



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh

# ALIVE VOLUNTEERS

Handbook for Homework Clubs  
and Youth Activities



[alive@nuigalway.ie](mailto:alive@nuigalway.ie)  
[www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive)

# List of Volunteering Opportunities with Homework Clubs and Youth Activities

The following Homework Clubs and Youth Activities provide a safe, structured opportunity for NUI Galway ALIVE volunteers. You can register to volunteer with these opportunities online at [www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive). Also on this website there is a Volunteering Map of Galway indicating the following projects if you are unsure where the project is located.

## **Location: NUI Galway**

- Access Office

## **Location: Westside, Galway**

- Le Cheile & Rahoon Youth Project
- LGBT Youth Group
- Scoil Bhride
- School Completion Programme Westside, Galway
- Rahoon Family Centre
- Youth Work Ireland, Westside

## **Location: City Centre**

- Bohermore Youth Development Project
- Circles
- Cape
- Gaf Youth Café
- Galway Traveller Movement
- Mercy College
- SPARK
- The Bish Secondary School
- Galway 1st Scout Group

## **Location: Headford Road**

- Ballinfoile Family Services – Tirellan Primary School
- Ballinfoile Foroige, No. 60

## **Location: Salthill and Knocknacarra**

- Friends Club
- Galway Refugee Support Group (GRSG)
- Scouting Ireland, Galway Units

## **Location: Dublin Road**

- Ballybane/Mervue Community Development Programme
- Galway Community College

## **Location: Galway County**

- Clann Resource Centre, Oughterard
- Cullairbaun Community House Project, Athenry
- Foroige Adolescent Support Programme, Athenry
- School Completion Project, Tuam

## **Location: Clare**

- Clare Youth Service, Ennis

## **Location: Mayo**

- Calabria Youth Club, Headford

## **Location: Various Locations**

- Big Brother Big Sister
- Galway 14th Scout Group



# Contents:

Welcome	3
Your Role	3
The Who's Who	3
Why Homework Clubs?	5
Benefits	5
Steps to Involvement	7
What Happens Next...	9
ALIVE Volunteer Agreement	10
Once you are Volunteering	11
Tips for Volunteering with Young People	13
Experiences from past ALIVE Volunteers	16
ALIVE Volunteer Code of Behaviour	17
NUI Galway ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering	21
Detailed List of Volunteer Opportunities with Homework Clubs and Youth Activities	23

## What does ALIVE do?

ALIVE is NUI Galway's student volunteering programme.

ALIVE works with schools, charities and community organisations as well as within NUI Galway to provide volunteering opportunities in a wide variety of roles. We are dedicated to helping you to volunteer in the area of your choice, which suits your individual needs, interests and time commitments. We are here to offer you information, advice, guidance and support throughout your volunteering experience. We also reward your efforts with the NUI Galway Presidential Award, the ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering.



# Welcome

Welcome to ALIVE, NUI Galway's Student Volunteering Programme. We are glad that you have decided to volunteer with a Homework Club as a student mentor or tutor. Please take some time to look through this handbook before you start your volunteering. It has been designed to help you get the best out of your experience and to answer any questions that you may have.

Do remember that the ALIVE team is here to support you, so if you still have any questions or worries that are not addressed in this handbook, do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We hope you find your time as an ALIVE Volunteer rewarding, worthwhile and fun!

The general role of ALIVE Volunteers in Homework Clubs is to work in the classroom, after-school club or youth club setting under the supervision of the class teacher or youth worker helping students with their homework.

- Tutoring involves giving individual or group support to a student, generally in a structured manner. A tutor should help the student become independently capable of meeting the expectations of their class or classes.

ALIVE volunteers provide an extra resource for the Homework Club and you gain valuable experience and develop new skills. ALIVE volunteers also consolidate the skills they have already acquired. With this general purpose in mind ALIVE Volunteers undertake a wide range of activities, such as:

- Classroom support for specific subjects
- Support in literacy and numeracy
- Help with lab work, projects and fieldwork
- Working on a one-to-one basis and/or working with small groups
- Supporting students with special educational needs
- Extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs
- IT support
- Sport, drama, dance and music
- Supporting students who have English as their second language
- Sharing experiences of life at university
- Supporting school trips

## The who's who

**Primary and Secondary School Students** - The school children or young person attending the Homework Club in need of support from a tutor.

**ALIVE Volunteer** - That's you! And you are not alone, lots of NUI Galway students volunteer every year as tutors, youth work volunteers and mentors.

**ALIVE** - That's us! We are here to support you, feel free to contact us anytime.

### Lorraine Tansey, Student Volunteer Coordinator

Tel: 091 49 5346

Web: [www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive)

Email: [alive@nuigalway.ie](mailto:alive@nuigalway.ie)

**Homework Club** - A safe place students can come to get support. This may be in a school, in a youth group, a community centre or in a community organisation.

**Homework Club Coordinator** - This is the person on the ground with you in the Homework Club, they may be a teacher, youth club leader, a parent or a volunteer.





# Welcome



# Why Homework Clubs?

Homework Clubs help primary and secondary students to build a positive experience of school, to raise their aspirations and to encourage them to continue in education.

NUI Galway ALIVE Volunteers currently volunteer in the classroom, in after-school clubs and with youth groups, alongside teachers, youth workers, and fellow volunteers. ALIVE Volunteers are able to help either with individual students or small groups. The benefits for these students are enormous. At the same time ALIVE Volunteers are acting as positive role models for young people.

ALIVE Volunteers have worked in many different areas and have a range of skills that they can offer to schools which will benefit students. ALIVE Volunteers also benefit from participation. Working with children and youth is very rewarding and knowing that you are making a difference is doubly rewarding!

Volunteering provides NUI Galway ALIVE Volunteers with invaluable experience and skills, such as communication, teamwork and problem solving, which are much sought after by employers. In fact everyone wins – schools get much needed help, students get the much needed individual attention which they do not always receive, and ALIVE Volunteers have the opportunity to develop their own skills.

## Benefits

**For you, the ALIVE Volunteer:** Development or enhancement of key transferable skills (such as communication, patience, active listening, initiative taking, teamwork and time management), the chance to reflect on your degree subject, the feeling of making a difference, an insight into the teaching/learning process, experience for careers in general, direct experience for a career in teaching, an opportunity to get to know and participate in the local community, an enjoyable break from studying.

"Volunteering puts all the college work, everything, in perspective, it is important to know there is more to life!

- Katie Stack, 4th Year, Occupational Therapy

**For primary and secondary students:** Receiving more individual attention, finding learning more fun and interesting, enhanced learning, enjoying additional help from a sympathetic young adult, increasing their awareness of and aspirations to further and higher education, meeting with positive role models.

"The mentors encouraged us to do our work better."

Ellen Cassidy Aged 10

"The mentors were good at helping with our homework."

Gary Mahon aged 11

**For Homework Clubs:** Extra help, enthusiastic supporters, more learning activities possible, an additional resource.

"The high calibre of volunteers from NUI Galway genuinely adds to the support that we offer young people in the GAF. The skills, enthusiasm and interest they bring are very beneficial." -Frances Ford, GAF Youth Café

**For NUI Galway:** Raised profile in the community, close the gap between town and gown, the development of students who will graduate with a rounded set of skills and experience as well as their degree.

"The impact of student volunteering in the community is considerable and NUI Galway is proud to celebrate your achievements through the award of the ALIVE Certificate."

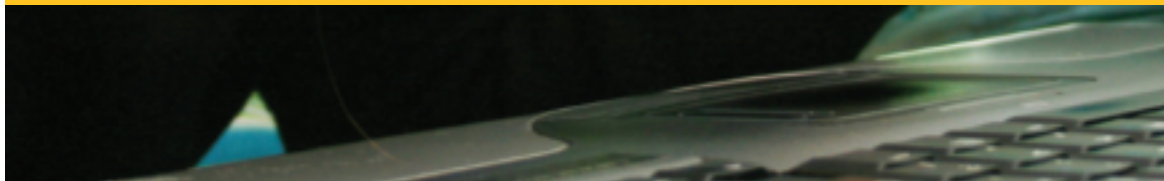
-Dr. James J. Browne, President,  
National University of Ireland, Galway







# Homework Clubs



# Steps to Involvement

Follow the steps outlined below to help you find a Homework Club...

## Step 1: Discover what is on offer

Have a read through the complete list of all the Homework Clubs: the times of the clubs and locations are in the back of this Handbook. This information is also on the ALIVE website with a map if you need directions.

## Step 2: Ask yourself some questions

### How much time do I have to give?

- How much time can you spare for volunteering? It is up to you. Most of the homework clubs need commitment of 1-2 hours a week for the year. You will be making positive difference to yourself and the students you support. You will really see the impact on the students.
- Remember your other commitments (family, hobbies, employment) and do not over commit yourself.
- What period of time can you commit to volunteering? For example, one hour a week, more or less? First semester? Both Semesters? Summer? Some Homework Clubs require you to stay for a minimum period of time, so check before you commit.

### When can I volunteer?

- What times of the day are you free? Morning? Afternoon? Evening?
- What days of the week are you free?
- Do you have your own transport? If not, is it easy for you to use public transport to get to the Homework Club?

### What kind of volunteering would I like to do?

- In what ways do you feel you can best contribute?
- What are your particular skills and interests? What do you really enjoy doing?
- Do you prefer working with people on a one-to-one basis or in a group?

like to visit and learn more about the volunteering opportunity. How many Homework Clubs should I express interest in? You will probably not know if a Homework Club is the right one for you until you have made contact, and so it may be a good idea to get in touch with two or three that look promising. You are just enquiring at this stage, so until you have made a commitment you are under no obligation.

If a Homework Club Coordinator tells you that they are full then email ALIVE, there is probably a different Homework Club that is seeking volunteers. If you do not get a response from a Homework Club within one week email ALIVE, we will follow-up for you and let you know what is happening in that Homework Club.

Ensure you are registered with ALIVE - we need to know about you! Also we will send you a weekly e-newsletter with information about volunteering opportunities. You will be automatically registered with ALIVE when you express an interest in a Homework Club on the ALIVE website.

## Step 3: Express interest in Volunteering on the ALIVE website

All you have to do is log-on to the ALIVE website and view the list of Homework Clubs. Once you have decided which Homework Club you want to volunteer with, click "express an interest" and enter your contact details. By expressing an interest with a Homework Club you are saying that you would





#### Step 4: Visit the Homework Club

Visit for a tour and Meet the Coordinator:

Meet the Homework Club Coordinator and get to know more about volunteering with the Homework Club. You may want to cover:

- Your particular skills and interests
- A tour of the school or youth club
- Any dates you know that you cannot make it (due to exams, holidays, coursework, deadlines etc)
- Any dates the Homework Club is closed (school holidays, exams etc)
- Any relevant Homework Club policies (such as student protection and confidentiality)

#### Coordinator getting to know you

The Homework Club Coordinator will also want to get to know you. They may ask you to fill in a Volunteer Application form and ask you a few questions about why you want to volunteer.

#### Garda Clearance Form

You may be asked to complete a Garda Clearance Form as part of the Homework Clubs' Student Protection Policy. This form is confidential and asks for your contact details and previous addresses. The form is sent on your behalf by the Homework Club to the Central Garda Vetting Unit in Tipperary. The Garda Clearance form will then be sent back to your Homework Club indicating whether or not you have criminal record. Again this is completely confidential. The Homework Club Coordinator will inform you and you will get notification in the post of the outcome of the Garda Clearance. A criminal record is not necessarily a barrier to volunteering. It is important though to discuss any previous convictions

with the Homework Club Coordinator so they can advise you properly about your volunteering options.

#### Volunteer Agreement

The ALIVE Volunteer Agreement in this Handbook (page 10) is designed to support you and the Homework Club Coordinator. Have a read through this together.

#### Step 5: Induction or Training

Attend an Induction Workshop with ALIVE or with the Homework Club (Details on the ALIVE website.) It is strongly recommended that all ALIVE Volunteers attend a training session to cover the basics of going into the Homework Club as a volunteer. Additional specialist training sessions may also be provided by some Homework Clubs. These training workshops may be mandatory or optional. They will certainly be beneficial for you not only as a volunteer but for developing your skills. If you get the opportunity to participate in training go for it!

Lost? Want to visit the Homework Club but don't know your way? Have a look at the Volunteering Map of Galway on the ALIVE website to help you find your way.



# Before you start volunteering: What do I do if...

I've contacted the Homework Club, but they haven't got back to me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact ALIVE we will follow-up for you and let you know what is happening in that Homework Club.</li> </ul>
I can't decide which Homework Club to choose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get in contact with several different Homework Clubs, and have a chat with the Homework Club Coordinators there.</li> <li>• Come and see ALIVE.</li> <li>• Try out some one-off volunteering events before you commit to anything.</li> </ul>
I signed up to volunteer, but now I realise that I'm too busy to take this on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have been in contact with the organisation let them know the change in your situation-they will understand and appreciate hearing from you. Don't just not show up.</li> <li>• Get in touch with ALIVE – we may have a volunteering opportunity that is less time-demanding.</li> <li>• Consider getting involved with the Homework Clubs one-off projects or events.</li> </ul>
The Homework Club has asked me for a referee – but I can't think of one!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different Homework Clubs have different criteria for who can act as a referee – so check this out with your Homework Club Coordinator.</li> <li>• Consider – former teachers, your current tutor, previous employers, your family doctor, landlords or someone else who has known you in a professional or academic capacity.</li> </ul>
I am an international student and the Homework Club has asked for references and a Garda clearance form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For referees who are abroad, try to get an email address so the reference can be sent more speedily.</li> <li>• Different Homework Clubs have different criteria for Garda Clearance – so check this out with your Homework Club Coordinator.</li> </ul>
I completed and submitted my confidential Garda Clearance form, but it still hasn't come back.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of time it takes for a Garda Clearance form to come back can really vary, from a few weeks to several months.</li> <li>• Ask your Homework Club Coordinator if they have any other types of voluntary work whilst the Garda Clearance comes through or if not, get in contact with ALIVE and we will be able to find something for you to do.</li> <li>• Whatever you do, keep in regular contact with the Homework Club to show that you are still interested.</li> </ul>
I do have a previous conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A criminal record is not necessarily a barrier to volunteering. It is important though to discuss any previous convictions with the Homework Club Coordinator so they can advise you properly about your volunteering options.</li> </ul>

# ALIVE Volunteer Agreement with Community

This agreement sets out what you, as an ALIVE volunteer, can expect from your volunteering and ALIVE, and what we expect from you as a volunteer. Whilst your time is contributed freely, mutual support and reliability are expected.

## As a Volunteer, you have the right to:

- Have a description of your role detailing what is expected of you, the time commitment involved, the skills you need, the training you can expect, etc.
- Safe working conditions.
- Receive and request an induction and necessary training from the organisation.
- Be respected.
- Regular review and evaluation of your work by your Homework Club Coordinator.
- To be heard. (ALIVE values your experience of volunteering and will explore any concerns and suggestions made by yourself)
- Confidentiality. Your records and references will remain confidential.
- Withdraw from volunteering at any time and not be made to feel guilty or pressured to continue as a volunteer. (You should, however, inform your Homework Club Coordinator and ALIVE of your decision to leave within plenty of time.)
- A chance to meet and work with other volunteers and staff.

## As a Volunteer, you have a responsibility to:

- Choose your own volunteering role in consultation with the Homework Club.
- Agree to a level of commitment and uphold this commitment.
- To abide by the ALIVE Code of Conduct in this Handbook.
- Respect others.
- Recognise that you are a representative of NUI Galway while you are volunteering.
- Attend recommended training sessions provided by the organisation.
- Inform the organisation with which you are volunteering if you are unable to attend, giving as much notice as possible.
- Look after your own safety. (If you are attending an activity, let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.)
- Report any concerns you have regarding your volunteering to ALIVE.
- Ask for information or guidance if you are unsure of any aspect of your volunteering role.

## Declaration

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to abide by the ALIVE Volunteer Agreement as set out above.

Signed by Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Homework Club Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Once you are volunteering...

Once you have decided on the Homework Club and met with the Homework Club Coordinator you can start volunteering!

## Confirmation of attendance and reliability

Please remember that when you have started your volunteering, the Homework Club Coordinator will be expecting you to turn up each week. It is vital that you let your Homework Club Coordinator know as far in advance as possible of dates you will be prevented from attending. Please, as far as possible prioritise your volunteering. Homework clubs run only for 10 weeks each semester for one hour a week, for a total of 10 hours per semester. Overall this a small amount of your time that makes a huge difference in the lives of the young students you support.

Furthermore activities may be planned that need your involvement. The students and Homework Club Coordinators feel let down if you just don't turn up one afternoon. Of course there are occasions when it is unavoidable to attend. If you are ill and unable to make it to your volunteering, then please let the Homework Club know as soon as possible. The procedure for each Homework Club will be determined by the Homework Club Coordinator. If necessary get a friend to call for you, but

not to replace you. You have built up a relationship with the Homework Club and a replacement is not appropriate.

The success of ALIVE is dependent on good relations with Homework Clubs. Keep in mind that when you volunteer in the community with a Homework Club you are a representative of NUI Galway.

## Volunteer Support

As an ALIVE Volunteer you are entitled to support for your volunteering. There are people all around to give you the support you need. You can either talk to the Homework Club Coordinator which may be a teacher or youth club leader or the ALIVE team. We are unable to see every ALIVE Volunteer personally, so we cannot automatically know about any problems you may experience unless you let us know. First point of call is always the Homework Club Coordinator, but if they cannot solve it for you or you do not feel comfortable speaking to them, come and speak to us. We will be happy to try and resolve any issues and give you the support you need.

NUI Galway Academic Calendar can be viewed on  
[http://nuigalway.ie/academic\\_dates/academic\\_term\\_dates.html](http://nuigalway.ie/academic_dates/academic_term_dates.html)

# Once you have started volunteering: What do I do if ...

I don't like volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to your Homework Club Coordinator at the Homework Club</li> <li>• Speak to ALIVE.</li> </ul>
I realise I don't have time to volunteer anymore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to your Homework Club Coordinator – if you are going to withdraw from volunteering, please give them plenty of notice.</li> <li>• Speak to ALIVE if you'd like to do something less time-consuming.</li> </ul>
I don't feel that I'm getting enough support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to your Homework Club Coordinator.</li> <li>• Speak to ALIVE.</li> </ul>
I don't get on with my Homework Club Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come and talk to ALIVE – we are here to listen and support you.</li> </ul>
I'm worried about something a student has told me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You should speak to your Homework Club Coordinator as soon as possible.</li> <li>• You may also wish to speak to someone at ALIVE.</li> <li>• See the Student Protection information in this Handbook outlined in the section called 'ALIVE Volunteer Code of Conduct'.</li> </ul>
I'd like a reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The best person to write you a reference is your Homework Club Coordinator – please ask them.</li> </ul>
I am leaving my volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please, please tell ALIVE and the Homework Club Coordinator– it's very useful for us to know if you are no longer volunteering, and the organisation needs to know too.</li> <li>• Don't just not turn up. You have built a relationship with a student, so you need to ensure that you tell the Homework Club Coordinator.</li> </ul>

## Your Volunteering in summary...

- ✓ Choose an activity and make your first contact with the school, youth club, after-school programme, etc. via the ALIVE website
- ✓ Find out how to get there and where to park or a viable bus route
- ✓ Check-in with the Coordinator upon arrival
- ✓ Arrive early on the first day
- ✓ Fulfil your commitment every week and always try to be on time
- ✓ Maintaining a reliable routine is very important for students. Make sure that you set a consistent schedule for your tutoring or mentoring, and always notify your student in advance if you will be late or cannot attend a session.



# Tips for Volunteering with Young People

As an ALIVE Volunteer you are there to support the learning of the students you are working with in a variety of ways. You may be working through activities set by the class teacher with students, share your expertise about a certain subject in a short talk, or assist on school trips.

## General Tips

- See things from the student's perspective. This will help you understand what is challenging and why
  - Try to motivate students
  - Work with students to problem solve (try breaking things up into steps, and practice each step at a time)
- Be mindful of your role as an ALIVE Volunteer  
It is hoped that through your support, the aspirations of the students will include further and higher education. Do not be afraid to talk about university to the students, let them know about your life as a student and encourage them to aim high!
- Be observant so you can evaluate and develop your experience using the reflective log at the back of this Handbook
- Let the Homework Club Coordinator know what you have to offer or what you want to learn
- Communicate with the students you work with about their interests and hobbies and respond to them

## ALIVE Volunteer Behaviour

An ALIVE volunteer is ...

- ✓ open minded
- ✓ reliable
- ✓ enthusiastic (young people will follow your lead, if you smile when they pull out their maths book you are sending a positive message.)
- ✓ friendly and understanding
- ✓ interested (listen - look - learn names - smile)
- ✓ committed
- ✓ helpful – ask yourself what does the Homework Club Coordinator need you to do?
- ✓ takes initiative
- ✓ punctual
- ✓ dresses appropriately

## An ALIVE volunteer does not ...

- ✗ contradict the Homework Club Coordinator in front of the student
- ✗ tell the Homework Club Coordinator what to do
- ✗ suffer in silence if things aren't going well – come and talk to ALIVE or your Homework Club Coordinator and we will work through any issues or concerns
- ✗ forget to let the school know when you can't make it
- ✗ repeat staff-room conversations
- ✗ appeared bored or just standing around
- ✗ do the students homework for them



## Tips for Homework

### • Ask questions

Asking questions about why a student came to a conclusion, or what makes an individual question difficult, is very important. It will help you get a feel for how the student learns and check for understanding.

### • Identify broad concepts

Try to identify broad concepts that will allow the student to answer new questions independently.

### • Guide the student

Try not to answer questions for the student; instead, guide them toward the correct conclusion with hints and pointed questions. Let them get the answer themselves.

### • Have a plan and communicate it.

Give the student the opportunity to add to the plan. For example: "We have three books to read today. Which one do you want to start with?" Write down a list and let the student check things off as they get done - this will give them a sense of accomplishment and serve as a visual representation of their progress.

### • Acknowledge when things aren't going well.

Assume that when the student doesn't understand something, you have to find a better way to explain it. "This is a hard book. It's ok. We'll work through it together." If a student is having continued difficulty understanding, move on. Focusing on one point makes the student anxious, and students learn best in an environment they perceive to be safe.

### • Recognise different learning styles

Recognise that students learn in different ways, and that it is important to try and understand where the student is coming from.

- Kinesthetic learning takes place through hands-on types of activities. A student with a preference for kinesthetic learning may benefit from games and interactive projects.
- Visual learning takes place through sight. A student with a preference for visual learning may benefit from the chance to read instructions or watch demonstrations.
- Auditory learning takes place through sound. A student with a preference for auditory learning may benefit from lectures and vocalized explanations of material.

Identifying the way your student learns can help you develop a successful approach. Most learners benefit from a combination of these approaches, but may be strongest in one area.

## Communicating in the Homework Club

- Do not jump to conclusions or assume understanding. Find out why a student does not understand something
- Try to keep explanations short
- If you don't know something, say you don't. You can use this to teach students how to research
- Be open to discussion - this can help the student to think about their ideas
- Ask open questions which encourage thinking e.g. why do you think that happens?
- Regularly check for understanding (e.g. by asking questions)
- Put yourself in the student's place, pace discussions at their rate and think about what might make things more clear
- Wherever possible, make eye contact
- Actually get down to the student's level (pull up a chair and sit next to them)
- Draw out ideas or concepts using gestures or pictures rather than just a verbal description
- Use analogies, metaphors and examples from real life

### Student Behaviour

You may encounter the following:

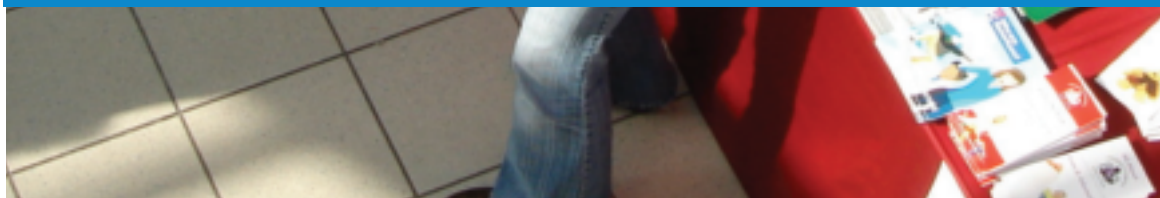
- Students resisting to do their homework
- Students with varying abilities
- Students suspicious of new people
- Inappropriate behaviour from students

When a student is pressing your buttons, be an actor and don't let on. You can ask for information or guidance from the Homework Club Coordinator if you are unsure of any aspect of your volunteering role.





# Volunteer



# Experiences and Tips from Past Student Volunteers

"I tried to continuously praise the students I volunteered with."

"I really enjoyed talking to the children in the group and helping them with their homework. I felt a little bit apprehensive and self conscious at the beginning but that soon faded when I began to interact with people. The leaders of the group were really friendly and welcoming also and this made me feel more at ease."

"I used darts as a fun way of exploring maths, so we would practice subtraction by imagining a dart board."

"If my student was having difficulty or frustrated I would just listen to them."

"I have become to know the girls and have had many discussions with them regarding their future education. They have asked my advice regarding colleges, courses and the leaving cert exams. I found that sharing my experience with them has helped them on their way to deciding their future education."

"Try using physical things like balls or blocks in the room to help with counting."

"I would give clues if the student was stuck in English, like pictures. And use the questions words: what, who, where, when, why, how?"

"Ask them to explain a drawing to you. Getting them to describe the picture is good for their English skills."

"I have learned that volunteering, especially with young children, can give you an increased feeling of self worth. Your confidence can grow when you feel like you are helping out in a community. I have learned that I definitely want a career working with children. I have got an insight into what it would be like to teach. I did not have any negative experiences at the homework club. The people working there were friendly and helpful. The children were good fun and mostly cooperated with me."

"When they had to write a story I would ask them to use their senses, what could they smell, see, hear, touch, it helps the student get started."

"My homework Club had a Buddy system, where volunteers came together to the club and that was great support."

## School age and year:

Primary School		Secondary School Class and Ages:	
Class	Age	Year	Age
1st Class	6-7	1st Year	(12-13)
2nd Class	7-8	2nd Year	(13-14)
3rd Class	8-9	3rd Year	Junior Cert (14-15)
4th Class	9-10	4th Year	Transition Year (Optional) (15-16)
5th Class	10-11	5th Year	1st year of the Leaving Certificate or Applied Leaving Certificate Courses (16-17)
6th Class	11-12	6th Year	Leaving Certificate or Applied Leaving Certificate Year (17-18)

# ALIVE Volunteer Code of Conduct

**The following information is not intended to scare or worry you. It is unlikely you will encounter any of these issues. However it is important that you are prepared in case you do.**

Overall this Code of Conduct is designed to provide you with information on how to ensure that you and the students are protected. All the information provided comes from Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, you can email ALIVE if you would like to know more about child protection.

## ALIVE Volunteer Role

Remember: You Have an Important Influence Upon the Young Person. This point is extremely important. You will have a lot of influence upon the young person, the student, and your actions, demeanour, and words will all be studied.

An ALIVE Volunteer is a ...

- ✓ role model
- ✓ guide
- ✓ source of encouragement and support
- ✓ resource offering knowledge and experience

The needs of each student will vary; some may need assistance with their schoolwork, some will need help developing confidence and others may just need a guide and a friend. Many will need some combination of all these things; it will be up to you to identify what role it is best for you to take in the student's life.

When working with your student, remember that adolescents and children can struggle with self-confidence, uncertainty, social anxiety and myriad other issues. You will have an opportunity to guide the student through various challenges, some of which you will have faced yourself, and some which will be unique to the individual.

As an ALIVE volunteer, you will be a role model for the student. You will have the opportunity to occupy a special position of respect and responsibility in the student's life. If you seem interested in the success of the student, and demonstrate patience and perseverance, there is a good chance that over time they will emulate those characteristics. The student, however, is also likely to mirror any frustration, impatience, or disinterest you demonstrate, so it is very important to be aware of not only your actions, but also your tone and the way you carry yourself.

You are there to offer the student encouragement and support, and to encourage them to develop and grow, both academically and as an individual. You will be in a position to offer knowledge and advice on a wide range of issues, and will be a valuable resource to the student in many ways.

An ALIVE Volunteer is not a ...

- ✗ best friend
- ✗ parent
- ✗ teacher
- ✗ counsellor

Being an ALIVE volunteer is a lot of responsibility. The lines in the relationship can become blurry if you are not aware of them. Remember that you are not there to make a new friend. For the relationship to work, the student must not view you as a peer or best buddy. Feelings of friendship are positive, but your role must remain that of a guide and source of knowledge and experience. It is also very important that as a mentor you do not stray into the role of parent, teacher, or counsellor. This can create confusion and lead to a multitude of problems for all parties involved.





## General Guidelines for ALIVE Volunteer Behaviour

As an ALIVE volunteer in a Homework Club you must value and respect the students as individuals, which is done by listening, encouraging and praising them. The following are guidelines for behaviour:

- ✓ Be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one young person. Favouritism should be avoided.
- ✓ Be sensitive to the fact that jokes of a sexual nature may be offensive to others and should never be told in the presence of children.
- ✓ Although you are there to befriend the children, you are not a peer. It's a good idea to maintain a professional approach whilst in school or homework club.
- ✓ Try not to swear, you are there as a role model.
- ✓ All Homework Clubs are totally non-smoking. If you need to have a cigarette during break or lunchtime, try to walk away from the Homework Club ensuring that students do not see you.
- ✓ Where a volunteer has a concern about the nature of a particular relationship involving themselves or another employee, volunteer or young person, they should discuss it with their Homework Club Coordinator.
- ✓ Volunteers will not give lifts in their cars to students.
- ✓ If a volunteer becomes aware of bullying they should report it to the Homework Club Coordinator.

### Diversity

Diversity is celebrated in Ireland. ALIVE Volunteers should not discriminate against groups or individuals on the nine grounds of Equality Legislation (Employment Equality Act 1998) in Ireland:

1. gender
2. marital status
3. family status
4. age
5. race
6. religion
7. disability
8. sexual orientation
9. membership of the Traveller community

### Things to avoid:

- ✗ Making physical contact with the student
- ✗ Accepting information from a student in confidence (never promise to keep a secret)
- ✗ Remaining in the classroom without a Homework Club Coordinator present
- ✗ Over chatting to the detriment of not completing the student's homework

- ✗ Becoming friends with the student – don't exchange mobile numbers or tell them where you live
- ✗ Never take a student in your car

## Physical contact should be avoided.

Respect boundaries

- Physical
- Personal

Avoid touching the student. This doesn't mean that you cannot shake their hand or give them a quick hug in an appropriate situation, but such contact should be very limited. Physical contact creates the risk of accidental harm, or could be viewed as inappropriate. Even contact you perceive to be innocent, such as resting your hand on a student's shoulder while they are working, may be viewed very differently by the student, their parents or authorities.

Tied into this is the need to respect boundaries, both physical and personal. Remember, you are the student's mentor or tutor; you do not have a right to get overly involved in their personal life. Use common sense.

However, there are some circumstances where this may not be possible e.g. you encounter an injured student. It is best to find out what the Homework Club's policy on physical contact is when you go on the initial meeting.

- ✓ Be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports with young people, for example, rough horse play, aggressive or offensive tackling for possession of the ball, domineering attitude to play, will not be acceptable.
- ✓ Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children. Guidelines for physical contact are:
  - Touch should only be in response to the need of the student and not of the adult.
  - Touch should be with the student's permission-resistance from the student should be respected.
  - Touch should be open and not secretive with respect to the environment & the type of touch. Any concerns that a volunteer/worker has in respect to touch should be discussed with their Homework Club Coordinator on a timely basis.
  - Touch should be governed by the age and developmental stage of the student.
  - Volunteers must never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a young person.

## You should also avoid being left alone with children.

It is not your responsibility to teach the class. When working with small groups or individuals outside the main classroom area it is also important to stay in an open space where other responsible adults are present/can see and hear you.

- ✓ Be sensitive to the potential risk to personal safety and false allegations, which may arise when meeting alone with a young person in a room. No occasion should arise where a private meeting is necessary between an ALIVE Volunteer and a student.
- ✓ In the exceptional circumstances where it might occur, consider leaving the door slightly ajar or informing another volunteer or Homework Club Coordinator that you will be alone in the room with the individual in question.

## You should not promise to keep a secret.

Although it is fine for the student to talk to you about non-academic things, there are several issues to be considered. You should not promise to keep a secret; they may disclose to you something you have to tell the Homework Club Coordinator e.g. some form of abuse or bullying. It is fine to let the student know you are happy to listen to them, but to let them know beforehand that you cannot keep secrets for them. If it is the case that you feel the need to pass on information to a Homework Club Coordinator then it is a good idea to let the student know that what they have told you is too important for you to keep it a secret.

Anything that the student shares with you should be considered confidential. Do not share this information with anyone who does not have a right to know, or make attempts to intercede in their private life. If a student discloses this type of information to you while at the school, do not leave the school without first discussing the disclosure with the homework club coordinator, the counsellor or principle. There is one very important exception to this rule. If the student tells you about a situation where they or someone else has been harmed, or if the threat of such harm exists, you are legally obligated to report it.

### Guidelines for handling disclosures

- ✓ Listen to the student.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions.
- ✓ Offer reassurances but do not make promises.
- ✓ Do not stop a student recalling significant events.
- ✓ Do not over react.
- ✓ Explain that further help may have to be sought.
- ✓ Record the discussion accurately and retain the record.
- ✓ Report the disclosure.

## You should report a Disclosure or Student Protection Concern to the Homework Club Coordinator.

A volunteer who knows or suspects that a young person has been or is at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey this concern to the Homework Club Coordinator. There will be a procedure in the Homework Club to deal with this situation.

### What is child abuse?

Child abuse is complicated and can take different forms, but usually consists of one or more of the following:

- Neglect: Where a student's needs for food, warmth, shelter, nurturance and safety are not provided, to the extent that the student suffers significant harm.
- Emotional abuse: Where a student's needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by their parent or carer.
- Sexual abuse: where a student is used for the sexual gratification of an adult.
- Physical abuse: where a student is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate.

## Concluding the Relationship

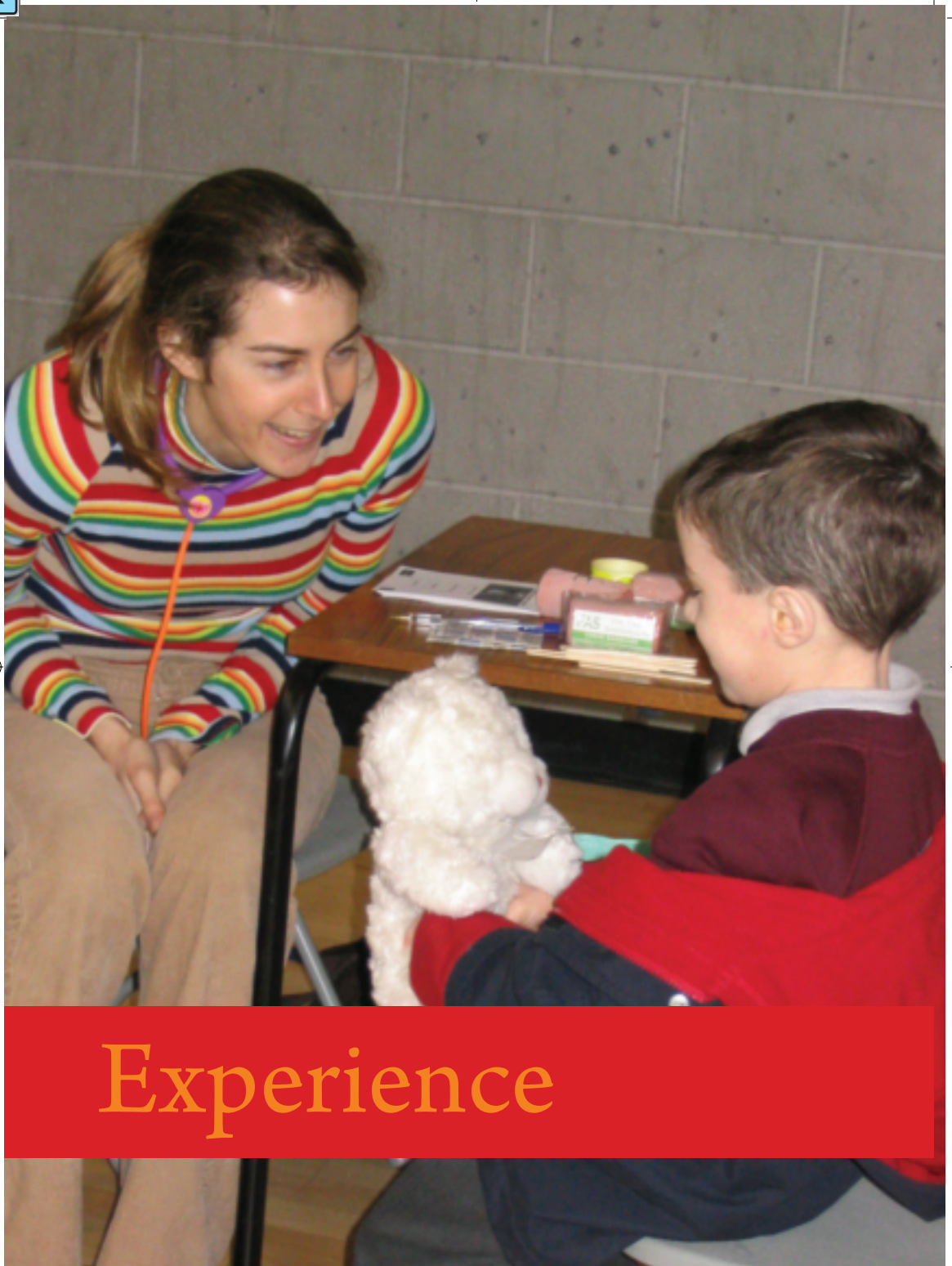
- Prepare the student

Tutoring and mentoring experiences lead many students to develop strong emotional bonds, and sometimes the volunteer is unaware that these emotional ties exist. You should be aware of the potential for these types of feelings even in short-term tutoring or mentoring situations, but they are especially important to anticipate when the student is very young, or you have been working with a student for an extended period of time.

Keep in mind that, while you may be excited about the approach of exams, Easter break, or summer, the student may be feeling a sense of loss or pressure at the prospect of you leaving.

It is important that, a few weeks before your last tutoring or mentoring session, you make the student aware of the approaching termination of your role as a tutor or mentor, and continue to remind the student of this until the conclusion of the relationship.

If you would like to know more about Child Protection you can attend a training workshop organised by the Homework Club Coordinator or ALIVE. You can also visit the ALIVE website or email us if you have any questions or concerns.



# Experience



# NUI Galway Presidential Award, the ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering

**Get Certified! As an ALIVE Volunteer you are eligible for the NUI Galway ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering.**

The NUI Galway ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering is a Presidential Award recognising all extra-curricular activities of all NUI Galway students. To congratulate and recognise students that volunteer, the President of NUI Galway, James J Browne awards the ALIVE Certificate to students that give their time to communities – whether that be the NUI Galway, Galway city, your hometown or international communities.

## What's it all about?

The ALIVE Certificate has three aims.

First and foremost, we want to reward all the time and effort students put into societies, sports clubs, campaigns, committees, community volunteering, Mentoring, Class Rep, student radio, and everything else that isn't degree-related, all your extra-curricular activities.

Secondly, employers note that students have a lot of fantastic experience but do not know how to talk about it in interviews and application forms.

Third, the Certificate is an opportunity for you to reflect on your volunteering, academic degree and role in society. Volunteers can really make a difference in the world.

NUI Galway has developed the ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering: a chance to tell us what you have been doing and get the recognition you deserve!

## Volunteering and Your CV

On your CV it is important to refer to the ALIVE Certificate as an achievement. It is great addition to your CV. Check out the ALIVE website for details on how to add volunteering to your CV.

## Applying for the Certificate

You can apply online for the ALIVE Certificate at [www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive) All you need to do is complete a few questions about your volunteering.

To qualify you need to be an active volunteer for at least one semester. You can volunteer in Galway, in your hometown, or internationally during the summer months. ALL volunteering is recognised.

## ALIVE Certificate Ceremony

The ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering represents the volunteering, training and reflection you have undertaken. The Certificate is awarded annually in March at the ALIVE Certificate Ceremony by the President of NUI Galway. Everyone is welcome to the annual event – students, staff, community organisations – to celebrate volunteering. Each student is presented with their Certificate at the Ceremony.

**“The impact of student volunteering in the community is considerable and NUI Galway is proud to celebrate your achievements through the award of the ALIVE Certificate.”**

**Dr. James J Browne, President,  
National University of Ireland, Galway**





# What do you think about your volunteering?

This reflective log is for you to use in whatever way you wish. You might like to include personal writing, drawings, web pages, emails, or anything that you have found helpful to your learning process. If you submit this log to ALIVE then you can receive the ALIVE Certificate for Volunteering - a great addition to any CV.

You might find it useful to use the following questions to make a record of your personal development. Think about examples from your volunteering and make some notes. Revisit these pages every month or so during your volunteering and add to them.

- **Describe your Volunteering role and activity.**

---

---

- **What is the history of the Homework Club and what work is conducted?**

---

---

- **What is the impact of the Homework Club (on you, the students, the local/national community)?**

---

---

- **Please list the positive and negative experiences you have gained so far.**

---

---

- **Please list with a brief description any training you received.**

---

---

- **Please list any new skills or knowledge you have gained to date. (For example: Trying out a new technology for the first time; Giving a presentation, etc.)**

---

---

- **Please list your plans for your continued voluntary work.**

---

---





### What is volunteering?

Volunteering is giving your time free of charge to a community. As an NUI Galway student volunteering is the opportunity to gain experience and skills.

### What do volunteers do?

talk to people • work with animals • drive cars • plant trees • write letters • paint walls  
• sell books • host events • raise funds • cook dinners • walk dogs • play music •  
organise meetings • listen to people • give first aid • collect for recycling • work with  
young people • spend time with older people • keep accounts • campaign on justice  
issues • office work • after school support for children and much more!

### What is ALIVE?

ALIVE works with schools, charities, community organisations and within NUI Galway to provide volunteering opportunities in a wide variety of roles. We are dedicated to helping NUI Galway students volunteer in the area of their choice which suits their individual needs, interests and time commitments. We are here to offer you information, advice, guidance and support throughout your volunteering experience. We also reward your efforts with the NUI Galway Presidential award for volunteering, the ALIVE Certificate.

## To find out more about volunteering...

visit [www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive)

email [alive@nuigalway.ie](mailto:alive@nuigalway.ie)