

HAJI PUBLIC SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Inviting applications for 5 months minimum, with an option to extend.

[Longer term volunteers will be given preference.]

Term 1: March to July

Term 2: July to December

Only shortlisted volunteers will be contacted.



Dear Volunteers / Teachers,

All the introductory information about Haji Public School's **Volunteer Program** is available on the following websites/pages. Please go through these before reading further.

- [Official School Website](#)
- [HPS on Facebook](#)
- Instagram: [@HajiPublicSchool](#)
- School Tumblr: [That School in the Village](#)
- LinkedIn [Haji Public School](#)

To date we have had over 100 teachers and guests from India and other countries who have volunteered at or visited Haji Public School.

Many of our strongest volunteers initially applied for a few months and then extended their stay at the school for a few years, becoming a part of the regular staff.

People you may know who've been to Haji Public School:

- **Volunteer / Teacher** at HPS from 2012 - 2014: Madhuri Vijay (author, *The Far Field*)
- **Visiting Guests:** Vinay Pathak (actor), Sanjay Kak (author, activist, filmmaker), Arundhati Roy (author), Aliya Nazki (journalist); former diplomat Manoj Kumar Bharti (IFS), among others.

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE:



Haji Public School requires full time volunteers living in staff quarters in the village with other teachers and volunteers.

Duties: Teaching regular classes, following school schedule and syllabus, running the school in line with management rules, as well as reporting to/discussion with the school management on a regular basis to improve quality of classes.

Personal:

Volunteers must have subject mastery, be competent, sincere, hard-working and genuinely interested in education and social service. We expect applicants to be serious about their tenure with Haji Public School. Experience in teaching/working with children will be an advantage, but not a requirement.

We expect emotional and intellectual maturity from our volunteers. Villagers and students alike hold any visiting teachers in high esteem and their behaviour in and outside of the school should reflect this.

OUR PRIME REQUIREMENT IS TEACHERS WHO WILL TAKE ON FULL TIME REGULAR CLASSES WITH OUR STUDENTS, IN KEEPING WITH THE LOCAL SYLLABUS AND BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING.

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Anything else you can bring to the table is most welcome, but essentially we are looking for young women and men to come over and teach our kids standard subjects [English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, Hindi, Urdu] for a semester or longer.

HPS has classes up to Grade 10. The age group of students you will be dealing with will be from 4+ to 17 years.

Volunteers should be mentally prepared for a quiet village stay. There is much to do in, and learn from agrarian rural life if one is so inclined.

Volunteers are requested to be respectful of the **local culture and traditions** of the people. Breswana is a friendly village with Muslim population. There is no compulsion on our lady volunteers to cover their heads etc. Modesty in dressing [for all volunteers] is more than adequate. For ladies, kurtas/long shirts teamed with any trousers/jeans/shalwar/pajamas are best. We are a typical South Asian village of simple, easy-going farmers, and volunteers should not look to come in and stir things up. We are looking for the utmost you can contribute to the students as a teacher and as a semi-parental figure in your time here.

Smoking and alcohol consumption are strictly not permitted.

Please do not apply to the school if you see this as a sort of holiday break, some down time in the hills, or if the intent is to get some photography/filmmaking done in Kashmir. Our prime concern has always been to get the best candidates to help the kids in the time they are here, and we can gauge this within a week of a teacher's arrival.

All volunteers will start on a one-month probation, and will continue after the management is satisfied with their performance and suitability to the village.

TENURE:

HPS will accept only long-term teaching volunteers [five months or more].

There is of course no upper limit to one's stay. We would love to have you work with HPS permanently, if we find we suit each other.

Weather:

The weather remains very chilly throughout March and April. From May onwards, spring sets in in Breswana, with the occasional rain shower bringing a cold spell. Mornings and evenings are always chilly, but days are generally very pleasant and sunny throughout the spring and summer.

Autumn arrives mid-September and the weather becomes increasingly colder till winter's arrival in November.

Winter holidays for the school are scheduled anywhere between the beginning to mid-December till March of the following year.

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THE JOB:

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- **Proficiency in English: reading, handwriting, pronunciation, writing, grammar and overall command over the language.** This is a requirement for all English language subjects. Students pick up what their teachers say and do very quickly, and we don't want our students mirroring language errors, or not being checked for grammatical/language based errors in their notebooks or in conversation.
- **Tech-Savvy:** Teachers must know how to work on computers well (basic Office / Document processing suite), use technology and media to enhance lessons. Preferably bring your own laptops.
- **Hard work:** Teaching at Haji Public School is not a walk in the park. A teacher has a full timetable, lots of prepping to do, notes to prepare and teach well. Time management is essential. There will be work to take home and as management we expect all volunteers to give 100% to the students. The management is very serious about the quality of Volunteers in house and whether they are invested in the students or not.
- **Taking instructions and guidance:** The volunteers who have made the best fit in the school are the ones who quickly understand the students and the working style of the school. They are very quick to pick up on advice from the management and colleagues in terms of what works with the students, and what will not fly. They will have a very free reign in classes but there are certain guidelines which a volunteer must adhere to, developed over years of teaching in the village and with inputs from various previous volunteers / teachers.
- **Maturity and Seriousness:** We expect our volunteers to be grown-ups in every sense of the word, co-exist comfortably with their housemates in shared staff accommodation, serve as good examples for the children when around them, and to take care of the facilities provided to them at their home stay.
Please remember to be conscientious of other house members, to pick up after yourselves, to be very careful with waste management and in general take care of yourselves.

DETAILS:

Volunteers will **teach regular classes** Monday through Saturday (with Friday being a half day and usually reserved for games, music, movies, arts, drama and sports). They are expected to adhere to the school timetable strictly, arriving in school before the first bell and staying on till the last.

Ofentimes **extra classes** will be needed, or special coaching for weaker students, where volunteers can spend an additional hour or so at school.

Apart from classroom teaching, **regular and thorough correction of notebooks** is a big part of the volunteer's daily life. We expect teachers to give **excellent notes**, ensure that students

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maintain their notebooks in very good condition, have neat and well-written notes and that these notes be checked very frequently. Handwriting, neatness, presentation, spellings - these are all aspects that teachers will need their wards to perfect.

Teachers will be dealing with students in the age group 4+ to 17. The level of understanding about the outside world and exposure that the kids in our area have is very, very basic, far lower than kids of the same age in urban areas or even more accessible villages. They are naturally very bright and pick up quickly. The English speaking / understanding of our students is pretty good, but needs constant checking and improvement. It'll take a few days for students to start responding to a new volunteer, without a familiar face to translate for and encourage them. But after that they'll more than make up for time lost with their enthusiasm. Once you develop a sense of how to pace yourself, and their inhibition with a new teacher disappears, it should be smooth sailing.

Our students in the village can gain from ANY outside influence. Volunteers could just talk to them, conduct spoken-English sessions, play games, teach them songs, all the while moving the syllabus along as per the school's lesson plan.

An important aspect of the volunteer's job will be **helping train the permanent teaching staff** at Haji Public School. This would be spoken-English lessons, help with pronunciation, assisting in teaching and preparing lessons and organising the school schedule better.

BRESWANA: GETTING THERE, TERRAIN & OTHER PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Breswana lies in the mountains of Doda District spread out at an altitude of 7,200-7,500 ft. Teachers can arrive at Jammu City/ Udhampur / Katra, whichever suits.

Road Trip: Drive from Jammu to the village: **6-7 hours** approx.

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ACCOMMODATION:

Volunteers will be provided comfortable accommodation in separate quarters on the Haji estate.

They are requested to show particular care with the living area and facilities. To take care with the furniture, kitchenware and other household items.

We expect volunteers to clean up after themselves, maintain a rota to keep the toilets clean, manage toilet trash impeccably and in general be very, very careful with using plastic in the village. Plastic is completely alien to our environment and everything you use stays here as trash. Please limit your use of snacks and other unnecessary items that are packed.

Features:

- Rooms with twin beds [Depending on the number of volunteers at a time, you may have to share your room with 1 or 2 other volunteers.]
- Lobby area with television
- Western style toilets
- Hot water
- Kitchenette
- Very close to school [a couple of minutes' walk away]

CLOTHING

LAYERS: Volunteers are advised to bring light, cool, easily washable clothes for the most part, and a few items of warm clothing for cold spells. Spring Volunteers need to bring heavy, warm clothes to take them through March and April, when it is still very cold.

Footwear: One pair of trekking/hiking shoes, with grooved soles [for better grip on rocky/gravelly mountain slopes when walking up or down.] Additional flip flops or casual wear

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shoes/slippers. No bathroom slippers to school please, so something smart to wear to work.

Bring lots of long socks - light coloured preferably. Thick as well as cooler socks. Socks will be very important to prevent flea bites in the summer. **Ankle socks are not recommended, long socks are the way to go.**

I'd recommend full sleeves to protect against both the sun and the cold.

To reiterate: Please do not wear tight-fitting, short/tank tops, shorts, sleeveless or other clothes that you might find normal in the city, but will be unusual and uncomfortable for the locals to stomach in a regular desi village. Shalwar kameez, kurtas, long t-shirts and jeans are comfortable for daily wear. Nothing too novel for the villagers or students - it will just be an unnecessary distraction, taking away from your purpose here. This goes for all volunteers.

MEALS [breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner] will be provided to volunteers by the HPS management at fixed times as per the school schedule. It will be homely, village style food. Please bear in mind we're in a remote village and food provided will be as per availability of local vegetables/rations. Gas cylinders are a luxury and brought up to the village at great cost. Please be economical in the use of all resources.

Volunteers are requested to adhere to meal times and not waste food prepared in house. They may do cookouts on weekends or so, after informing the cook beforehand so there is no duplication/waste of meals.

Groceries will be brought from the city from time to time as required and should be used with care and rationed appropriately. As far as possible, please use local items available in the village. Again, please limit the use of plastics and other waste generating items. We eat off the farms and it is generally the healthiest organic food. Cooking with store-bought ingredients is discouraged. It generates plastic waste and is not really required in village life.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

-Summers naturally see a thriving insect population in our villages. Since we also live on a farm, bugs are omnipresent. Not a concern **unless you have an insect phobia or bug allergies. We have big spiders. Harmless mostly. Fleas are the only real concern and volunteers are requested to follow all precautions to prevent flea attacks in the house and on your person. Fleas are not a problem that just go away. The real way to do away with flea bites is flea prevention. One person's carelessness with flea prevention could bring an infestation into the house, so please be very mindful.**

-Scheduled electricity cuts during the day: We have emergency lights & generator backup for emergencies. But please be mindful of power usage at every moment. Switch off lights or sit in common areas using minimum light as far as possible.

-The food provided will be simple local fare: all organic, village-sourced items for the most part. Basic and limited groceries available immediately, which you may purchase as you like. Once again, we request Volunteers not to purchase store bought items so that plastic consumption is reduced.

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-For your personal shopping: The local groceries stock only very few basic essentials: chips, local chocolates, snacks. Please come prepared with whatever special groceries/toiletries you require for yourselves. [LADIES: No tampons available. Recommend you use a menstrual cup or tampons rather than sanitary pads, since there is no waste disposal system in the village, and sanitary pads are the absolute worst items to get rid of.]

-Bring a flashlight and an umbrella. Always useful in the village.

-ONLY POSTPAID SIMs from other states will work here, not Prepaid SIMs. Airtel and Reliance Jio work in the village. Airtel 4G works well now and connectivity is not a problem.

Volunteers will be required to keep their rooms/bathrooms clean on their own. You could schedule a cyclical routine and share the housework amongst yourselves.

The in-house cook works very hard to provide fresh homely meals and maintain the kitchen in the Staff Cottage. Please help around the house as much as you can, without interfering in their chores.

Most of the staff at the school and Volunteer Home (and in fact the entire village) are family members and not servants. Please be respectful and courteous to all.

This Volunteer Programme document seeks to highlight most details of what is expected from a volunteer of Haji Public School.

The next step in the process is a more detailed discussion with shortlisted volunteers in an informal phone chat / interview by the Director Sabbah Haji. Please send complete, detailed applications to the Programme in the following format.

PAPERWORK AND REFERENCES:

1. Applicants are requested to submit their CVs or resumes, along with a few personal and professional references [contact details and best time to contact], to the Director of HPS, Sabbah Haji, for vetting.

2. Clear scans/photos of school and graduation marks cards or degrees, please.

2. A covering letter / essay describing:

-How you learnt of the HPS Volunteer Programme

-Previous volunteer experience, if any

-Why you would like to work with HPS

-What you can contribute to the schools in terms of teaching [there is no restriction on subjects you can teach/activities you plan etc.].

3. DATES: Please state very clearly how long you would like to commit to the school, and when you intend/plan to start. Months, dates.

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The above information may be sent to:

Sabbah Haji

[Director, Haji Public School]

Email: imsabbah@gmail.com ; info@hajipublicschool.org

Please note: HPS may not be able to reply to applicants immediately, owing to limited internet access, archiving communications for later, or just plain carelessness on the part of the communications team. Do send reminders on e-mail or text, if really interested.