

Volunteer Handbook



www.teachonthebeach.org/volunteer-resources

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Contents

Introductory Statement.....	3
Definitions.....	3
Vision	4
Mission.....	4
Values of Teach on the Beach.....	4
Nature of Service.....	5
Orientation Series	5
Service Learning Reflection.....	5
Consequences of Policy Violations	6
Strike System	6
Expulsion.....	6
Volunteer Policies.....	6
Attendance Requirements	6
Substance abuse.....	6
Sexual conduct.....	7
Gifts or handouts	7
Outside guest approval	7
Outside guest curfew	7
Interactions with local community	7
Cultural Discussions.....	7
Scholars.....	8
Excursions.....	8
Community Feedback.....	8



Introductory Statement

This handbook provides each volunteer of the Teach on the Beach program with guidelines for daily living and organization policies and expectations that affect your volunteer status. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this handbook at all times. It describes your responsibilities as a volunteer and outlines the programs developed by Teach on the Beach that you participate in.

As Teach on the Beach continues to grow, we reserve the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portions of the handbook from time to time as deemed appropriate and necessary. Volunteers will be notified of such changes to the handbook as they occur.

Teach on the Beach is an organization modeled around education and service. Therefore, every volunteer represents TOB to the community and the student. How volunteers present themselves is a reflection of our entire organization.

We believe that each volunteer contributes directly to TOB's growth and success and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team. If you have any questions, please contact your pre-trip coordinator, program director, or a member of the Board of Directors for clarification or explanations.

No statement or request by any volunteer contrary to this document shall have any force or effect unless it is in writing and signed by the Board of Directors.

This handbook has been review and approved by the Teach on the Beach Board of Directors. Proof can be requested from the Teach on the Beach Secretary by emailing info@teachonthebeach.org.

Definitions

- The House: Teach on the Beach's facility in Busua, Ghana
- Scholars: students whose academics, room and board are sponsored by Teach on the Beach during school terms.
- The Community: the people, businesses, officials, etc. of Busua, Ghana
- Volunteer: any individual participating in Teach on the Beach volunteer programs that has completed Teach on the Beach's orientation series.
- Pre-trip coordinator: a Teach on the Beach leader that helps volunteers prepare for their trip
- Orientation: a series of formal sessions run by Teach on the Beach directors.
- Program Director: a Teach on the Beach leader on the ground in Ghana that manages programming and volunteer involvement



Vision

Teaching is a human activity and we feel everyone can teach. We envision a world where educated citizens of all ages take responsibility for teaching those who lack access to this very basic of human needs.

Mission

- To build open environments for students to discover, develop and share their love of learning.
- To create future leaders of change by engaging students in team community service projects.

Values of Teach on the Beach

Everyone Can & Should Teach. The idea that only certain people are qualified to teach ignores that educated people use important skills every day. Literacy, math, social studies, writing, verbal communication, critical thinking, planning, creative problem solving and many more subjects and skills must be passed on to younger generations. With some guidance, an open mind, and determination we believe everyone can and should teach.

The Next Generation. We focus solely on the youth because they are able to change, adapt and learn. We cannot reprogram adults to think in new ways and learn new skills, but we can work with adults to create opportunities for our students to make a difference in the schools and in the community. We actively try to make ourselves obsolete by working inside our mission and training our Scholars to run the organization.

Open to All Students. Our programs are open to all ages, skill levels, and types of students. A selection process would go against our belief that teaching and learning can and must be part of everyone's lives. Our experience in Ghana, however, has uncovered that it is the enthusiastic students who regularly attend our programs.

Laser Focus on Education. To promote the value of learning and teaching and truly fill the gap left by poor schools and illiterate parents, we must build strong relationships with students centered not on sympathy or charity, but education.

Complement Local Efforts. Since we are about education, we support the school. Every community has its local institutions. We believe these institutions need to evolve and improve to create long-term sustainable change.

Data Drive Student-Centered Approach. We place the student at the center of our teaching methods. The student-centered approach rejects the traditional teacher centric model Paulo Friere called the 'banking' model to education where the student is treated like an empty bank account that must be kept open to deposits by the teacher. Instead we share the experience of learning with our students – learning about them whenever we spend time together. And most importantly recording, coding and analyzing what we learn and turning it into insights.

Global Awareness & Connectivity. Social media allows people from around the globe to share their thoughts, ideas, experiences with each other. This benefit aligns exactly with our student-centered approach to teaching – sharing learning experiences.



Cultural Sensitivity through Acculturation. The student-centered approach requires a two-way understanding. To truly understand our students and their culture and heritage we spend time living like them – fetching water, cooking and eating with them, learning their language(s), national history, pop culture, jokes and idioms, etc. We try to break the idea that we are Americans and they are Ghanaian by acculturating and weaving ourselves into the fabric of their society.

Nature of Service

Becoming a volunteer with Teach on the Beach is an action entered into voluntarily, and the volunteer is free to leave the program at any time, with or without cause. Similarly, Teach on the Beach may terminate volunteer status at any time in the event that policies of this handbook are not adhered to. All volunteers must complete Teach on the Beach's Orientation Series.

There are three types of volunteer programs: 1) Base Volunteer 2) Service Learning, 3) Teaching Fellows. Policies apply to all programs without exception. The Service Learning program's volunteer development goals are detailed in the Service Learning Rubric. Teaching Fellows volunteer development goals are developed in collaboration with a Teach on the Beach Board member.

Teach on the Beach reserves the right to take action to limit or end the volunteer status at any time. The Consequences of Policy Violations section outlines the Strike System associated with specific policies (outlined in Volunteer Policies) and the Volunteer Expulsion procedure.

Orientation Series

All volunteers must pass the three part Teach on the Beach orientation series. Orientations are held online as webinars and are by invitation only. Only individuals who have paid the minimum due at the booking deadline and provided a copy of their trip itinerary will be invited to attend orientation.

The three parts of orientation are:

1. Traveling to Ghana
2. Education in Ghana & the Teach on the Beach Student-Centered Approach
3. Health & Safety in Ghana

Volunteers in the Service Learning Program will need to attend an additional orientation either held online or on location in Ghana to prepare them for their Service Learning Reflections.

Volunteer attendance at each orientation is tracked. If any orientation is not complete upon departure to Ghana, volunteer will start the program with two strikes (see Consequences of Policy Violations – Strike System)

Service Learning Reflection

Teach on the Beach's Service Learning program is a deep-dive into the issues of working as educators and community advocates in a poor, rural village in a foreign country. The issues revolve around questions ranging from "Should foreigners try to play this role?" to "How can we address the behavioral problem of a specific student?"

The Service Learning program includes mandatory attendance to at least two of three reflection sessions held during the week after NewsHour in the After School room. Reflections will be guided in part by a



curriculum developed by Teach on the Beach's partner, the Bonner Foundation and partly by the events on the ground brought to light by the program director or by volunteers.

Consequences of Policy Violations

Strike System

Consequences are based on a three strike system. Violations of policies result in strikes. The number of strikes for violations of specific policies is listed under the respective policies in the Volunteer Policies section. Once three strikes are reached, volunteers are expelled from the program.

Expulsion

Expulsion is at the volunteers cost. Once Teach on the Beach expels a volunteer all travel and accommodation costs must be paid for out of the volunteer's pocket. Program fees will not be refunded.

The first step of the expulsion will be removal of the volunteer from the Teach on the Beach house to a local hostel of the volunteer's choosing. If the volunteer resists, local police will be asked to intervene, resulting in further costs and possible local legal action.

The second step is dependent on when the expulsion occurs. If the expulsion occurs one week or less from the volunteer's originally planned date of departure, the volunteer will be asked to immediately move from Busua to Accra where they will stay until departure from the country. If the expulsion occurs over a week from volunteer's originally planned date of departure, the volunteer will be asked to first provide Teach on the Beach with proof of a changed airline itinerary before moving from Busua to Accra.

Volunteer Policies

Attendance Requirements

- Attend News Hour every evening (unless ill or News Hour was cancelled)
- Attend After School and sufficiently help wherever he or she is needed at least three days a week unless the after school program is cancelled
- Dedicate at least three evenings a week to mentoring a scholar (helping on homework, NewsHour writing assignments, etc.)

Violations will result in a Strike, one for each day any one of the above requirements is not met.

- SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM ONLY: Attended two out of three reflections in one week

Violation will result in a Strike, one for each week attendance requirement is not met

Substance abuse

Teach on the Beach volunteers are required to help maintain the positive and productive learning environment at the House. No drugs or alcohol are permitted on the premises at any time, regardless of whether there are Scholars or students present.

Violation will result in a Strike.



Sexual conduct

Teach on the Beach volunteers are required to help maintain the positive and productive learning environment at the House. No sexual conduct is permitted on the premises at any time, regardless of whether there are Scholars or students present.

Volunteers may not engage in any sexual activity or relationship with anyone within the Teach on the Beach family while maintaining their volunteer status.

Violation will result in Three Strikes and immediate expulsion.

Gifts or handouts

Teach on the Beach volunteers represent the organization's mission and vision in the community. Gifts or handouts to children or adults, to Scholars, or any other member of the local community misrepresents the organization's mission, vision and role in the community, creating very difficult to change long term problems. Begging is actively discouraged by Teach on the Beach program directors of all students and scholars, so absolutely no gifts or handouts of any kind are allowed.

Violation will result in Three Strikes and immediate expulsion.

Outside guest approval

Teach on the Beach program directors are ultimately responsible for the proper operations of the House. Program directors must meet and clearly approve all individuals before they are invited into the house, even if that individual insists they have been invited into the house previously.

The only exceptions are students during After School program hours or individuals who have been previously approved and invited into the house.

Violation will result in a Two Strikes.

Outside guest curfew

In order to maintain a positive and productive learning environment, no outside guests are allowed in the house after 10pm even if they are approved and invited guests. All guests must leave premises by 10pm local time.

Violation will result in a Strike.

Interactions with local community

Any interaction with local street sellers, political leaders, chiefs, police, etc. carried out in a constructive and polite manner. Teach on the Beach volunteers represent the organization and its mission and vision in the community. Combative, insulting, or insensitive words or actions are misrepresentations of the organization and volunteers are encouraged to extract themselves from situations that take on a negative tone instead of engaging community members in a way that misrepresents the organization.

Violations will result in a Strike.

Cultural Discussions

The Teach on the Beach house is a multicultural environment where sensitive topics are often brought up in discussions designed to serve as learning experiences. To uphold the integrity of the learning



experiences, volunteers and scholars must remain objective and not use these discussions as personal platforms on which to lecture or promote their opinions.

Violations will result in a Strike.

Scholars

In order to maintain a spirit of professionalism and allow scholars to focus on their academics, volunteers may not engage in any type of relationship outside of friendship with scholars. Volunteers are not allowed in scholar rooms, or vice versa, after 10pm local time.

Violations will result in a Strike.

Excursions

Volunteers may take excursions on weekends but must be certain to notify the Teach on the Beach program director of their travel plans, cell phone number they can be reached on, and when they expect to return.

Volunteers forming relationships or making plans with scholars to visit cultural sites or their hometowns will be required to help the scholar write:

1. a summary of their plan for the trip including how they will travel, where they will stay, and what activities they will do
2. a reflection of their trip – i.e. what they learned, experienced, felt, discovered

Summary and reflection need to be a minimum of one paragraph.

Violation of this policy will result in a Strike.

Community Feedback

As stated throughout this Handbook, the volunteer represents Teach on the Beach in the community, therefore making community feedback an important component of how we evaluate whether volunteers are abiding by policies and positively representing the organization in general.

If a community member expresses to a program director that a volunteer has violated a policy listed in this Handbook, acted outside of the spirit of the organization as outlined by the Mission, Vision and Values in this Handbook, or broken the local law, Teach on the Beach reserves the right to immediately expel the volunteer in order to protect its place in the community.