

Your volunteer handbook



ACTION TUTORING

infinite potential





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Welcome

Action Tutoring is passionate about its volunteers. Our work would not be possible without you. We want to say a big thank you to each and every one of you!



Volunteers enable us to deliver our mission: supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve the academic qualifications they need to progress in education, employment or training. The effects of Covid -19 and school closures continue hit disadvantaged pupils particularly hard. Our work, and your support, is **all the more important** as we support school communities to recover.

This guide is designed to help you **get the most from volunteering with us** and explain the support you can expect from us. We really hope that you have an enjoyable and rewarding time as a tutor, with many opportunities to learn and connect with others.

Thank you again for volunteering with Action Tutoring!

Best wishes,

S. Hardyman

Susannah Hardyman
CEO, Action Tutoring



Where we work

We work in partnership with primary and secondary schools across England to provide tutoring programmes.

We welcome volunteers across the country to tutor in person in our hubs or take part online from further afield. We now also run 'virtual programmes' with schools outside of these hubs.

In 2021–22, we worked with over 150 schools in nine hubs.





Why we exist

Education is vital in ensuring that young people from all walks of life can succeed and live a fulfilling life. But there is currently a **huge divide in educational outcomes** between pupils that face socio-economic disadvantage and those that don't.

As a volunteer, you will support pupils facing socio-economic disadvantage who are also at risk of leaving primary or secondary school without **reaching national standards in English and maths**, to help make sure their future opportunities are not limited.

What we do

We want to make sure all children and young people have the best chance of **achieving their potential**. We work with disadvantaged pupils to help them reach a grade 4 in maths and English at GCSE or meet the national expected standards in their Year 6 SATs. These benchmarks are the gateway into the next step after school. Those that don't achieve this are often left behind. At 16, they could become one of the 728,000 young people in the UK not in education, employment or training.¹

We work with non-selective state primary and secondary schools that have a higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for **Pupil Premium** funding (additional government funding dedicated to raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils).

Our tuition is **free for all of our pupils**. Private tutoring is an expanding and expensive market, with an estimated 27% of pupils across the country now having a private tutor at some point during secondary school. 2 This **worsens the gap in attainment** between pupils of different socio-economic backgrounds.

Research shows that pupils make up to five additional months' progress during an intensive small-group tutoring programme. 3 Our tutoring can also boost pupils' subject knowledge, **confidence** and study skills.



Why our volunteers matter

Volunteers are the engine of everything we do. In 2020–21, 2,749 volunteers provided nearly 32,000 hours of tutoring to pupils that needed it. Without you, our mission of tackling educational inequality would not be achievable. Our volunteers bring the diverse range of experiences, incredible passion and commitment that allows us to reach thousands of young people each year. **Thank you.**



How we work

We tutor pupils in **Year 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11** preparing for their Key Stage 2 SATs or GCSEs. We support them in English, maths or both subjects. One programme will involve 10, 15 or 20 tutoring sessions that take place at the **same time each week** with pupils taking part at school. Tutoring happens both face-to-face and online via our tutoring platform.

For each programme, Action Tutoring looks to work with approximately 20 pupils, supported by up to ten volunteer tutors. You will be able to **choose which programme to sign up to**, at a time and location that suits you best.

When you sign up to a programme, you are committing to **attend every session once a week for the length of the programme**. These sessions are a precious, one-time opportunity for pupils who rely on consistent attendance; this continuous support not only improves their progress but also your experience. Programmes run for 10–20 weeks.



Sessions pause during the school holidays and you will be given all the dates of the programme in advance to add to your diary.

When do our programmes run?



We run tutoring programmes **throughout the school year**, beginning in late September or October. We do not run sessions during the school holidays.

Usually, our Year 6 and Year 11 pupils will receive tutoring with us right up until their GCSE exams or SATs in May. We then welcome a new group of pupils at the school onto our sessions for a few weeks before the summer break.



We accept volunteer applications **all year round** as this allows enough time for them to be trained and get their DBS check before they start tutoring.

There are usually opportunities to **join a programme at any time** during the school term, even if the pupils have already had some sessions with us.

We also run initial **tutor training** sessions throughout the year – including during the school holidays.

The tutor journey



Apply

Complete our online application form, once accepted select your training session.



Get trained

Attend a training session and find out how to tutor effectively, what to expect and what resources are available to you.



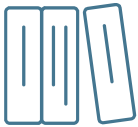
Get a DBS check

This is done in two stages, we will support you to process it and cover the costs. You will not be able to tutor without it.

Sign up



Choose a tutoring programme that suits you and receive further resources and school information.



Prepare

Connect with your Programme Coordinator and review the resources for your programme.

Tutor



Work with your pupils to help them to make progress throughout the term.

Final session

Celebrate and reflect on the progress your pupils have made with you! Share your success and learnings with others in tutor de-briefs and socials.



Advocate



Share your experience with others. Sign up to tutor again at either the same school or a new one.

Volunteer support

To help you get the most out of your experience, we will:



Always treat you with **respect**, consideration and **appreciation**.



Ensure you have a **clear** idea of your volunteer role, responsibilities and commitment.



Welcome your **feedback**, positive or negative, to improve our work.



Give you a thorough **induction** and ongoing **training**, and support.



Update you on how your support has **made a difference**.



Aim to deal with any questions, queries or difficulties **promptly**.



Support you if and when sensitive issues arise during tutoring sessions, including topics related to diversity and inclusion.

Training and development



In addition to your **initial training** before you start to tutor, you'll have ongoing opportunities for training and development. Through your online **tutor resources library**, hosted on a website called **Loop**, you'll have access to training and materials on demand to sharpen your skills as a tutor.

Regular contact



You will have an assigned **programme coordinator** for each volunteering programme you take part in. They will keep in touch with you while you're volunteering to resolve any issues, provide updates and thank you for your incredible support. You will also receive **regular emails and texts** from Action Tutoring with essential information and updates. We're always glad to hear from you, so drop us a line any time with questions or feedback.

Giving feedback



We are continually learning and striving to improve which is why we welcome your feedback, positive or negative. You'll be invited to give us feedback after training and at other key milestones in your journey, as well as after each session. We really value your opinions; they help us improve our work.

Meet other volunteers

We think it's great for our volunteers to get to know each other. We arrange volunteer socials and debriefs to encourage you to meet and interact with others outside of tutoring. We have a Facebook group you can join to connect with others and share ideas and experiences.



Saying goodbye

We don't ever wish to see you leave, but we understand that there may come a time when you can no longer commit to volunteering.

It would be great for us to find out how your experience went, which is why we might ask to have a catch-up before saying goodbye. We would still love for you to keep in touch, so feel free to call or drop us a line from time to time and let us know how you're doing.



What we ask of you

To ensure that you get the most out of your volunteering, we ask that you:



Always treat Action Tutoring and partner school staff, supporters and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration and appreciation.

Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or you no longer wish to be involved.

Engage in training and updates relevant to your tutoring.

Recognise the needs of our pupils as your primary concern.

Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone.

Read our diversity and inclusion code of conduct for tutors and act accordingly.

Seek help and ask questions if you are ever in doubt about any aspect of a programme.

What your pupils ask of you

Supporting our pupils is why we get up in the morning. So they can get the most out tutoring, they ask that you:

Are committed for the duration of the programme.

Are enthusiastic, reliable and resilient.

Are well-prepared for their sessions.

Listen to their ideas, questions and concerns.

Adapt to their needs.

Praise their efforts and achievements, no matter how small.





Our impact

When asked how likely they were to recommend Action Tutoring to a friend or colleague, tutors gave an average score of

9.1 out of 10

5,528 pupils

were supported in the academic year 2020–21.

Pupils received

61,747

hours of tutoring.

When asked if they would recommend tutoring to a friend, pupils gave an average score of

8.1 out of 10

Frequently asked questions



When do the programmes normally take place?

Most sessions run before (8 am–9 am) or after (3 pm–4 pm) the school day, with some running during school hours. In London, we also run a small number of Saturday morning sessions.




I haven't worked with young people before; will that be a problem?

Experience with young people is valuable but not essential, provided you can demonstrate the necessary skills to work with them, like patience, commitment and resilience. Our training and ongoing support will help you build the skills you need.

What resources are available to me?

After your initial training you'll be given access to all our training and workbooks via the tutor resources library on a website called Loop. We are always updating and improving these resources.

Am I expected to know the current UK curriculum?



Many of our volunteers have not taken their exams recently or have been educated abroad. As long as you are prepared to spend some time familiarising yourself with the syllabus through our resources and planning your sessions then this won't be a problem.

What does a typical volunteer look like?


We are proud that our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds, ranging in age from 18 to their 80s. Our volunteers may be university students, people in full-time work or retired professionals. We welcome any suggestions volunteers can make to help promote our opportunities to more to minority groups.

What is DBS check and why do I need one?

DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service. It is a criminal record check that is required for you to be able to work with children in a school. We'll arrange for a DBS check to be processed for you, free of charge.

What do I wear to my tutoring session?

We ask that our tutors dress in a way that's appropriate for a school environment, in smart-casual attire – even if tutoring online.



Will Action Tutoring cover my travel expenses?

Yes, we can cover travel expenses up to £5 per session. These expenses should be submitted in one go at the end of each volunteering programme via a form. Please make you sure you keep your receipts. Some volunteers choose not to claim as a way of supporting our charity, but this is entirely a personal choice.

Will I get to find out my pupil's SATs or GCSE results?

We request to see the SATs and GCSE results of all the pupils we support via our partner schools each year.

Unfortunately, we don't always receive results for everyone. If you'd like to find out your pupils' results, please make a note of their names and get in touch in late July (SATs) or mid September (GCSEs). If we have the information, we are more than happy to share this with you.

What our tutors say...



"I've become more **confident** in my teaching. I suppose it's reinforced my knowledge of teaching and the maths itself because I haven't done it for a few years. My **communication skills** have definitely improved, especially with children—I've never worked with children before. To anyone looking to get involved, I would say **go for it**, definitely go for it. I would also say don't stress out too much – just try and get to know your pupil. It's not a classroom environment, it's more **relaxed**. Just take it slow to begin with and increase the pace as the weeks go on."

— **Chike**



"I'm a career banker who has worked in financial services. My **motivation** for choosing to volunteer is because I believe it is important to have a purpose in life, after retiring I missed having a busy diary everyday but didn't want to make any huge commitments. Seeing the pupils' levels of confidence increase was very **rewarding**, when you develop a relationship with them they become more **motivated** to learn and look forward to coming to the sessions. One of the best parts about volunteering with Action Tutoring is the lovely **community** of tutors and the great bonds that have been created."

— **Liz**



Thank you



Your support will make a huge difference to the lives of children and young people across the country.

"I like tutoring because my tutors teach me words that I've never really used. I think my tutor is very nice. He makes it simple for me to understand and he's great."

Matheo, a primary school pupil

"I had a really great Programme Coordinator who was always well organised, always kept you informed, always contactable. And with loads of useful tips to give on both teaching and behaviour."

Kate, a volunteer tutor

"Action Tutoring was a powerful programme for us. Our children got quality time with skilled adults. The children loved the attention and the opportunity to practise skills learnt in the classroom."

A teacher at Hareclive E-ACT Primary Academy, Bristol



References

1) <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06705/>

2) www.suttontrust.com/our-research/private-tuition-polling-2019/

3) <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/peer-tutoring>



Contact us

0300 102 094

hello@actiontutoring.org.uk

www.actiontutoring.org.uk

@ActionTutoring

Registered charity number: 1147175

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