

# Community Language School

Expressions of interest  
open for volunteers

Est.  
2016

YORK ST JOHN  
**COMMUNITIES  
CENTRE**

Est  
1841

YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

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Are you proficient in a language other than English? Would you like to volunteer to introduce and use the language with children and adolescents from the community? If so, sign up for the Community Language School today!

### What's it all about?

Led by Drs Indu Vibha Meddegama and Maja Skender-Lizatovic, the Community Language School welcomes children and adolescents, between the ages of 6-13 years, from families where a language other than English is already being used at home or whose parents/guardians are keen to see their children use a language other than their dominant one.

### Why is this important?

- Even though parents are often keen for children to learn a heritage or additional language, they do not always have the time or resources needed to achieve this aspiration.
- For children growing up and receiving education in England, there is little to no opportunities to learn or use heritage or additional languages. For children from migrant backgrounds, the home is quite often the only place where they hear either parents or grandparents use the heritage languages. As a result, children often tend to shy away from learning them.
- Children from recently arrived migrant families may also be mistaken to have poor academic skills because their dominant language is not English. This can easily leave children feeling that their home language is no longer valued.

We hope that the Community Language School will become a safe and welcoming environment for children to use these languages with a feeling of pride. Additionally, we hope it will provide opportunities for families to network with others from the same or similar linguacultural backgrounds, sharing experiences and creating a sense of belonging.



## What does it involve?

With support from the School Leads, volunteers will deliver one-hour classes on Saturday afternoons. The classes will involve activities such as making cards for a specific festival or talking about concepts like friendship with the children. The school term will run from September to May the following year, with breaks between December - January and March - April.

## Can I get involved?

If you are proficient in a language other than English and are over 18 years of age, then yes! We are not necessarily looking for individuals with teaching experience or qualifications, but people who are passionate about celebrating language diversity and share a love for languages, and of course, have an hour to spare on Saturdays to run the classes.

\*Please note that places will be offered on the condition that the applicant successfully receives an enhanced DBS clearance during the enrolment process.

## Why volunteer?

Our aspiration is that you, together with School Leads and other volunteers, will set in motion the beginnings of a thriving multilingual community whilst engaging in truly rewarding work!

The Community Language school will be hosted via the York St John Communities centre that offers many other community-facing projects and programmes. So, your involvement in our school may open other, equally exciting opportunities for you!

If you have prior experience, and an interest in the academia and research, the School Leads may also invite you to contribute to their research outputs.

## What training and support will I receive?

- An induction with School Leads
- Safeguarding training and Enhanced DBS clearance as part of the Centre induction
- Weekly (optional) online meetings with School Leads to discuss all aspects relating to the delivery of the classes
- All resources (from arts and crafts to baking) needed for classroom activities

## Anything else?

For best practice, we will ask you to maintain a reflective journal to record classroom experiences and personal trajectory on the programme.

## How do I get involved?

If you would like to apply then please complete the application form on the 'Opportunities at the Centre' page on our website ([www.yorks.ac.uk/ysjcc](http://www.yorks.ac.uk/ysjcc)), and send to the York St John Communities Centre Manager Nikki Jephson ([n.jephson@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:n.jephson@yorks.ac.uk)), along with your CV and a brief cover letter detailing your motivation for applying, your proficiency in the language you are offering to share with children, and any prior experience of working with children and/or adolescents.



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