where possible, read some of your tutee's chosen books in order to generate discussion