

## **Engineers Without Borders Ireland Volunteering and Child Protection Policy**

Engineers Without Borders Ireland does not work directly with children or vulnerable people. We do however offer the opportunity for our members to volunteer on the STEPS programme run by Engineers Ireland, the professional body for engineers in Ireland.

Any EWB-Ireland volunteers who participate in this programme must be over 18 and must adhere to the policies and rules of STEPS. These are outlined below;

### **1. The Engineers Ireland STEPS programme**

The Engineers Ireland STEPS Programme works in strategic partnership with Science Foundation Ireland on Smart Futures, a collaborative government-industry-education programme promoting STEM careers to post-primary students in Ireland. STEPS is managed by Engineers Ireland and supported by Science Foundation Ireland, the Department of Education and Skills, and a number of major engineering employers.

### **2. Goals**

- Encouraging a positive attitude towards science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Introducing to students the relevance of science, engineering, technology and mathematics to industry and everyday life.
- Raising a positive awareness and understanding of engineering as a career choice.
- Promoting a greater understanding of the role and contribution of engineering in society.
- Highlighting the advantages, diversity, opportunities and excellent rewards offered by a career in engineering.

### **3. Child Protection- Important volunteer information**

The nature of volunteering with STEPS means that as a STEPS volunteer you will come in contact with young people (less than 18 years of age).

It's important that you take the time to review the Volunteer Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Policy statement in advance of volunteering as part of your induction to STEPS.

#### **3.1. Safety**

It is important that you should not be in a situation where you are left alone with a young person. STEPS will take care to ensure the safety of all volunteers as far as is reasonably practicable.

It is also the responsibility of volunteers to ensure their own health and safety when dealing with members of the public or school students and to act safely and responsibly. Volunteers should immediately contact the STEPS team to report any accidents, injuries or concerns that occur while volunteering.



### **3.2. Photography**

If you wish to organise a photo of your visit (i.e. for a company newsletter etc.) then please advise STEPS who will forward consent forms to you in advance of your visit.

### **3.3. Garda vetting**

Any volunteer who may have unsupervised access to children must undergo Garda Vetting as part of their recruitment process.

The STEPS team requires all volunteers volunteering on behalf of STEPS more than eight times per annum to undergo Garda Vetting.

*Note: The Engineers Ireland STEPS Garda Vetting Policy is appended to this document.*

## **4. Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of STEPS and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of STEPS and Smart Futures, volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive image of STEPS and Smart Futures to the outside world.

### **4.1. Volunteers with STEPS will:**

- Portray a positive image of STEPS and Smart Futures.
- Prepare for the volunteer role by attending regular training sessions, reviewing STEPS presentation materials and referencing the STEPS and Smart Futures websites' resources.
- Wear clothes appropriate to their responsibilities; they should be clean and tidy at all times.
- Report for their volunteer role in a timely manner and free from influence of alcohol and drug related substances.
- Show respect and consideration at all times for fellow volunteers of STEPS, members of the public and other volunteers.
- Encourage a young person with positive words at all times.
- Keep staff informed of progress, concerns and problems with the role.
- Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as representatives of STEPS.
- Avoid activity that could be considered detrimental to STEPS and Smart Futures and which could specifically result in personal injury to themselves, other volunteers or a member of the public.
- Report any accidents or injuries while volunteering.
- Endeavour to follow all STEPS policies and procedures that apply to their role.
- Volunteer with the STEPS programme at least twice per year.

The nature of volunteering with STEPS and Smart Futures means that STEPS volunteers will come in contact with young people (less than 18 years of age). It is important that volunteers should not be in a situation where they are left alone with a young person.



#### **4.2. Volunteers with STEPS will not:**

- Physically touch a young person; (handshakes are acceptable)
- Contact a young person directly in any way (via email, text, befriend on social media, phone or arrange to meet in person after the activity).
- Take photos/videos of a young person unless their teacher/parent has completed a consent form.
- Use vulgar or inappropriate language, or make remarks that could be considered offensive.
- Discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status or disability, and/or sexual orientation.
- Take any action that could threaten the health or safety of themselves, a young person, other volunteers or members of the public.

#### **5. Child Protection Policy Statement**

The Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme encourages primary and post-primary students to explore the world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics while also promoting engineering as a career of choice. STEPS interact with children across many platforms.

All STEPS post-primary activity is part of the national Smart Futures programme. Smart Futures is a collaborative government- industry partnership promoting STEM careers to post-primary students in Ireland. It is managed by SFI's Discover a partnership with Engineers Ireland STEPS programme.

STEPS are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children while they are participating in events run by or on behalf of STEPS. Our aim is to create a safe, creative and fun environment where children and young people across all levels can engage with volunteer engineers and where their welfare is paramount. To realise this aim, we will adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

#### **STEPS undertakes to:**

- Treat children with care, respect and dignity
- Ensure communication with children is open and clear
- Assess the risks posed to children when undertaking activities
- Ensure volunteers never spend time alone with children away from other adults
- Recognise that all children have a right to protection from harm or abuse
- Ensure best practice in the recruitment of staff or volunteers, which includes good HR practices in interviewing, induction training, probation, Garda vetting (where required)
- Provide guidance for staff and volunteers, who may have grounds for concern about the welfare of children involved
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters