



## Stirling

School of English SCIO

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## WELCOME

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Stirling School of English SCIO (SSE) which was constituted in 1999. SSE is a small, volunteer-led organisation with just one part-time employee. Our volunteer tutors' gift of time, energy and experience is at the heart of the organisation and their contribution is invaluable.

This handbook provides you with the essential information about our school, and your responsibilities while studying at the SSE.

I do hope you enjoy studying with us and that your contribution to welcoming, socialising with other students and tutors is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

David Howes  
Chairman  
Stirling School of English

## Aims and Objectives of SSE

The aim of the Stirling School of English is to advance the education of persons whose first language is not English, regardless of ability, gender, ethnic origin or political or religious beliefs, by providing them with high quality small group or individual tuition AND to provide support for tutors in order to enhance the tuition of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

The Stirling School of English SCIO is a voluntary organisation. Volunteers are engaged to

- deliver English language teaching tuition which meets the needs of our service users
- provide new skills and perspectives to our learners
- a range of support services, e.g., administration, crèche, IT
- make decisions about service delivery
- provide regular feedback to improve service delivery
- Volunteers are engaged in the governance of the organisation and appointed to the Board of management at the AGM

The Stirling School of English is committed to

- support volunteers in the delivery of services
- be responsive to the needs of volunteers
- provide different skills and perspectives
- offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded
- provide initial and ongoing training and support for volunteers

## **Principles**

The Stirling School of English

- believes that voluntary work should be of benefit to volunteers as well as to service users
- will ensure that volunteers are at the centre of the decision-making process
- will ensure that volunteers are given satisfying work and personal development to meet their needs
- believes that volunteers should receive the support to enable them to carry out their functions
- adopts flexible working practice

## **Our Structure**

SSE is a volunteer organisation. We have one part-time member of staff- the Volunteer Manager, Ilona Hunter- and everybody else is a volunteer.

## Trustees

David Howes: chair, fundraising  
Mike Hall: secretary  
Malcolm Shaw: treasurer

Lore Kelling: fundraising  
Liz Allan: policies

Board members: Margaret McCann, Houssam Alish, William Watson

### **What is a Volunteer?**

A volunteer is someone who commits time and energy to benefit others, freely, through personal choice and without expecting financial reward, except for out of pocket expenses.

Our volunteers make a commitment to support the work of SSE.

### **How Volunteers Are Involved With SSE?**

Our volunteers help us to achieve our aims in a variety of ways including:

1. Providing governance and vision by serving as Trustees on the Management Board (Board of Governors)
2. External Relations Team which includes developing, designing, and distributing publicity materials; developing partnership with organisations; helping out with social media; working with the Scottish Government
3. Fundraising Team by researching and compiling funding applications where we meet the criteria or being involved in our events that raise money.
4. Tutoring Team: provides language tuition to all whose first language is not English, regardless of ability, ethnicity and political or religious beliefs.
5. We also have a number of other volunteers who help in various other ways, including creche workers, monitoring and evaluation, policy developing, administration, moving furniture, helping out in a café

## **Our Venues**

Morning Classes take place in Level One: 61-63 Murray Place  
Stirling, FK8 1AP

Evening Classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays take place at Wallace  
High: Airthrey Rd, Stirling FK9 5HW

Online classes: ZOOM

## **Health and Safety**

Volunteers and students should adhere to the Health and Safety Policy of the Stirling School of English AND to the Health and Safety Policy of Level One (Stirling Baptist Church). All volunteers and students should take part in the regular fire drills and inform the Volunteer Manager immediately of any perceived risks. Faulty electrical equipment should not be used but handed in to the Volunteer Manager or Administrative Assistant.

- Looking after your mental Health and wellbeing:

The health and wellbeing of the school's community is of paramount importance.

Although your engagement in online learning may only be for a small number of hours per week, you should still be aware of good working from home practices and try to adhere to them to avoid any accidents or injuries. The following checklist can help you create a safe environment:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf>

## **Crèche and Safety of Children**

A child is a person under the age of 16 years.

Crèche is available for students' pre-school children for a small fee while parents/guardians are in classes. During break time parents are responsible for their children.

Crèche workers do not take children to the bathroom or feed them. They will ask a parent/guardian to take their child to the toilet.

If the fire alarm goes off, crèche workers will look after the children and take them to the fire assembly point. Do not go to crèche to collect your children.

As a student, during breaks, you might have contact with other students' children. You should not be left alone with a child or children except in case of an emergency. If you have concerns about the welfare of a child or children, you must share these with the Volunteer Manager. Please see our Child Protection Policy for more details.

### **Personal Safety**

Please remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that you do everything possible to avoid injury to yourself or others. If an incident or accident or any injury occurs to you in the school, please report it the Volunteer Manager who is a First Aider.

If you have any concerns, incidents, near misses etc. please do speak to a volunteer manager for personal support and to enable appropriate recording and risk assessment to be undertaken.

### **Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking**

The use of non-prescription drugs and the use of alcohol are not permitted while studying with us. Students under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs will be sent home and may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The Stirling School of English operates an equal opportunities policy in respect of both volunteer tutors and students. Both are expected to

understand and commit to the Equal Opportunities Policy available on our website.

### **Confidentiality**

Although there is generally no requirement for confidentiality, volunteer tutors should aim to provide a supportive environment for all students. Knowledge of your personal details is restricted to those who need it and passed on only in line with our Data Protection Policy.

Regard is taken to storage of confidential documents in line with our Data Protection Policy.

### **Complaints**

Please refer to our Complaints Policy available on our website.

### **Student Representatives**

There is one representative for in-person and one for online classes. You can discuss with them any comments or suggestions you may have if you are not comfortable to speak directly to the manager. The representatives are invited to Board Meetings and play an active role in shaping the future of our school.

### **Problems and Misconduct**

In line with the Complaints procedure, volunteers and students may discuss any concerns they have at any time with the Volunteer Manager.

If a problem arises with the Volunteer Manager, the volunteer or student may go directly to the chairperson.

If the Volunteer Manager is unable to resolve the problem he/she will refer the matter, with the permission of the volunteer, to the Board of Management.

## **Leaving the school**

The Stirling School of English would be pleased to provide a certificate of attendance if requested. The certificate will have the date of your enrolment and leave, class level, and the number of hours you attended out of the total number of hours taught.

## **Refunds**

Refunds to students are only given if the student is unable to attend classes for a serious reason after registering and paying the fee. If they have attended at least one class, the refund will not be more than 50% of the registration fee. The recipient should sign a receipt for the refund he/she received.

## **Complaints**

Please refer to our Complaints Policy available on our website.

## **Semesters and Summer School**

The SSE operates on a semester system. The two semesters, Autumn and Winter/Spring are approximately 15 weeks. The summer school runs for four weeks. Please consult our Academic Calendar available on the website (<https://stirlingschoolofenglish.com/calendar/>) for the exact start and finish dates for each semester.

## **Levels**

There are six levels at which students enter the SSE based on the initial assessment: beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced.

A student's level may be changed based on their performance in the first semester.

While it is rare, students are sometimes enrolled in one level, and then moved to another level during the same semester, if this seems appropriate. If the tutors believe, based on diagnostic assignments in the classes, that a

student may qualify to move to another level, they need to speak to the Volunteer Manager who will then arrange a meeting with both the student and their tutor. However, students are not forced to move up or down in levels.

## **Classes**

It is important to attend classes regularly both for your benefit and for volunteer tutors. Please tell your tutors about any planned absences well in advance so that that they can prepare accordingly.

If you attend an online class, you will be given login details which you are not allowed to share with anyone. If you need help with logging in, please call the volunteer manager (07742514087).

If you attend online classes, please do remember to stay muted if you do not speak. If you are not muted, other students' audio is of very bad quality so please mute yourself if you do not speak.

## **Exam Classes**

We are not an exam centre, however, we prepare students for Cambridge FCE, CAE, CPE, Citizenship and IELTS exams.

A student must be at:

- an upper-intermediate level to join and FCE class and IELTS intermediate
- an advanced level to join CAE, CPE or IELTS Advanced classes

The deadline for joining exam preparation classes is the end of September.

## **Student Course Books**

Every student attending an exam or social English class must purchase a legally acquired course book (**the latest edition, hard copy or editable e-copy**) and bring it to class within a fortnight of their enrolment.

If you do not have a course book, your tutor will ask you to speak to the Volunteer Manager.



Headway 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Course Books also have online practice. You will find more information on how to access it here:

<https://help.oxfordonlinepractice.com/students/>

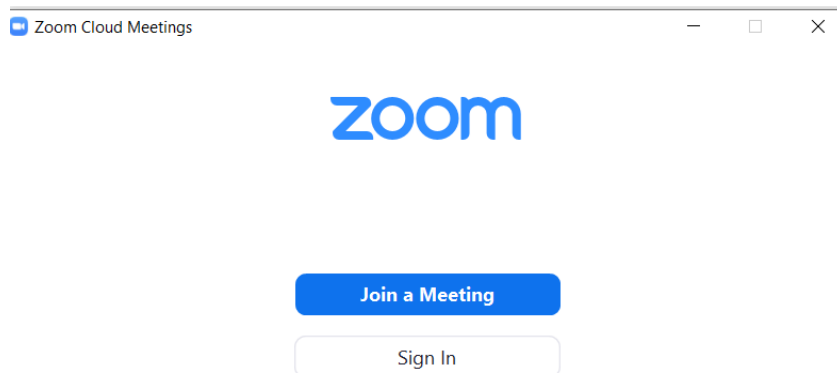
If you need help, please contact the school's manager.

## **ZOOM**

You can download zoom from here: <https://zoom.us/support/download>

You will receive your class zoom link, ID and password.

To join your zoom class either click on the link OR go to zoom and click on 'join a meeting' and type in your meeting ID and password. Remember to type your name.



## **Resources**

Our school is a charity with very limited resources, therefore it is vital that you have a coursebook in every class as tutors will use it a lot.

## **Internet**

There is WiFi in Level one-please ask the Volunteer Manager for the password. There is no internet access in the Wallace High School at the moment.

## **Classrooms**

Level One only has 2 classrooms that are usually reserved for exam classes. Other classes take place in the large communal area and are separated with room dividers. It can be noisy and uncomfortable at the beginning but you

will get used to it and unfortunately there is nothing we can do about it as Level One is the cheapest and the most accessible venue we could find.

### **Student Library**

We have graded readers in Level One in plastic boxes near the cafe for students to borrow. They provide opportunities for students to work independently towards acquiring the necessary language and skills. Tutors can also use them in class. Students and tutors must write the title of the book, their name and date in the notebook placed beside the boxes.

You can also access electronic graded readers for free on this website: <https://english-e-reader.net/>

### **Social Events**

There are 3 main social events that we encourage all volunteers and students to promote and attend to help you integrate and get to know Scottish culture: St. Andrew's Night (November), Burns Supper and Ceilidh (January), International Supper and Ceilidh (May/June). They usually take place in the Albert Halls and SSE students get discounted tickets.

We also have smaller events, such as International Day of Languages, Halloween, Christmas Party, Pancake Day, Easter Bonnet Competition. We celebrate these at our normal venues.

### **Attendance and lateness**

You are expected to be present in class. It is very disrespectful for our volunteers not to attend the class without letting them know, so we kindly ask you to inform your tutor/volunteer manager by emailing them as soon as possible if you are going to be absent-sickness, holiday, appointments. This is especially important if your class has 1-4 students. Please be punctual. You are expected to be in school on time (the school is open from 9:45am) so that you are ready at your desk at 10am. In this culture punctuality is valued and it is rude to be late for school. If no

students turn up within the first 15 minutes of the class, the class tutor will go home and the class will NOT take place.

Punctuality and appropriate dress code (no pyjamas) also apply to online learning.

**After two absences without any previous notice,** you will be contacted by the volunteer manager to discuss our involvement in classes.

Our tutors are volunteers and we would appreciate that you would give advance notice to your tutors.

### **Assessing and Monitoring Your Progress**

During a normal semester, students working with a course book generally have a minimum of one midterm assessment per course. It is recommended to do the assessment at the end of November and in the middle of May.

Some courses use assessment methods that do not involve a midterm assessment and students' progress is monitored in class. The purpose of the assessment is to establish what the students have learned and what items need to be revisited in class.

### **Student Feedback**

These questionnaires are administered to the students in the middle of each course that is run. Each class nominates a class representative or a tutor who collects all the feedback during a class discussion, which should not take more than 20 minutes, and then hands in the questionnaire with answers to the Volunteer Manager. Tutors don't need to be present during the class discussion. You can also email the Volunteer Manager with any comments or suggestions at any time in the semester.

The purpose of the feedback is for students to evaluate the course and provide tutors with the opportunity to make changes to the course plan to further meet students' needs in the course. After the administration of the

questionnaire, the Volunteer Manager shares the results with the tutors and the Board.

At the end of the school year you will receive an individual feedback survey to complete.

### **Speaking to Media**

Only designated trustees may issue press releases or talk with members of the press. All press enquiries should be referred to the chairman who will forward it to an appropriate member of staff or trustee.

### **Photos and Videos on Social Media**

The school does not take any responsibility for what students put on their social media. Please ask your classmates and tutors for permission before you post something.

You are not allowed to record your classes.

### **Use of mobile phones in class**

The use of mobile phones for non-educational purposes is not allowed unless the tutor gives you permission. If you need to check any words you do not know-please ask your tutor.

### **Break times**

All students have to be present at break times and speak English (as much as possible) as they are part of the teaching hours. The purpose of breaks is to improve communication, make friendships and socialise.

Take the opportunity to speak English at all times and encourage other students to do so as well.

It is rude to speak your native language when other students and tutors do not understand it.

During online classes students should use the break to get some eye rest and move around their homes to protect their health.