



# Going to School Volunteer Engagement Policy

*Empowering Service | Ensuring Safety | Enabling Equity*

## 1. Introduction

Volunteers are a valued and integral part of **Going to School (GTS)**. Whether they contribute through field support, storytelling, content creation, translation, accessibility assistance, research, or mentorship, volunteers help extend the reach, relevance, and impact of GTS programs.

This **Volunteer Engagement Policy** outlines the principles, procedures, and protections guiding volunteer participation to ensure that all engagements are **ethical, inclusive, safe, meaningful, and rights-based**.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Define how volunteers can contribute to GTS's mission across departments and projects
- Ensure volunteer activities are aligned with **child protection, DEI, and organizational ethics**
- Establish standards for recruitment, training, conduct, supervision, and grievance redressal
- Create a respectful, inclusive environment where volunteers and communities mutually benefit

## 3. Scope of Application

This policy applies to:

- All individuals volunteering with GTS (including short-term, long-term, remote, field-based, and event-specific volunteers)
- Volunteers working with school programs, community outreach, youth engagement, research, translation, digital content, and office support
- Interns and fellows serving in unpaid or partially compensated roles
- National and international volunteers

Volunteers are **not employees** and are not entitled to wages, benefits, or employment status. However, GTS extends volunteers the same dignity, respect, and safety as staff.



## 4. Core Principles

### 4.1 Volunteering is Voluntary

Volunteers freely choose to offer their time and expertise. Participation is never coerced, exchanged for favors, or conditional on employment or academic advancement.

### 4.2 Dignity and Inclusion

All volunteers are treated with fairness and respect, regardless of age, gender identity, caste, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or educational background.

### 4.3 Child-Centered Practice

Volunteers are expected to uphold the **GTS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** and never engage in unsupervised or undocumented interactions with children.

### 4.4 Clarity and Transparency

Volunteers receive clear communication about expectations, tasks, support, and time commitment. No one is asked to contribute beyond what was agreed.

### 4.5 Reciprocity and Learning

GTS sees volunteering as a two-way exchange—volunteers contribute to impact, and in return, gain skills, insight, mentorship, and a shared sense of purpose.

## 5. Categories of Volunteers

Type	Role	Examples
<b>Field Volunteer</b>	Supports school or community programs	Assisting with workshops, observations, photography
<b>Creative Volunteer</b>	Collaborates on storytelling and content	Translating subtitles, reviewing scripts, graphic support
<b>Research Volunteer</b>	Aids in data collection, analysis	Survey support, transcription, documentation
<b>Administrative Volunteer</b>	Provides operations/logistics assistance	Filing, data entry, reception, office organization
<b>Remote/Digital Volunteer</b>	Works virtually	Accessibility review, social media support, remote coding

## 6. Recruitment and Selection



## 6.1 Application Process

- Volunteers apply through a form on the GTS website or are referred through partner institutions
- Applications include intent, background, skills, availability, and areas of interest

## 6.2 Screening

- Interviews are conducted (in person or remotely) to ensure alignment of values and suitability for volunteer tasks
- Volunteers interacting with children are required to submit:
  - Proof of identity
  - Self-declaration regarding criminal background
  - Consent to adhere to safeguarding policies

## 6.3 Acceptance and Orientation

- Selected volunteers receive:
  - A formal letter of engagement (duration, role, scope)
  - GTS Volunteer Handbook
  - Policy briefings: Child Protection, Code of Conduct, DEI, Ethics
  - Supervisor assignment and introductory call/meeting

## 7. Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers must:

- Act with honesty, humility, and professionalism
- Respect confidentiality of data, children, and community stories
- Follow GTS's **Child Protection**, **DEI**, and **POSH** policies
- Never take photos, post stories, or share children's identities without written consent
- Report any safeguarding concerns or policy breaches immediately
- Respect the values, leadership, and feedback of children and community members



Volunteers **must not**:

- Represent GTS publicly or with media without written authorization
- Request or accept gifts or compensation from children/families
- Give gifts, personal contact details, or money to beneficiaries
- Be alone with a child at any time
- Use their role to seek personal, commercial, or academic gain

## 8. Support and Supervision

- Each volunteer is assigned a **point of contact/supervisor**
- Regular check-ins are held to discuss progress, feedback, and support needs
- Volunteers are invited to GTS events, team discussions, and feedback sessions
- Reference letters, certificates, or endorsements may be provided upon successful completion and supervisor feedback

## 9. Duration and Termination

- Volunteer terms may vary from **1 day to 1 year**, depending on the role
- Either party can terminate the engagement with a **written explanation and 1-week notice**
- GTS reserves the right to suspend or terminate any volunteer engagement in cases of:
  - Misconduct or breach of policy
  - Reputational or safety risk
  - Repeated absenteeism or non-performance

## 10. Health, Safety, and Insurance

- Volunteers participating in field activities are briefed on:
  - Travel safety
  - Emergency contact protocols



- GTS does not provide personal accident or health insurance. Volunteers are advised to ensure personal coverage.

## 11. Recognition

- GTS honors volunteer contributions through:
  - Acknowledgment in reports or events

## 12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Volunteers must sign and adhere to GTS's **Data Protection Agreement**
- Any photographs, quotes, recordings, or observations are:
  - Used only for agreed purposes
  - Anonymized or consented to in writing
  - Not stored or shared beyond the GTS system

## 13. Grievance and Feedback Mechanism

- Volunteers may raise concerns about staff, practices, or ethics through:
  - **[integrity@goingtoschool.com](mailto:integrity@goingtoschool.com)**
  - **[safeguarding@goingtoschool.com](mailto:safeguarding@goingtoschool.com)** (if involving child safety)
  - Online feedback/reporting form
- GTS commits to:
  - Acknowledging all complaints within 48 hours
  - Investigating impartially and confidentially
  - Offering support and non-retaliation protections

## 14. Oversight and Policy Review

- The **Volunteer Engagement Coordinator** and **HR Lead** oversee implementation
- The policy is reviewed annually to:
  - Incorporate volunteer feedback



- Address field or legal changes
- Improve safety, ethics, and inclusiveness

## **15. Alignment with GTS Policies**

This policy is implemented alongside:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Ethics & Whistleblower Policy
- DEI and Accessibility Commitments
- Data Protection and Storytelling Guidelines
- POSH and Grievance Redressal Mechanisms