

# Online Reading Volunteer Description



## What does Doorstep Library do?

Here at Doorstep Library we believe in the power of words to take you places. We are a not-for-profit community organisation dedicated to bringing the gift of books and the joy of reading into the homes of families who need our support. Our Home and Online Reading Volunteers go into homes in disadvantaged areas across London, to inspire a love of books, of stories and storytelling, and to instil a lifelong passion for reading.

Our volunteers build relationships with families bringing enthusiasm and books to fuel children's natural love of stories, fire their imaginations, and encourage their appreciation of reading. Our goal is to help each child develop the self-confidence and essential skills they need to access all the opportunities that will come their way in life. Whether in person, or online, we are there to support children and families who need us most.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has accelerated educational inequality at an alarming rate and continues to be a growing problem, with four in every ten children in London living in households in poverty. We have been fighting inequality in education since 2010, introducing the magic and benefits of reading to more than 1,600 children. In order to continue doing so, we've had to adapt our home-reading service, and have now launched our new Online Reading Corner – online reading sessions for children and families in their home. Through this new service, we will be able to support those families who need us most and reach even more children going forward.

## What do our Online Reading Volunteers do?

Every week, our Online Reading Volunteers bring the magic of reading directly into the homes of families living in disadvantaged areas via online reading sessions. They read with three families virtually on a set day each week and share their love of stories with children aged 0 – 11, finding the most appropriate books for every child they visit, and building a relationship with the whole family.

Doorstep Library volunteers don't just read stories though. They do the silly voices, they listen and they give special recommendations. By making it fun first, we inspire children to experience the joy of stories and books, and transform them into budding readers.

By really getting to know the families, we empower parents to get stuck into the sessions too and encourage them to get involved in their children's education. Sometimes we're just there to give a bit of extra support, whether we're passing on information about a family activity, lending an ear, or even just being a friendly face.

## How can I get involved?

If this sounds like the role for you, these are the basics:

- Reading sessions run on **Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday** afternoons after school during term-time
- You will be volunteering for **2 hours on a set day** each week from **4:30 pm - 6:30 pm**
- Volunteers will be in pairs and read with **3 families**
- Each session will last 20 minutes and will happen over **Zoom from your own home and device**
- To get the most out of your volunteer experience, we ask volunteers to make a sustainable **weekly commitment of at least 6 months**
- You will be **responsible** for joining the sessions at your agreed time and day, preparing for the session, contacting the family should they be running late or need help with tech, and completing notes at the end
- You will be **fully trained** in all aspects of becoming an Online Reading Volunteer, to feel confident before starting with families. A member of staff will always be on hand for support throughout your sessions and placement
- The **Volunteer Specification** below outlines the skills and qualities we are looking for in an Online Reading Volunteer
- The sessions will be child-led, and **lots of fun** for all involved!



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

Of course! We have a Stand-in Online Reading Volunteer option too which doesn't require a weekly commitment, but is essential to the smooth running of our reading sessions. Being a Stand-in still allows you to volunteer but with more flexibility if you can't make it every week. We just ask that you commit to at least 12 sessions spread throughout an academic year.

## What are the next steps?

**Book into one of our virtual Information Sessions to find out more about what we do and the Online Reading Volunteer role. Email [volunteer@doorsteplibrary.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@doorsteplibrary.org.uk) for more details, or visit [www.doorsteplibrary.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.doorsteplibrary.org.uk/volunteer). We hope to see you there soon!**

# Online Reading Volunteer Specification



- Enjoy spending time with children and believe in education for all
- Comfortable fluency in English
- Non-judgemental and respectful of a variety of lifestyles and children's learning
- Excellent communication skills - listening to families and communicating efficiently with Team Leaders (including via text/emails/calls with Doorstep Library staff)
- Note-taking - the ability to accurately and regularly complete records and reports
- Organised - multi-tasking in a multi-faceted role comprising of much more than solely reading to children
- Time management - when managing your visits and attending the project
- Reliable - always attending a pre-agreed session and giving plenty of notice in advance of absences
- Friendly - to build good relationships with families, your volunteer partner and the rest of the team
- Confident - to lead the round or mentor a new volunteer
- Patience, persistence and flexibility - tailoring your approach to each family's needs.