



SMALL STEPS VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS POLICY

2026 – 2027

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1. Policy Statement

Small Steps Learning Difficulties Centre LLC (“Small Steps”) operates as a social care service provider licensed by the Community Development Authority (CDA), Dubai. Small Steps delivers its services only within the activities, professional categories, conditions, and service scope authorised under its current CDA licence and applicable CDA requirements. Small Steps is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable individuals. This policy sets out the controls for short-term visitors, regular volunteers, and external professionals entering Small Steps premises, including vetting, authorisation, supervision, induction, conduct, confidentiality, and reporting requirements. These controls operate in accordance with UAE law, applicable GEMS safeguarding requirements, and Small Steps’ internal procedures.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the procedures for managing and monitoring all non-employed individuals who interact with Small Steps students or access Small Steps facilities, including:

- Short-term and long-term volunteers;
- University interns or observers;
- Parents and family visitors;
- Guest speakers, maintenance contractors, service providers, and external therapists;
- External professionals not directly employed by Small Steps.

3. Definitions

- Visitor: Any individual not employed by Small Steps or GEMS who is on the premises temporarily (e.g., parents, service providers, maintenance staff).
- Volunteer: Any individual offering services without pay and engaging in regular or repeated contact with students (e.g., interns, academic observers).

4. Guiding Principles

All volunteers and visitors must:

- Prioritize the safety and well-being of students;
- Respect confidentiality and professionalism;
- Operate under the supervision of designated Small Steps staff;
- Follow all campus security procedures and sign-in requirements;
- Abide by the Small Steps and GEMS policies, including dress code, mobile phone use, and photography restrictions.

5. Volunteer Recruitment and Vetting

Volunteers, including interns and long-term observers, are subject to the same principles of safer recruitment outlined in Small Steps’ Safer Recruitment Policy. This includes:

- Completion of a Small Steps Application Form;
- Provision of valid ID and passport copy.
- Submission of police clearance from the country of residence if the individual will volunteer for more than 10 consecutive days or regularly over a term;

- Verification of qualifications (where relevant, e.g., for behavior therapy interns);
- Reference check from an academic institution or former employer;
- Completion of safeguarding and child protection induction prior to start;
- Volunteers must not have unsupervised contact with students;

6. Visitor Management Procedures

All visitors to Small Steps must:

- Present valid identification (Emirates ID, or passport) at the school reception upon arrival;
- Be issued a visitor badge, which must be worn visibly at all times;
- Be escorted by Small Steps or school staff unless the individual has been formally authorised as a known and vetted professional and the permitted areas, purpose, and duration of unescorted access have been recorded;
- Sign the visitor log and agree to abide by the campus safeguarding and conduct policies.
- Unscheduled visitors will not be allowed access to Small Steps facilities.

7. Supervision and Conduct of Volunteers and Visitors

All volunteers and visitors are expected to:

- Follow the instructions of their assigned supervisor and the designated Small Steps administrative representative, such as a member of the Operations team;
- Immediately report any safeguarding concern, disclosure, or incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Refrain from taking photos, sharing personal contact information, or discussing confidential student matters without written consent.
- Any immediate risk to a child must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the relevant school safeguarding team. Concerns or allegations involving an employee, volunteer, visitor, contractor, or safeguarding lead must be managed under the applicable safeguarding and allegations-management procedures. Volunteers and visitors must not investigate concerns, question a child beyond what is necessary to clarify an immediate disclosure, or promise confidentiality.
- Failure to comply with these standards may result in removal from the premises and termination of volunteer engagement.

8. Induction and Training

Volunteers and long-term visitors (e.g., academic interns, therapy observers) will be required to:

- Attend a Safeguarding induction session;
- Sign to confirm receipt and understanding of the Small Steps Safeguarding and Incident Reporting Policy, and Health & Safety Policy;
- Complete annual refresher training if engaged beyond a single academic year.

9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All volunteers and visitors are bound by confidentiality requirements. They must not share, record, photograph, copy, store, or discuss information concerning any child or staff member without formal authorisation. Any notes, data, records, or observations created or accessed during the visit or placement must be returned to Small Steps or securely disposed of as directed and must not be retained for personal, professional, or academic use unless prior written approval has been granted.

10. Monitoring and Review

The Small Steps Senior administrative team will maintain a register of all current and past volunteers and ensure compliance with vetting and supervision expectations. Regular audits will be conducted to align with GEMS safeguarding frameworks and UAE child protection law. This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed based on legislative updates.

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