



Register today

## Voluntary Service Activity (VSA)

Find out more about our Charitable work

### What is the 'VSA'?

The VSA, Voluntary Service Activity, is Brentwood School's largest group of organised volunteering. Taking place during co-curricular time in the school day on a Tuesday, the VSA is made up of Year 10 – Upper Sixth students, with Year 9 students having the opportunity to join from the Lent Term.

### What are the aims of the 'VSA'?

Truly embodying the attributes of 'Virtue' and 'Manners', our VSA students have copious opportunities to help not only the School community but also the wider Brentwood and Billericay areas.

### Term Structure

We offer our 'core' volunteering opportunities, such as receiving an accredited British Sign Language Level 1 certificate, and are always continuing to develop our community garden work around the School site (including in the Headmaster's garden!) However, we also always aim to extend our outreach further. As well as our weekly visits, and bi-weekly concerts, at Hutton View Care home, we have set up a partnership with Hamelin Trust in Billericay, who care for young adults with disabilities. In addition, we have volunteered at the local Daily Bread food bank and cafe in Hutton, as well as volunteering in two local primary schools. As we are expanding our outreach, we aim to rotate the selection of activities every year, so that students have ample opportunity to try multiple different forms of volunteering each term. Finally, as of last September, we were able to accredit students with the St John's Ambulance NHS Cadet award, which is a fully-comprehensive 31 week first aid training course. Following certification from the course, students will be able to volunteer with their local NHS trust and go on to partake in the further certification opportunities the charity offers.

The VSA field days are another opportunity for us to provide outreach as a group. In previous years, we have visited RHS Hyde Hall and conducted work on the importance of biodiversity and environmental preservation.

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Volunteering for charities has been great! I've learned to understand and help people from different backgrounds, gaining empathy. It feels good to make a positive impact, even in small ways. This experience has made me more caring and open-minded.

Jack, Year 10

In addition, we helped for the day at Billericay Community Garden. Last year, we volunteered at Barrow Farm, which is an RDA-registered charity which helps those with disabilities to ride horses, and also volunteered in two local primary schools. This year, we have volunteered at Lambourne End outdoor centre, taken a trip to the Wellcome Institute in London and have conducted a beach clean on the Suffolk coast. Our field days are ever-evolving, and we try to vary the trips so that our students get to know their VSA peers, even if they do not work with them weekly on the same activity.

### Uniform

VSA students can be recognised by their white T-shirts and navy blue hooded sweatshirts, both of which have our logo of 'helping hands' on the back. Worn with school-issue tracksuit bottoms, the uniform is a practical, yet smart, choice for the range of options we do.

### Interested in joining the 'VSA' Team?

In essence, the VSA is a prime opportunity for students to establish themselves as empathetic, open-minded individuals. Volunteering is an excellent asset for any university or job application, but more than that, it allows our young people to truly become 'well-rounded' and a credit to those they interact with. In addition, with our service curriculum now being extended to Y7, Y8 and Y9 (in the Lent Term), we are able to truly emphasise the importance of cultivating an awareness of the national and global issues others face and truly encourage an altruistic determination to help fix or change them in ways both big and small.

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Our students' commitment to the charity programme is impressive and there have been some inspiring fundraising events taking place this year.

Miss M Smith, Head of VSA

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