

**ACTION  
TUTORING**  
infinite potential

# Your volunteer handbook

[www.actiontutoring.org.uk](http://www.actiontutoring.org.uk)



# ACTION TUTORING

infinite potential





# Contents

Welcome and thank you	1
Where we work	2
Why we exist and what we do	3
Why our volunteers matter	4
How we work	5
When do our programmes run?	6
The tutor journey	7
Volunteer support	8
What we ask of you	11
What your pupils ask of you	12
Our impact	13
Frequently asked questions	14
What our tutors say	17
Thank you	18

# 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!



We know that **tutoring is a proven way to help pupils** facing disadvantage to succeed, but it's the human connection that pupils remember most. There is something incredibly rewarding about the relationship you'll build with your pupils each week. It's about making progress together, one step at a time.

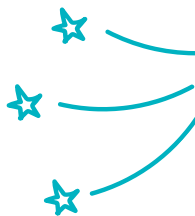
This guide is designed to help you **get the most from volunteering with us** and explains the support you can expect from us. We really hope that you have an enjoyable and rewarding time as a tutor, with many opportunities to learn and connect with others.

Thank you again for volunteering with Action Tutoring!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jen Fox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Jen Fox  
CEO  
Action Tutoring



# Where we work

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

In 2024-25, we worked in partnership with over 100 schools in England.

We welcome volunteers across the country to tutor in-person in our hubs or take part in online programmes from further afield.





# Why we exist

Education is vital in ensuring young people from all backgrounds can succeed and live a fulfilling life. But there is currently a **huge divide in educational outcomes** between pupils facing 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 to the next step after school. Those that don't achieve this are often left behind. At 16, they are at risk of joining the nearly one million (946,000) young people in the UK currently not in education, employment or training.<sup>1</sup>



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 the latest research showing that 30% of pupils across the country have now received private tuition at some point during their school years, a figure that rises to 46% in London.<sup>2</sup> This reinforces the gap in attainment between pupils from different backgrounds.

Research shows that small-group tutoring is a highly effective way to support progress, with pupils making an average of four months' additional progress over the course of a year.<sup>3</sup> Our tutoring can also boost pupils' subject knowledge, confidence and study skill

## Why our volunteers matter

Volunteers are the engine of everything we do. In 2024-25, more than 1,401 tutors delivered over 42,400 hours of support to 3,736 pupils.

Your dedication allows us to tackle educational inequality and unlock the potential of thousands of young people each year. **Thank you.**



# How we work

We tutor pupils in **Years 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11**, supporting them in English, maths, or both, as they prepare for Key Stage 2 SATs, GCSEs or transitioning to secondary school.

Each programme consists of 10, 15, or 20 weekly sessions, held at the **same time each week**, either face-to-face or online via our tutoring platform. Programmes typically support around 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. Programmes pause during school holidays, with dates provided in advance so you can plan your diary.

When you sign up, you are committing to **attend every weekly session for the duration 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.



# 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 to be trained and process a DBS check before starting 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



## 1. Apply

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

## 2. Get trained

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

## 3. 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.



## 4. Sign up

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

## 5. Prepare

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

## 6. Tutor

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

## 7. Final session

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



## 8. 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** plus ongoing training and support. This includes a **Best Practice Framework** for tutors who aspire to improve their practice.



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 safeguarding 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 our online **tutor resources library**, hosted on a website called **360 Learning**, 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.



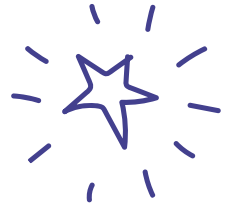
## Saying goodbye

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 an email 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.

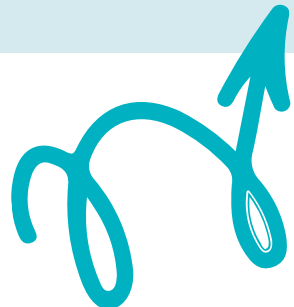
Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or you no longer wish to be involved.

Engage in our Best Practice Framework.

Recognise the needs of our pupils as your primary concern.

Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone, in accordance with the 'Standards of Behaviour' in our safeguarding policy.

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 that they can get the most out of 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

Each year a summary of our data is published in our **annual impact report**. You can read some of the key findings from our latest report (2024–25) below:

When asked if Action Tutoring staff were **well organised**, teachers gave an average score of

**9.7 out of 10**

**9.4 out of 10**

– that’s the average score tutors gave when asked if they would **recommend volunteering** with Action Tutoring.

Across the academic year, **3,736 pupils** received

**42,487 sessions**

delivered by

**1,401 tutors.**



# 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.

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


Experience with young people is valuable but not essential. You just need to be able to demonstrate the necessary skills needed 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 360 Learning. 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 communities that we're not yet reaching.

## What is a 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 with us in the following autumn. If we have the information, we are more than happy to share this with you.



# What our tutors say...



*"It's been incredibly fulfilling to assist young learners in building confidence. I had the privilege of forming **genuine connections** and witnessing pupils' growth week by week. This experience enhanced my **communication and teaching skills** and reinforced my belief in inclusive education.*

— Laksha

*"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 every day 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. They had 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

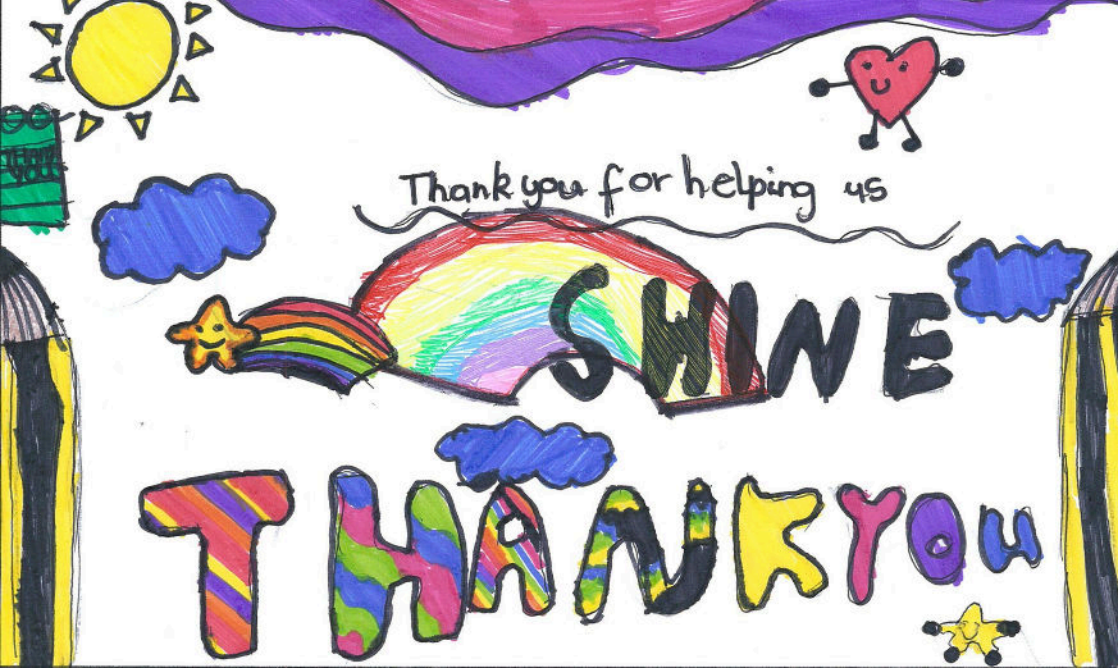
1) <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06705/>

2) [www.suttontrust.com/our-research/private-tuition-polling-2019/](http://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/private-tuition-polling-2019/)

3) [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/peer-tutoring\\_](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/peer-tutoring_)

## **Latest impact report:**

<https://actiontutoring.org.uk/our-impact/>



## Contact us

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