



## Stepping Stones Volunteer Guidelines

Thank you for signing up to volunteer with Stepping Stones! As an organisation that relies heavily on the participation and quality of its volunteers, we ask that every volunteer read and abide by the following guidelines in order to ensure that Stepping Stones can continue to provide effective, rewarding English classes in the schools where our programs run, as well as ensure the safety of our students. As a representative of the Stepping Stones organisation, it is each and every volunteer's responsibility to carry out the mission and values of the organisation.

Before your first volunteer session, please read and agree to the following guidelines.

### General Volunteer Guidelines

- *Commitment* – Stepping Stones requires a high level of commitment from its volunteers. Typically we prefer volunteers to commit to volunteering for at least once a week, and for a whole school term at a time, though other schedules can also sometimes be accommodated. We also require that volunteers arrive at their volunteering destination at least ten minutes before their lesson is due to begin.

Whatever your volunteering commitment, we ask that you will do your best to fulfill it. If for whatever reason, you cannot attend one of your scheduled teaching sessions, it is your responsibility to contact your team coordinator as soon as possible to ensure that either a replacement can be found or the school & students can be advised in advance that the class is cancelled.

- *Proprietary curriculum* – As a member of the Stepping Stones community, volunteers will be provided private access to a wealth of teaching resources that have been developed over time by Stepping Stones volunteers. Since Stepping Stones' inception, its team of staff and volunteers have designed and refined unique teaching resources to support the migrant students' learning according to the local curriculum. These resources are shared with Stepping Stones' volunteers to facilitate lesson plan development and in-classroom teaching techniques. Information contained in these lesson plans is the sole property of Stepping Stones and may not be shared or distributed publicly for profitable or non-profitable purposes without prior consent from a full-time Stepping Stones staff member or Board Member. Any questions or comments regarding this matter should be directed to us at [coordinator@steppingstoneschina.net](mailto:coordinator@steppingstoneschina.net).
- *Volunteer referrals* – Stepping Stones has grown rapidly over the years largely thanks to volunteers inviting their friends, colleagues, classmates and family members to join Stepping Stones. Stepping Stones always welcomes new volunteers, but requires that these persons complete the same registration process, participate in the standard orientation and training and sign this Volunteer Agreement before entering the classroom as a Stepping Stones volunteer.

### Volunteering Behavioral Guidelines

The following list of behavioral guidelines are suggested by Stepping Stones to ensure that your volunteer experience is as enjoyable as possible and at the same time does not compromise the future of our programme or the safety and dignity of our students, their family members, teachers, schools or community centres.

- Respect the students, their teachers, family members, school and community centre staff; as visitors in the classrooms, volunteers should learn, respect and observe the school's rules and take advice from local staff on issues relating to discipline and security.
- A local teacher or adult community centre representative should always be on hand and should be sent for immediately in any emergency, or in a dangerous situation (e.g. children fighting) which the volunteer is unable to get under control.
- Always ensure the safety of the children while in the classroom; for this reason, sports and physical activity should be avoided, as this is not part of the standard Stepping Stones curriculum. Volunteers are required to familiarize themselves with the school's emergency procedures before teaching in the school.
- Never leave the children unattended during your class time. If for whatever reason you need to leave the classroom, ensure that there is another adult to cover for you during your absence.
- Never go to the school and teach when under the influence of alcohol and/ or illegal substances, regardless of volume consumed.
- When battling a contagious illness, such as flu, refrain from going to the school as not expose the students to health risks.
- Physical restraint should only be used when there is an immediate danger, or a strong likelihood of a child injuring him/herself or others, or seriously damaging property. If physical restraint of a child is necessary, this should be performed with another staff member or volunteer present. If you or any other volunteer is subject to physical violence and you can see no other way to manage it other than holding the child, do so in as non-intrusive manner, with force only sufficient to prevent him/her from damaging self or others. Talk gently to the child. Try to remain in control. Hitting, kicking, biting, punching by a child is never acceptable.
- Use only appropriate and respectful physical contact with the students. Respectful and affectionate physical contact, such as putting a hand on or around a child's shoulder or holding a young child's hand, can support and encourage. Cuddling, kissing or any other physical contact that could be misconstrued by children or other adults as sexual should be avoided. Never be alone with a child. In the unlikely instance of sexual advances from a student, don't make it a public issue, but gently and firmly tell the child that this is not acceptable behavior. Model healthy ways of expressing love and affection.
- As role models for the students, please dress appropriately for the classroom environment; formal dress however is not required – personal comfort may be more important in unheated / un-air-conditioned classrooms.
- The teaching or discussion of religion and politics are strictly forbidden by Chinese law. Any contravention of this law may lead to Stepping Stones volunteers no longer being welcome to teach in Chinese schools.

Should you have a query on any topic covered in this document, please contact a Stepping Stones staff member or your school coordinator for clarification.

Volunteers who fail to comply with any of these guidelines may not be permitted to continue volunteering with Stepping Stones.

For foreign volunteers: Please note that according to local laws, foreigners should always carry an I.D. with them, though a copy should normally suffice, and in practice foreigners are rarely asked to present their I.D. It is recommended to keep a digital copy of your passport and valid visa in your mobile device or a hard copy in your wallet, just in case.

### **Stepping Stones Volunteer Agreement**

I have read Stepping Stones Volunteer Guidelines and sought feedback/clarification from Stepping Stones staff where any point is unclear.

I agree to abide by these Guidelines.

I understand that as a representative of the Stepping Stones volunteer organisation, I will use sound judgment and discretion in all of my interactions with Stepping Stones staff, other volunteers, school and community centre staff and students.

I am residing / visiting China legally and have a valid passport and China visa.

I possess no criminal record in China or any other country.

I understand that Stepping Stones reserves the right to conduct a background check, as a standard precautionary measure, before or after I am assigned to any of its programs.

As a volunteer, I take full responsibility for my own personal safety, health and security and hold no other person or organisation in any way responsible for my personal safety, health or security.