



Introductory Information for Coaches

Our mission ...

KEEN London is a charity providing sports and recreational activities for children with special needs. Our aim is to provide activities that promote physical and social development, teamwork and self-confidence in an encouraging, friendly, supportive and, most importantly, fun environment! We do this primarily through individual and group coaching in a range of sporting and recreational activities.

The athletes ...

The needs and abilities of KEEN “athletes” (participants) vary enormously. Because we offer one-to-one coaching, we are able to welcome children with all levels of disability. Some have learning difficulties and others are physically disabled. The age range is from 5 to 14, and siblings are also welcome, so we have a very wide spectrum of children attending. We also offer welcome respite for the parents so that they can spend time alone or with their other children.

The coaches ...

Our volunteers are a group of students, professionals and others who share an enthusiasm for working with children. Many of our coaches have years of experience. However, we welcome new coaches – without them we cannot expand our work and take children from our waiting list. No previous experience is necessary. We provide initial training before your first session and try to have spare experienced coaches on hand to assist those in need of a little extra help. In addition, all sessions are run by session leaders who look after the groups activities. Further enhanced trainings are offered throughout the year, for instance in Autism awareness, Makaton (sign language) and sport session leading.

KEEN Sports and Arts Activities ...

KEEN London sessions offer a range of games and activities, ranging from weekly sessions to special outings and events like trips to the city farm, skating, trampolining, swimming, and our annual disco, throughout the year. On a weekly basis we run a sports and creative arts session on Sundays in Tufnell Park, NW5 from 11am to 1pm. No particular ability is necessary, because KEEN coaches can tailor the activity to the needs of the individual athlete, emphasising co-ordination, concentration, mobility and fitness. Athletes are encouraged to compete only with themselves, fulfilling individual goals and learning new skills in a relaxed and supportive environment.

In our creative sessions we use music, art and drama to have fun, promote social development and develop skills such as coordination and concentration in a different environment. These sessions are a bit quieter (usually!) and suit some athletes better. We do things like making things, painting, play games and play musical instruments.

The Cost ...

All activities are provided completely free of charge for both athletes and coaches. We fundraise to support the cost of all our activities.

Enrolling in KEEN ...

We ask all interested coaches to fill in our registration form, and attend an induction session before their first session. At the induction session we tell you more about KEEN and give you a chance to meet other interested volunteers. We will also give you an induction pack which has lots of useful information and helpful advice. As part of our child protection policy, we'll then perform a check on the Protection of Children Act list (with your permission) and, subject to your suitability, register you as a KEEN London coach. You are then welcome to come along to sessions and our special events! To ensure that we can provide our very special one-to-one form of coaching, we then ask that you give advance notice when you want to participate in a session, a few days beforehand.

Our history ...

KEEN London was founded in February 2001, and began holding sports sessions in August 2001. Our creative sessions started running in October 2004. K.E.E.N. (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now) was originally set up in Oxford in 1988, and KEEN Oxford now offers activities to over 200 children and young adults with special needs. This work is made possible by a pool of over 300 student volunteers who provide one-to-one coaching in sport and drama. KEEN London is an independent charity, but retains close links to K.E.E.N in Oxford. Branches of KEEN have also been established in York and there are various KEENs in the USA!

Feedback ...

We want to know what you think about the work we are doing now and our future plans. If you have any comments or ideas, please get in touch. As well as coaches for sessions, we are always looking for help with the more administrative side of our work. So if you're more interested in fundraising, publicity or think you could be of help in any way, please do get in touch...

Alternatively ...

If coaching doesn't seem to be the thing for you, there are many other ways you could help – fundraising, organisation, administration... Please contact us to lend a hand!

Get in touch ...

If you'd like to enrol in KEEN London, or if you just want more information, please get in touch:

By email: belinda@keenlondon.org

Phone: 020 7250 0012

Post: KEEN London, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road London EC1V 8AF