

# gateways

because there's more  
than one way to be educated



# Volunteer Handbook

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**Every young person deserves an education,  
no matter the challenges they face”.**

Laurence Field – Gateways CEO

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A WOHL RONSON PARTNERSHIP

# Dear Volunteer and Colleague,

May I say a huge 'thank you' for sharing our vision and taking the time to become a volunteer with Gateways. Our volunteers offer invaluable support to help us deliver our services to countless young Jewish people between the ages of 14-25 who are, or have struggled, to remain in mainstream education.

Your skills, expertise and positive, friendly attitude have an enormous and lasting impact to everyone we work with. We offer a range of volunteer opportunities across the organisation, including roles in vocational and life skills courses, enrichment activities, outings, fundraising events and campaigns. Volunteers also assist with our 'back office' functions and help govern the organisation through our Board of Trustees. I hope that you will enjoy your volunteering time with us and gain as much from your experiences with us as we will from you. Acts of kindness generate so much more than people often realise; not only are you helping the person in front of you, but you are also making a difference to their family members and community.

Welcome to the Gateways family and thank you so much for all you do.

Laurence

Laurence Field  
Chief Executive Officer  
Gateways



# About Gateways



Gateways believe that every young person should have the same opportunity to progress and thrive, regardless of the challenges they face. A growing number of young people struggle to function within mainstream education with many believing that there is no other option available to them.

As an alternative education provider, Gateways offers bespoke teaching for each student, all requiring another approach to learning.

Students attending Gateways are ages 14+, they generally struggle to remain in mainstream school, due to poor mental health, critical illness and social and emotional challenges, preventing them from accessing the education they deserve.

Delivering a broad curriculum, this unique offering in the UK Jewish community, caters for the interests, abilities and specific needs of each student and prepares them for a life beyond education.



# Why we welcome volunteers

Our volunteers make an invaluable contribution to our organisation. Our students experience a greater sense of belonging, increased self-esteem, and well-being as a result of interaction with a volunteer.

Volunteering has many benefits for individuals, communities, and organisations. People who volunteer gain confidence, learn new skills, and develop a real sense of belonging to their communities whilst helping to improve the quality of life for local people.

We ask all our volunteers to sign an informal agreement as part of our volunteering processes.

**It is our aim for the experience of volunteering to be mutually satisfying and rewarding for staff, students and volunteers.**

## A little about our volunteers

Volunteers are central to the work and purpose of our organisation and their contributions are highly valued and have a direct impact on the work we do.

Gateways is currently growing its small team of committed volunteers who volunteer for a variety of reasons... whether it be to give something back, support a personal passion, develop new skills, or gain experience. Each volunteer is unique and brings a range of knowledge, skills, and experiences, which enriches our services by providing a different perspective, and ensuring we are responsive to needs.

## Ways to get involved

**By offering practical help, volunteers can improve the quality of life of others and at the same time build up community spirit. We look for committed volunteers who can share our passion and offer support across a range of roles. There are lots of ways volunteers can become involved with Gateways. Here are some examples:**

- Support in one of our vocational courses
- Support in one of our life skills courses
- Volunteer in our lunchtime student cafe
- Support our enrichment & engagement activities
- Support our Termly 'Enrichment Week'
- Support our 'Outings' programme
- Support our 'back office' functions
- Volunteer as an exam invigilator
- Volunteer in our 'Homework Club'
- Become a student 'mentor'
- Help us raise funds including organising events
- Supporting fundraising activities



If there are any other areas where you feel you could contribute, please let us know.



# Expectations



## What can volunteers expect from us?

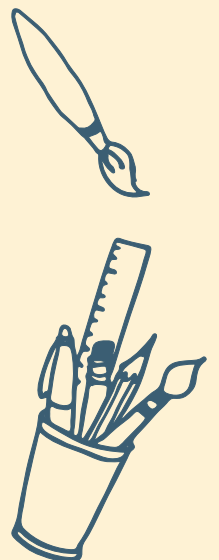
We will ensure all volunteers:

- are valued and respected.
- have a clear and defined role profile outlining the tasks they are being asked to perform.
- are offered flexibility in their volunteering opportunities and take into account any other commitments they might have.
- are covered by Gateways insurance, unless driving their own vehicles for volunteering purposes.
- have a comprehensive induction and receive appropriate training and tools to carry out their roles effectively.
- have support and help in their work from a named contact person, who will provide support, supervision and guidance including training and development opportunities.
- have the opportunity to attend training sessions to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- are protected against exploitation of their interests, both as individuals and as volunteers. They should not be put under any moral pressure to do work which goes against their principles.
- are adequately protected against any risks, which may arise from doing voluntary work.
- do not suffer any financial loss through doing voluntary work and will receive reasonable out of pocket expenses and be provided with appropriate equipment/tools/materials to enable them to carry out their tasks.
- have a voice within the organisation - we will ask for your views and ideas whenever we can.
- will be valued and the hard work, achievements and commitment of our volunteers will be much appreciated and celebrated.



## We expect our volunteers to:

- understand our values and behave appropriately.
- treat everyone with dignity, respect, consideration, and appreciation.
- engage with our volunteering programme and team.
- be reliable and trustworthy.
- only perform tasks outlined in their role description.
- take part in any meetings and training required for their role.
- inform the volunteer team or appropriate lead person if, for any reason, they cannot fulfil their commitment.
- keep us informed about their voluntary work and feedback about their aspect of delivery
- bring to our attention any concerns or comments they might have to their named contact person or a member of the volunteering team



# Recruitment



Equal Opportunities principles outlined in Gateways' policies and procedures will be adhered to with regard to the recruitment of volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted and positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate, for example if a person has specified a volunteer of a particular gender.

Selection of volunteers will always be carried out without regard to protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

All volunteers are required to complete a DBS before commencing volunteering with us. The DBS will be at either standard or enhanced level dependant on the role. All volunteers will be required to present their original DBS certificate to the Volunteer team and agree to be signed up for the online update service within 19 days of receiving their DBS certificate.

We also require all potential volunteers to provide 2 references (from previous volunteering or employment roles), and upon receipt of these and DBS check, the volunteer is notified, and a plan will be put in place to commence in their volunteering roles.

Once the position has been accepted, a formal agreement will be signed by both parties, which includes the responsibilities to be undertaken by both the organisation and the volunteer.

## Induction

Every volunteer is offered a full and comprehensive induction, which will vary according to the role undertaken, but may include:

- an introduction to our work.
- a tour of the building in which they will be based.
- an introduction to their named Contact Person and other members of the team.
- health, safety and security, kashrut advice and guidance.
- our key policies and procedures.
- practical guidance e.g. where they will be based and use of equipment.
- any support needs the volunteer might have.
- an overview of our work with the Head Teacher.
- a meeting with class teacher/activity lead to learn more about the specific role.
- an introduction to the CEO.

Each volunteer will be issued with personal identification badge and lanyard, which they will be required to return if they cease to be a volunteer.





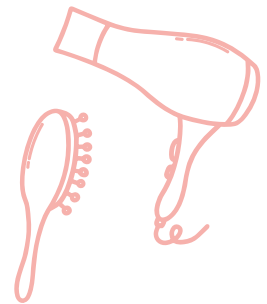
# Our Volunteer Training

We want all our volunteers to be confident in their role, so we provide learning and development opportunities and training to support our volunteers. This depends on the role undertaken and may include practical hands-on support and training as well as training courses.

Training will be delivered by Gateways staff in or online via a third party. Volunteers will receive information on the training available and are encouraged to further their learning and development and enhance their skills and knowledge as well as quality of service delivery.

## Additional Training may include:

- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding
- Food Hygiene
- Key policies & code of conduct
- Professional Boundaries
- Alternative Education
- SEMH (social, emotional, mental health)
- EBSA (Emotionally based social avoidance)
- Course content





## Ongoing support

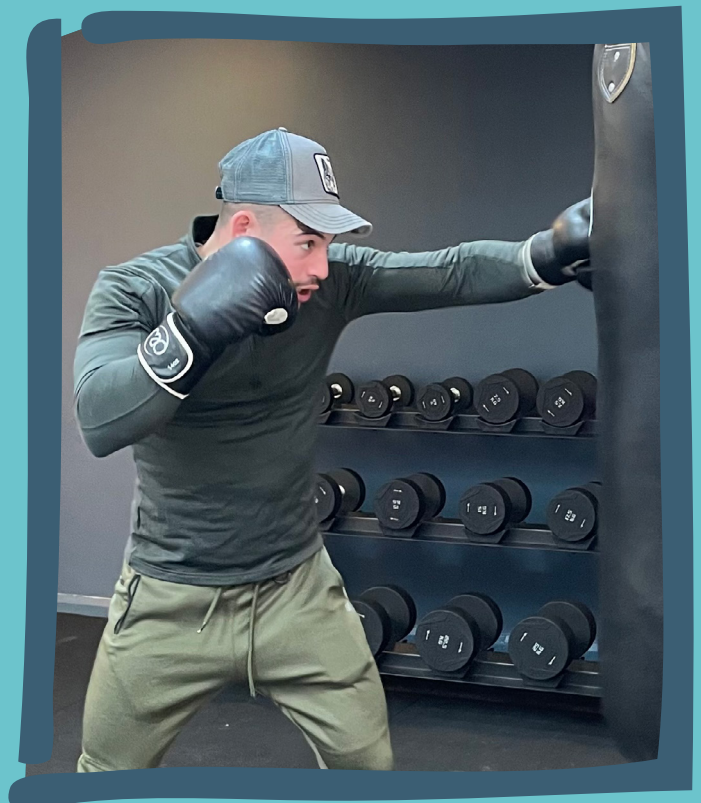
Providing support is very important to us as we aim to ensure that all our volunteers are happy and confident in their roles, and we maintain the highest standards possible with volunteering.

All our volunteers are invited to a full induction upon commencing their new roles and are allocated a named person who will be the first point of contact and who will be available at any time if there are any needs, concerns or questions.

This may be a member of the volunteer team, or a member of staff with responsibility for the aspect of work the volunteer is supporting with.

A member of the volunteer team will be in touch with all new volunteers to review how they are settling into their role and answer any queries. This may be done in person, or by telephone.

Where applicable volunteers will receive supervision from their named person and have regular updates with the volunteer team to review their role. This will include information as to training offered, which volunteers can access to support them in their roles and enable them to learn new skills.



# Problem Solving

We hope that volunteering with us will be a positive and enjoyable experience, and that any issues will be resolved promptly and informally. Please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator who will be able to give advice and support in the first instance and hopefully resolve the issue.

Very occasionally there may be situations which are not easily resolved or need further investigation. Safeguarding issues should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Facilities, Operational & Security Issues to the Operations Manager.

**Behaviour code** - We expect our volunteers to treat all staff, students and other volunteers in a polite and friendly manner. All volunteers have a responsibility to behave professionally at all times. Please be aware that swearing, offensive language and inappropriate / offensive jokes are unacceptable when volunteering with our organisation.

**Kashrut (Kosher food)** - All volunteers will be required to respect Jewish food stipulations and ensure that they are strictly followed within the common areas in the building. This will include specifications on what food and drink is permissible within the building and where certain foods may or may not be eaten, if you are unsure please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

**Volunteer hours** - If you are volunteering please sign in and out at Reception so we can record all volunteer hours. This also ensures your presence in the building should there be an evacuation procedure.

**Personal information** - Volunteers must not give their personal details to the people they are supporting (e.g. phone number, email and home addresses).

**Personal ID card** - On appointment in their role, all volunteers (dependent on role) will receive an ID card which will identify them as a volunteer. This is to support our safety and security. This must be returned when a volunteer ceases to work with us.

**Insurance** - We have Employers Liability Insurance which includes cover for any volunteer suffering an accident which causes disablement, or who is involved in a claim for damages to property or injury whilst directly engaged on agreed duties.

**Gifts** - Any volunteer who is given a gift of any sort by a person must disclose the gift and its nature to the Volunteer Team. Cash gifts must not be accepted under any circumstances. If such a gift is offered, the volunteer is required to decline politely and explain that they are not allowed to accept money. Volunteers should not exchange gifts with people with whom they are volunteering as this may be perceived as favouritism and may raise expectations unintentionally. Accepting or asking for tips or gratuities is not permitted.

**Alcohol & Drugs - Substance Misuse Policy** - The charity is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive working environment for all our staff, volunteers and visitors. This includes ensuring that all volunteers are fit to carry out their jobs safely and effectively in a working environment which is free from alcohol and drug misuse.

We expect you to carry out your role safely without any limitations due to the use or after effects of alcohol or drugs (whether prescribed, over the counter or illegal).

**Security** - Security measures will be in place at all times and you will be required to adhere to all procedures at all times.

**Dress code - Dress and Appearance Policy** - We encourage everyone to maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal appearance at work. The purpose of our dress code is to establish basic guidelines on appropriate clothing and appearance at our workplace, so that we:

- Promote a positive and professional image.
- Respect the needs of men and women from all cultures and religions
- Make any adjustments that may be needed because of disability.

**Absence** - If a volunteer is unable to attend their commitment, they must let the Volunteer Coordinator or Named Person know as soon as possible, to enable alternative arrangements to be made.

**Smoking** - Smoking is prohibited at all times (including vaping) anywhere in the charity's buildings (including all common areas, work areas and the toilets) and also the charity's vehicles. Freelance staff who wish to smoke must leave the building. If you do wish to smoke, please do so only in designated outdoor smoking areas and suitably dispose of cigarette ends

**Criminal and / or Illegal activity** - Any volunteer found to be engaging in criminal or illegal activity will be reported to the police.



# Our Key Policies and Procedures



Please visit <https://gateways.org.uk/our-policies/> to key policies or contact the volunteer team to read the policies in full.

## Volunteering Policy

Our Volunteering Policy outlines the value we attach to volunteering and our relationship with volunteers. It outlines why and how we recruit, select, and manage our volunteers and our principles of best practice.

## Diversity

We are committed to be a diverse and inclusive organisation and we welcome and value the contribution of all volunteers regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, marital status, nationality, religion, disability, political beliefs, and socio-economic background. We are committed to ensuring our volunteers are provided with equal opportunities and take steps to ensure they are protected from discrimination.

## Confidentiality

Any sensitive information that volunteers come across whilst volunteering with us, including details about people who use our services, families, supporters, staff, and our work must be treated as strictly confidential. Failure to do so may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the organisation. However, if a volunteer has any concerns at all, especially about the safety and well-being of our service users they must inform their named Contact Person or Safeguarding lead as soon as possible, who will be able to help.

## Data Protection

In some volunteering roles there may be access to personal information about people who use our services, other volunteers, or staff members. You must only use this information where necessary, and in your role as a volunteer. Appropriate training will be provided regarding this if it is relevant to role. We will also keep details of our volunteers safe and secure. Information about our volunteers who no longer volunteer for us, will be destroyed within 6 months. Any confidential information/paperwork should be returned to Gateways for destroying.

## Professional Boundaries

It is important that all our volunteers maintain clear professional boundaries. This means making sure that what volunteers say and do is within the limits of their role, as outlined in their volunteer role description - for example, it is not advisable for a volunteer to befriend someone they are supporting on social media. Should you have contact with students in a personal capacity, please let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know, to avoid any conflict of interest. Professional boundaries will be discussed in detail at induction and training.



## Health & Safety (Staff handbook)

The safety and well-being of volunteers is of utmost importance, and we have a duty of care to adhere to health and safety legislation to ensure that any significant risks concerning volunteers are assessed and reduced. We have several policies and procedures in place to ensure people are safe when volunteering with us. Volunteers also have a personal responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety and that of others around them, and we ask our volunteers to help maintain a safe working environment. All volunteers will be informed of the following during induction into their role and mandatory training:

- Reporting of accidents, incidents and near misses
- Risk management procedures for the activity they are involved in.
- Fire Safety and evacuation.
- First Aid Procedures

## Fire Procedures

All volunteers are requested to familiarise themselves with the fire procedure which will be provided as part of the induction process. In addition to this, the organisation aims to have at least one drill a term, three times a year in total.

**On hearing the alarm volunteers must evacuate by the nearest possible exit.**

## First Aid

Volunteers have access to a trained first aider, appointed person, or first responder (someone who can take charge in the event of an accident) whilst on the Gateways site. Details of these trained staff will be displayed on notice boards throughout Gateways. You should familiarise yourself with names and contact details.

## Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

If a volunteer witnesses or is involved in an accident, incident or near miss, they should inform their named contact person or volunteer co-ordinator as soon as possible who will then complete relevant documentation so any risks can be assessed and addressed quickly.

## Building Security

When accessing Gateways, all volunteers must use the main entrance and unless they have entered the building using their access cards should sign in at the front desk.

Gateways is a Jewish organisation and as such has a set of security related emergency procedures. These will be provided to you during your induction. We encourage staff to remain vigilant at all times and to report anything that they see which may seem unusual or suspicious.

## Complaints

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a positive opportunity to improve the way we do things and provide a better service for people. We define complaints very broadly, as 'a statement of dissatisfaction'. This covers any kind of comment – spoken or written – which relates to dissatisfaction, whether it's labelled as a complaint, and whether it needs a formal response.

We have a centralised complaints procedure, details of which can be found in our policy bank.

If a volunteer wishes to make a complaint or they receive a complaint from someone about their service or anything to do with our work, please pass the information on to the volunteer co-ordinator.

### Manual Handling

You are required, in accordance with the Manual Handling Regulations 1992, to advise us of any condition which may make you more vulnerable to injury. Before undertaking any manual handling, you should have conducted a risk assessment and been trained on manual handling techniques. For further information please contact the Gateways Facilities Manager.

### Safeguarding

Gateways is committed to the principle of safeguarding children, young people, and all vulnerable adults. All our volunteers, whatever role they may serve in, carry a duty of care towards those accessing our programmes and services. Our Safeguarding Policies and associated Procedures are applicable to all children, young people and vulnerable adults served through our work, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or religion.

Our approach is that 'Safeguarding is Everybody's Business' and 'Never do Nothing'. All concerns, however minor, should be discussed with the Volunteer team or Named Contact Person immediately:

Gateways Designated Safeguarding Lead is Sasha Sharpe, Head Teacher, Gateways  
Our approach to ensuring people are safe is to

- Ensure that all managers, employees, and volunteers have access to and are familiar with our Safeguarding Adult and Children Policies and Procedures and their responsibilities within it.
- Ensure all concerns or allegations of abuse are always taken seriously.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers receive training in relation to safeguarding adults and children at a level commensurate with their role.
- Ensure that people who use our services their relatives or informal carers have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of abuse.
- Ensure there is a named lead person to promote safeguarding awareness and practice within Gateways.

Please refer to the Adult & Children Safeguarding Policies on the Gateways link below:

<https://gateways.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Gateways-Safeguarding-Policy-May-2024.pdf>

# How we recognise the contribution of our volunteers

We really appreciate the support of our volunteers and will be hosting an annual Volunteer Celebration to recognise their achievements and impact on our work. This is an occasion for us to say a huge 'Thank You' to all our fantastic volunteers, committee members and fundraisers for their hard work and support.

## Moving On

If the circumstances of our volunteers change, we are flexible and creative and can offer alternative roles or commitments and are happy for volunteers to take a break. We will always be pleased to welcome volunteers back should they decide to return to support our work. When volunteers do decide to leave, we would appreciate at least one month's notice if possible, so we can recruit a replacement volunteer. We may ask volunteers to complete an exit questionnaire about their volunteering experience (where able) which we hope will have been positive from start to finish. ID badges and any other Gateways property must also be returned. We will be happy to provide volunteers with a reference if they have volunteered for us for more than 6 months.

## Spreading the word

We would love you to tell your friends and family about your experience of volunteering with us and our work. Please encourage your family and friends to get involved. We are always developing new opportunities, and will endeavour to find something to suit everyone's interests, availability, and skills.

If you would like to contact the Volunteer Team, please email:  
**[volunteering@gateways.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@gateways.org.uk)**

Please keep up to date with activities and volunteering opportunities on  
social media

**[www.gateways.org.uk](http://www.gateways.org.uk)**