



After school club: Volunteer Role Description

After school club provides activities, homework support and English language conversation practice to asylum-seeking children living in an asylum hotel in Birmingham. The children range in age from pre-school to eighteen years old and come from many different backgrounds, cultures and languages. Many of the children access school or pre-school but have limited opportunities for activities outside of school hours. Many have been living in the hotel for many months, living in just one room and on a very low income. The aim of the club is to promote wellbeing, provide stimulation and reduce isolation: through the sessions themselves and also through the development of language skills and confidence to enable the children to better integrate into their communities. It is also meant to be fun!

Birch Network takes the welfare of everyone participating in activities extremely seriously. Volunteers are expected to understand and abide by our safeguarding policies and personal boundaries guidance. This role includes regular and sustained contact with children, and will therefore require a DBS check, following a supervised probationary period.

The afterschool club is a service offered to any children who live in the hotel, regardless of age, gender, nationality or ethnic group, culture, faith, etc. All volunteers must abide by our equal opportunities policy and treat everyone fairly.

The afterschool club runs on Tuesday afternoon from 4.30 – 6pm. Volunteers are needed from 4pm to set-up, until about 6.30pm to clear away.

Tasks

Tasks before, during and after the session include (but are not necessarily limited to!):

- Create a culture of welcome and friendship: smile, engage people in conversation, etc. Be particularly attentive to anyone who is new, or who seems more isolated from the others.
- Invite and encourage children to engage and participate, but without coercion: children should be free to choose whether they want to join in
- Remain aware and sensitive to the potential for some topics or conversations to be difficult or emotional for some of those attending. Ensure children (and their parents) feel safe to talk or free not to about different subjects.
- Arrange the space as required, which may include moving furniture, and set out resources and materials as appropriate.
- Assist in facilitating activities, conversations and games. In time you may also be involved in planning, preparing and leading activities with groups of children.
- Ensure the register is completed each session.
- If you feel able to, respond to and assist with issues presented by families, such as sign-posting to other services. Or direct them to the staff member who may be able to do this. If it isn't appropriate to deal with the issue immediately, note down the concerns so they can be responded to later.
- Clear away all materials and ensure room is left in a reasonable state.

There are also some clear boundaries of tasks not to do:

- Do not accompany children to the toilet or engage in any personal care: this is their parents responsibility

- Do not give anything which could be construed as legal advice in relation to someone's immigration case: if in doubt, check.

Skills/Qualities/Experience

We are looking for volunteers who could attend the sessions on a weekly or fortnightly basis and who:

- Are committed to supporting asylum seekers and refugees
- Have good listening skills and are empathetic to the difficult situation the children and families find themselves in
- Have experience of supporting children with activities / schoolwork / English conversation (not essential)
- Are willing to be flexible to the variety of needs of the different children and adapt the sessions where necessary.

Contact

If you are interested in this role, please contact Steph: stephanie@birchnetwork.org

Find out more about our work: www.birchnetwork.org