

Children and Families Programme

Volunteer Introduction



Thank you for your interesting in volunteering with our Children and Families Programme. To join the team, you must first register as a BPCG volunteer: [click here](#).

We value the contribution you can make. This document introduces the programme and sets out the Code of Conduct we expect all our volunteers to follow when working with children. **Please read through the document carefully and then confirm with the Children and Families Programme Manager that you have read and agree to it by emailing education@brockwellgreenhouses.org.uk**

Once you have provided this confirmation, you can sign up for any session on the Children and Family Volunteer Rota by adding your name next to the session you would like to attend. For all sessions, we ask that you arrive a minimum of half an hour before the listed start time and remain on site at least half an hour afterward to help with tidying away. Details about our sessions can be found below.

The Children and Families Rota can be accessed [here](#).

You must register as a volunteer and also confirm that you have read this guidance before you sign up.

Background information

Our Children and Families Programme is central to the charity's vision and mission. It operates onsite Monday-Wednesday while on Thursday-Sunday the site is open to the general public and for garden volunteer activities. We aim to create an attractive and welcoming space which provides a haven for local people of all backgrounds. We want to build community and improve lives by encouraging people to take part in gardening, nature-based learning and a range of creative activities.

The key aim of the Children and Families Programme is to give participants a positive experience of our green space so that they will begin to value green spaces more. Throughout our sessions, we encourage children to have a first-hand experience of the garden. However, bear in mind that we need to be custodians of the garden, encouraging children to care for the plants, animals and resources on site.

Participants are encouraged to follow these rules and we expect all volunteers to help support them:

1. **Treat the plants with care** (Don't trod on them or pick anything without permission.)
2. **Respect the animals** (This is their home. Try to be calm, quiet and respectful.)
3. **Walk carefully** (Running can cause trips and falls. Avoid nettles and brambles.)
4. **Stick with the adults** (Roaming is allowed but make sure you can see adults at all times.)
5. **Keep hands away from your face** (to prevent germs from entering the body from dirty hands.)

Types of sessions

The programme currently includes these activities:

1. **Story Stompers** - our weekly sessions every Tuesday morning for preschool children and their parents/carers, up to 15 children can book on each week. Because each child comes with an accompanying adult, volunteers aren't essential for these sessions, and they are generally not included on the volunteer rota. However, we are happy to have volunteers join us if you want to. Get in touch if you are interested.
2. **SEND secondary school sessions** - four sessions every Wednesday for pupils aged 16-18 who attend local schools that cater for special educational needs and disabilities, 6-10 pupils with varying levels of need per session, generally the same pupils attend across each half term. The adult to pupil ratio

is quite high for these sessions but additional adults are useful to help engage those who are struggling and to support the session leader.

3. **SEND primary school sessions** – these are less regular and can include one-off bookings or a series of sessions. As above, the adult to child ratio is already quite high but we are happy to have additional adults who are interested in supporting these types of sessions.
4. **School sessions** – This is the area where extra volunteers are most useful. These are one-off sessions booked mostly by primary schools for individual classes of up to 30 pupils. They can also be booked by nursery classes or secondary schools. The sessions will generally follow one of these four topics (more details can be found [here](#)):
 - a. How does a garden grow?
 - b. The Edible Garden
 - c. Living Things and their Habitat
 - d. Humans and the Environment
5. **Holiday activities** - we also run workshops and special events over the holidays. Often these are for children and their families. Support is needed in setting up, delivering and tidying up.

Sessions are listed on the [Children and Family Volunteer Rota](#) where timings are also provided.

Role and responsibilities

The expectation is that children and family volunteers carry out these duties:

- Enthuse 'Children and Family Programme' participants in the beautiful gardens of Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, giving them a greater appreciation of green spaces more widely.
- Support delivery of the sessions by carrying out tasks such as:
 - Initiating discussions with children in response to activities set by the session leader.
 - Providing support to children as needed for activities and tasks – helping them to undertake the tasks themselves rather than doing it for them.
 - Encouraging children to remain focused and engaged with discreet reminders.
 - Encourage them to respond to instructions given by the session leader.
 - Support moving children around the site in response to directions from the session leader – ensuring they stick together and regroup as needed.
 - Providing accurate answers to questions that arise when confident to do so and consulting the session leader or respond 'I don't know' whenever there are uncertainties
- Setting up resources and equipment for sessions and ensuring it is put away ready for future use.
- Following the BPCG code of conduct to positively represent the organisation to the community.

Code of Conduct

Our Children and Families Programme enables us to engage a true cross-section of the local community. Because many of our bookings come directly from schools rather than individuals, participants in these sessions may not have an interest in nature-based activities (yet). Therefore, observing a worm or touching the soil may be new to many of the kids who visit. This needs to be kept in mind when interacting with children. We expect all volunteers to act as champions for nature, modelling respectful behaviour and enthusing children in the natural world.

1. Supervision

- 1.1. You should be supervised by a member of staff at all times when working with children unless you have obtained a valid enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. Please ensure you are never alone with an individual child.
- 1.2. You should follow the guidance and instructions given by members of staff.

2. Professional Relationships

- 2.1. At all times you should maintain a 'professional' relationship with all visitors and staff. This will minimise the risk of any allegations of inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.2. You should limit physical contact with children, ensuring physical contact is only ever in response to their needs at the time.
- 2.3. Do not share personal information about yourself such as contact details.
- 2.4. If a child tells you something or you see something that concerns you this should be reported to the session leader immediately. (Refer to the [Safeguarding Policy](#) for more details.)
- 2.5. Dress appropriately for the setting and the tasks and role you will undertake.
- 2.6. Talk politely and calmly to all pupils (avoid offensive language at all times).
- 2.7. Offer encouragement and praise.
- 2.8. Promote and follow the session rules as outlined above.
- 2.9. You should act respectfully towards all children, parents, carers, staff and other volunteers, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or beliefs.

3. Use of mobile phones

- 3.1. Please avoid using a mobile phone during sessions.
- 3.2. Do not take pictures during the session unless you have been directly asked to do so.

4. If you are unable to attend

- 4.1. If you have signed up to help but cannot make it, please phone or text the children and families programme manager on 07427 685714 as soon as you can.

Please confirm with the Children and Families Manager by email that you have read and agree to this guidance: education@brockwellgreenhouses.org.uk before signing up on the [Children and Family Rota](#).

Thank you for your offer of help. Any time you can give is greatly appreciated.