

## Stepping Stones Volunteer Agreement

Prior to volunteering with Stepping Stones, please read through the following guidelines carefully to ensure your volunteer experience is as enjoyable as possible and does not compromise the future of our programs or the safety and dignity of our students, their family members, teachers, schools or community centers.

### **1. Volunteer Participation**

- 1.1 As a Stepping Stones volunteer, you agree to provide voluntary services without compensation on our behalf to improve the general welfare and education of disadvantaged children in China.
- 1.2 All volunteers must complete our orientation and attend a program training.
- 1.3 Some programs may have additional requirements, which will be explained in that program's Supplementary Agreement.
- 1.4 You must be legally visiting / residing in China and have a valid Chinese ID or passport with a valid Chinese visa, and can provide copies of these to Stepping Stones.
- 1.5 You must possess no criminal record in China or any other country.
- 1.6 Stepping Stones reserves the right to conduct a background check as a standard precautionary measure, before or after a volunteer is assigned to any of its programs.
- 1.7 Our programs generally require a high level of commitment from volunteers and we ask that you do your best to fulfill the volunteering requirement of the program that you are participating in. Volunteers must provide advance notice if they are unable to teach a class. The requirement may differ between different programs, but in general a minimum of 48 hours' notice is needed if, for some unforeseen reason, you are not able to teach your class.

### **2. Behavior and Safety**

- 2.1. During your volunteering period, you will meet people from many different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Please treat them all with equal respect. This includes your students, their teachers and family members, other volunteers and Stepping Stones staff. Never talk disrespectfully about our partner schools and community centers, the local area or the way things are done in their community.
- 2.2. Avoid teaching or discussing the topics of religion and politics, as it is strictly forbidden by Chinese law.
- 2.3. Use only appropriate and respectful physical contact with students. For example, there is nothing wrong with putting a hand on a child's shoulder or holding a young child's hand to encourage them. Cuddling, kissing, or any other physical contact that may be construed by others as inappropriate behavior is not acceptable and could lead to your dismissal as a volunteer. Never be alone with a child.
- 2.4. Private communications with students under the age of 18 without the supervision of the parent/legal guardian is not acceptable.

- 2.5. 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. It should be performed with another staff member or volunteer present, in a non-intrusive manner with only sufficient force to prevent the child from damaging self or others. Under no circumstance should corporal punishment ever be used and no other type of violence, threat, intimidation, or harassment will be tolerated towards anyone in Stepping Stones' programs.
- 2.6. It is never acceptable for students to hit, kick, bite or punch others. A local staff member should be sent for immediately in any emergency or dangerous situation.
- 2.7. Never teach under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances, regardless of volume consumed.
- 2.8. Do not go to a program site if you have a contagious illness.
- 2.9. Never leave the students unattended during your class time. If you need to leave the classroom, ensure that there is another adult to cover for you during your absence.
- 2.10. To ensure the safety of the students, sports and physical activity should be avoided.
- 2.11. Please familiarize yourself with the school's emergency procedures before teaching and take advice from local staff on issues relating to discipline and security.
- 2.12. If you receive private requests from parents, local teachers, etc. to perform additional services to our beneficiaries outside of Stepping Stones programs' scope, you are not required to accept. You are encouraged to do only what you are comfortable with and inform us if you have any concerns. Stepping Stones is not responsible for additional services that are privately arranged between volunteers and beneficiaries.
- 2.13. If you notice or suspect inappropriate behavior by other volunteers, staff members or staff at the volunteering site, we strongly encourage you to voice your concerns to Stepping Stones staff or Executive Director ([director@steppingstones.china.net](mailto:director@steppingstones.china.net)). All such issues will be handled with appropriate confidentiality. Please also keep Stepping Stones staff informed of any other incidences or issues relating to safety and security at your volunteering site.
- 2.14. Avoid giving gifts to students. Encouragement can be provided in your classes via stickers, stamps, high-fives, verbal praise, etc.
- 2.15. Volunteers are not expected to dress formally, but they are expected to dress conservatively and maintain a smart appearance. Please wear appropriate clothing for teaching, something that comes to your knee, covers your shoulders, does not show too much skin and is not low-cut. This will help you maintain respect from the students.
- 2.16. Stepping Stones is not liable for any injuries caused by accidents / incidents at program sites. Stepping Stones may purchase insurance coverage for selected sites; however this is not comprehensive coverage. Volunteers are expected to have their own health and accident insurance and take full responsibility of their own personal safety, health and security.

### **3. Copyright & Confidentiality**

- 3.1. As a volunteer, you may be privy to information about students, parents, schools, community centers and other volunteers. This information is confidential and cannot to be used for personal or professional purposes without prior written consent from Stepping Stones.
- 3.2. Teaching materials, documents and resources provided to volunteers are the sole property of Stepping Stones and may not be shared or distributed for profitable or non-profitable purposes without prior written consent from Stepping Stones.
- 3.3. Publicity (photos, video, social media posts, blogs, etc) is welcome, but please do not publicise the names of the children, school or community center, or provide details that could allow others to identify the location. Please do not take photos of things that could be considered sensitive.
- 3.4. Stepping Stones may take photos or videos at our project sites which may be used in our printed and electronic publicity and training materials. Please inform us if you are not willing for your image to be used.
- 3.5. Please notify Stepping Stones if you receive any requests from the media to share your volunteer experiences.

### **4. Ending your volunteer role and dismissal**

- 4.1. Volunteers who do not follow these guidelines can be removed from volunteering with Stepping Stones.
- 4.2. If you wish to terminate your volunteering commitment with Stepping Stones, please give us sufficient advance notice so that our programs are not negatively impacted by your departure. You are more than welcome to join us again in the future.

I would like to volunteer with Stepping Stones, have read these guidelines and sought clarification from Stepping Stones where any point is unclear. I have understood all the risks involved, and am in sufficiently good health for this assignment. By signing below I agree to comply with Stepping Stones' Volunteer Agreement as laid out in this document.