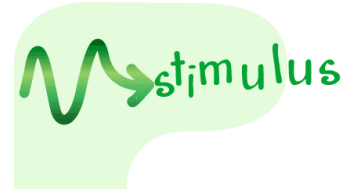


## Advice on making best use of volunteers

- Make sure the office are expecting them and know where to send them.
- Introduce them to the class; first names are usually used but that will be your decision.
- Tell them where you'd like them to sit/stand during any teacher-led part of the lesson.
- It may not be possible to talk before the first lesson, but do talk to them as soon as you can about how you would like them to work.
- If possible, let them know in advance what the class will be doing. Using e-mail is useful if you don't know a week in advance; ask them to e-mail you if you think you'll forget to e-mail them!
- Plan to use the volunteer; plan activities where their presence will be helpful and there will be plenty for them to do.
- Indicate if there are particular individuals you would like them to work with. If they are floating, some will be good at taking the initiative; others may need a little direction.
- If asking them to work on extension topics, check that they are confident to do this, and lend them appropriate materials. Some will be happy to prepare themselves; others may need to be told what you would like them to do.
- Let them know in advance if the class will be on a trip, doing a test, or off timetable for any reason. It is very frustrating for volunteers to make the journey and find no lesson.
- If you are going to be absent, ensure that the cover teacher knows the volunteer's role, and if possible warn the volunteer.

STIMULUS, University of Cambridge,  
Centre for Mathematical Sciences, Wilberforce Road, Cambridge CB3 0WA, UK  
Website: [stimulus.maths.org](http://stimulus.maths.org)

STIMULUS Co-ordinator: Jacqui Watkins  
Email: [jsw1001@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jsw1001@cam.ac.uk)



# Making the most of your STIMULUS volunteer

## Advice for schools

[stimulus.maths.org](http://stimulus.maths.org)

STIMULUS Co-ordinator: Jacqui Watkins  
Email: [jsw1001@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jsw1001@cam.ac.uk)



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## About the volunteers

The volunteers are Cambridge University students, studying Maths, Science and Technology related subjects. They are all in at least their second term at university. Some have experience of working with children and young people; others don't. They are all interested in sharing their enthusiasm and expertise with pupils in local schools, and have made a commitment to giving up time each week to do this.

All volunteers will have applied for a DBS check. Some may have them at the start of their placement but others may still be waiting for theirs to arrive. We ask that no student is left unsupervised, i.e. they should work within the classroom, until their DBS check is through. Students should show you their DBS certificates to the appropriate member of school staff as soon as they have them. Your school will have decided whether or not they will allow the student to start his/her placement without waiting for the Disclosure to arrive. We assume that all the necessary Risk Assessments are already in place in your school.

Before they go into schools, the volunteers will attend an orientation meeting. They will be given details of their placement, and will be given some guidelines on their role. Some experienced volunteers will share their perspective, and there will be ample opportunity for them to ask questions.

At half-term, which usually comes after just one or two school visits, a training session is held. An experienced teacher or teacher-trainer will lead this, giving useful advice on helping pupils effectively. Again, there is an opportunity for individual questions to be answered and support offered.

The volunteers are asked to contact the school office if they are unable to attend for any reason. Occasionally their timetables change, and the placement may have to be discontinued.

The coordinator is always available by e-mail to both teachers and volunteers, particularly where there is any problem with the placement. She has been a teacher for many years and understands the importance of good communication in sustaining positive partnerships.

## Ways to use the volunteers

In many cases, the volunteers provide general classroom help, either working with a specified small group within the classroom, or floating and helping where seems appropriate. Sometimes volunteers are given a more specific role, particularly if they return for a second term to the same school.

Examples of activities:

- Carrying out a practical task with pairs or groups of pupils in turns.
- Assisting with practical work
- Encouraging pupils to talk about their work, using key vocabulary
- Asking questions which help pupils develop their understanding
- Taking a small group to work on extension topics
- Helping with after school Science or Code Clubs
- Helping with a “surgery” for sixth-form students.
- Working within a reception class on exploring materials.
- Working with A-level students on writing up practicals.
- Working with an individual pupil taking GCSE or A-level early.
- Focusing on those with more experience during ICT lessons, showing them additional features of the packages used.

If taking a group out of the room, it can be useful to use a communal area, such as a library or support base, where other staff are around. In one school, the Learning Support department welcomed having a group of able learners in their base.

It can be more difficult to involve the volunteers in starters and plenaries, although one teacher commented “I have bounced ideas, vocabulary and definitions off him during whole class time.”

Do discuss plans with the volunteer; they may have ideas or suggestions, and may occasionally be able to suggest a useful resource.