

Volunteer Handbook





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Welcome and thank you!

At Action Tutoring we're passionate about our volunteers. Our work would not be possible without you and we want to say a big thank you to each and every one of you. We rely on your incredible generosity, skills, commitment and enthusiasm to ensure we can reach as many young people as possible. In 2016/17 we worked with nearly 900 of you!

Volunteers enable us to deliver our mission of supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve the academic qualifications they need to progress to the next step in education, employment or training. We know this need is huge but with your help we can support even more young people this year.

We really hope that you enjoy your time volunteering with us and find it rewarding. We want you to have a fulfilling experience and to learn new things too. This guide is designed to help you get the most from this time and to tell you about the support you can expect from us.

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 volunteer tutoring programmes. In 2016/17 we will be working with over 60 schools across Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, London, Newcastle, Sheffield and Sussex.



Why we exist

Education is vital in ensuring that young people from all walks of life can achieve their goals in a socially mobile society. But there is currently a huge divide in educational outcomes between pupils facing socio-economic disadvantage and their more affluent peers. In England, in 2015/16 only **one in three pupils on Free School Meals achieved five A*-C grades at GCSEs**, so that's two thirds of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds missing out on reaching a meaningful level of academic attainment, limiting their future choices. At primary school **only 35% of pupils from low-income backgrounds met expected grades** in reading, writing and maths in their national exams.

3

Our tuition is free for all of our pupils. Private tutoring is an ever expanding and increasingly expensive market. With an estimated 30% of pupils across the country now having a private tutor at some point during their secondary school career, this is accelerating the gap in attainment between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who are not.

4

Research shows that **pupils make up to five additional months' progress** during an intensive small group tutoring programme (Source, EEF Toolkit). Our tutoring support also helps to increase pupils' subject knowledge, confidence and study skills.

Why our volunteers matter

What are we doing about it?

1

We want to make sure that pupils facing socio-economic disadvantage are **given the best possible chance of achieving their potential**. We do this by working with pupils to help them achieve a grade 4 in maths and English at GCSE or expected national standards in their SATs. This is important because these grade markers are the gateway into the next level of education, employment or training.

2

We work with non-selective state primary and secondary schools where a **higher than average percentage of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding** (additional government funding allocated to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils). These pupils are also the least likely to access the benefits of private tutoring.

Volunteers are at the heart and soul of everything we do. In 2016/17, nearly **900 volunteers** enabled us to provide over **13,000 hours of tutoring** to those pupils who need it most.

Without our fantastic volunteers working towards our mission of tackling educational inequality would not be possible.

Each of you brings a diverse range of experiences, incredible passion and commitment that allows us to reach the thousands of young people on our programmes, so we thank you.



How we work

We tutor pupils in Year 5, Year 6, Year 10 and Year 11 preparing for their SATs or GCSEs. We support pupils in both English and maths by working with volunteer tutors to deliver this provision. Our tutoring 'programmes' are a term of tutoring at a partner school, with sessions taking place at the same time each week.



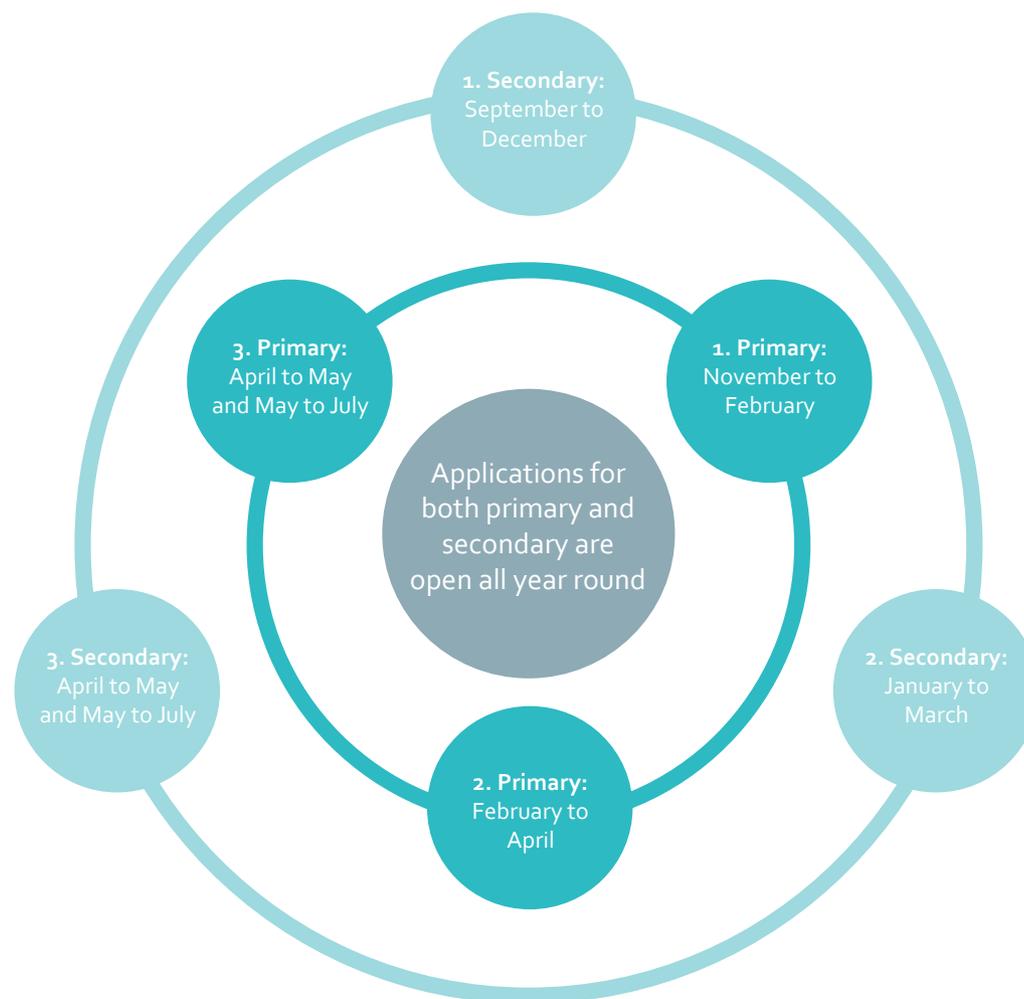
For each programme, Action Tutoring looks to work with approximately 20 pupils with ten volunteer tutors supporting them. You will be **given the choice of which programme to sign up to**, at a time and location that suits you best.

When you sign up to a programme, you are committing to attend each weekly session for a whole term. Pupils rely on consistent attendance; this continuous support not only improves their progress but also your experience. Most of our programmes run for 8-10 weeks with a break for school holidays. You will be given all the dates of the programme in advance.

When do programmes run?

Generally the dates of secondary programmes mirror the academic school year and our primary programmes begin after each half term break. We do not run any tutoring programmes during the summer holidays.

Our summer term programmes are often shorter, with some running from April until the GCSE exams in May and others from June through to the end of July



The tutor journey



What you can expect from us

We want to make sure that you enjoy your volunteering experience and get the most out of it as possible.

We will:

- Always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation.
- Ensure you have a clear idea of your volunteer role, including the length of time we'd like you to be involved in a programme.
- Give you a thorough induction and ongoing training and support.
- Provide you with a named contact to support you throughout.
- Welcome your feedback, good or bad, to improve our work.
- Update you on how your support has made a difference.
- Aim to deal with any questions, queries or difficulties promptly.

What we ask of you

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

- Recognise the needs of our pupils as your primary concern.
- Always treat Action Tutoring and partner school staff, supporters and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration and appreciation.
- Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone.
- Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to be involved in a programme.
- Take part in training and update sessions relevant to your tutoring.
- Seek help and ask questions if you are ever in doubt about any aspect of a programme.



What your pupils ask from you

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

- Are committed for the duration of the programme.
- Are enthusiastic, reliable and resilient.
- Are well-prepared for their sessions.
- Are full of praise for their efforts and achievements, no matter how small.
- Listen to their ideas, questions and concerns.
- Are adaptable to their needs.



Volunteer support

As a volunteer, you mean so much to us. We will support you as best as we possibly can by providing ongoing assistance and development opportunities. We are always on hand to answer any of your questions so feel free to drop us a line. Please get in touch with your Programme Coordinator if you feel like you need any further support.

Training and development

You will be provided with training before you begin tutoring but offering further training opportunities is really important to us too. This is why we often hold additional subject training and after-session discussions to keep you up-to-date.

Regular contact

Your Programme Coordinator will maintain regular communication with you throughout your time with us. This allows us to ensure that any issues are resolved, we are up-to-date on your availability and can thank each of you for your incredible support. You will receive emails and texts from us too with further programme information and updates from us.

Focus groups

We are continually learning and striving to improve which is why we welcome your feedback, good or bad. You may get invited to a focus group during your time with us, where you can share all of your thoughts and feelings on how to improve the way we work. We really value your opinions.

Thanking our volunteers

We love to thank you for all your hard work and support. We do this by providing you with an achievement certificate after the completion of your programme. We also arrange volunteer celebration events which give us the opportunity to say a big thank you in person.

Meet others like you

We think it's great for our volunteers to get to know each other. This is why we frequently arrange volunteer socials and meet-ups to encourage you to meet and interact with others outside of tutoring. We also have a Facebook group you can join to meet other volunteers and share best tutoring practice and resources. (visit: www.facebook.com/groups/179942349013094)

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.

Top tips for tutoring



Plan your sessions

Planning ahead and having a clear idea of what you want to achieve will help make a great tutoring session.

Give gentle reminders

If the pupils seem to be distracted or off task, giving them gentle reminders to focus usually does the trick.

Be confident and enthusiastic

Even if you are nervous, it is important the pupils feel you are in control.

Talk to your pupils throughout the session

Pupil feedback is a great tool to make use of. Encourage your pupils to verbalise their methods and thought processes.

Encourage your pupil to put pen to paper

This may sound obvious but some pupils lack confidence and require a helping hand.

Be positive and encouraging

If your pupils show a lack of understanding, provide them with encouragement to figure out where they went wrong.

Be prepared

Have your resources ready and in order. This helps you get started quickly when the session begins.

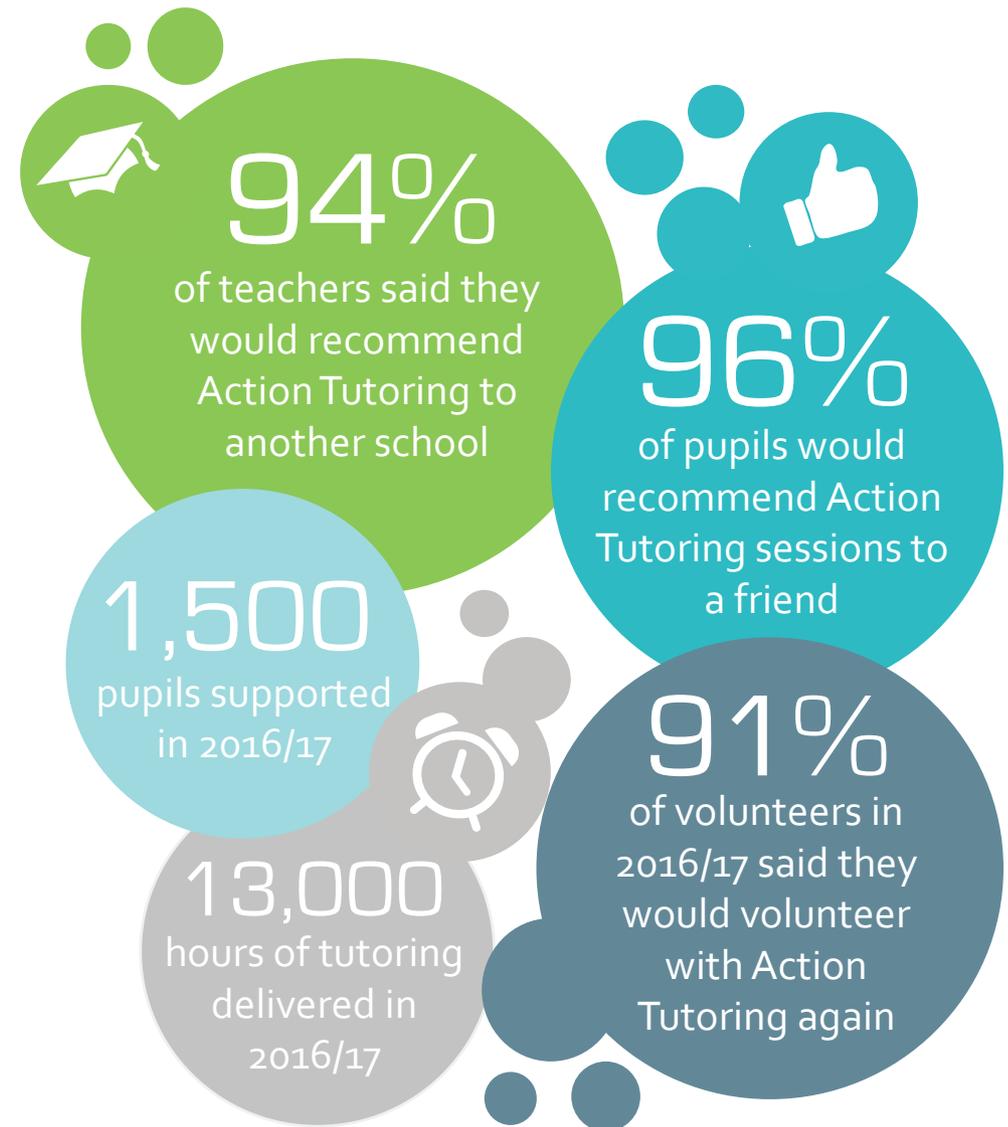
Use each session to inform your next one

Did the pupils struggle with something or indicate there is something in particular they'd like to work on in the following session? Make sure you incorporate this into your plan for the following week.

Ask for advice or feedback

Please speak to the Programme Coordinator or teacher as they are there to help. No question is too small!

Our impact



Frequently asked questions



Q When do the programmes normally take place and at what time?

Secondary school sessions generally run mid-morning (10am-11am) and mid-afternoon (3-4pm) with primary school sessions taking place before school (8-8:30am). In London we do also have Saturday morning sessions and the occasional evening slot.

Q I haven't worked with young people before, will this be a problem?

Experience with young people is preferable but not essential. Volunteers may not have worked with young people before but should demonstrate the necessary skills to work with them such as patience, commitment and resilience. We train all of our volunteers at the beginning and throughout the programme to prepare and support them.

Q What resources are available to me?

All tutors will be given training before they start and will be able to access our resources through the tutor area of the website. We ask tutors to be prepared to plan their sessions using our workbooks and any extra materials they wish to provide.

Q It's been a while since I sat my exams/I wasn't educated in the UK, how much am I expected to know?

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 and planning your lessons then this won't be a problem. We also offer subject specific training sessions which are perfect for tutors who are unfamiliar with GCSEs and SATs. Please do ask if you have any questions or concerns.

Q So I'm not expected to be as good as a teacher?

No, we appreciate that you are volunteers and can't be expected to know as much as a fully qualified teacher. We do promise that over the course of the programme, with training and practice, you will continue to improve.

Q What does a typical volunteer look like?

We are proud that our volunteers come from a range of different backgrounds and age groups. Our volunteer pool is made up of university students, people in full time employment and retired volunteers. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds and we welcome any promotion of us to minority groups.

Q What is a DBS check and why do I need one?

A DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service and is a criminal record check that is required for you to be able to work with children and young people in a school environment. We will arrange for a DBS check to be processed for you, free of charge.

Q What do I wear to my tutoring session?

We do not have a strict dress code but ask that our volunteers dress appropriately when in a school environment. As a representative of Action Tutoring we ask that you dress in smart/casual attire.

Q What do I need to bring with me?

Apart from your enthusiasm and your Action Tutoring resources there is nothing in particular that you need to bring. A pen and paper can be useful. Some of our tutors also decide to take a laptop or a tablet to use in the sessions which is great but not essential.

What our tutors say...

Q How shall I introduce myself to the pupils?

Most pupils will automatically call you 'Sir' or 'Miss' but feel free to introduce yourself by your first name. We want all of our volunteers to feel comfortable, so how you would like to introduce yourself is up to you.

Q What do I do if I have a problem or the sessions aren't going well?

Let us know. Speak to your Programme Coordinator as soon as possible. They are there to help. We will do our best to address your problems and work together to find a solution.

Q Will Action Tutoring cover my travel expenses?

Yes, we cover travel expenses up to £5 per session. Travel expenses are reimbursed once you have completed a programme, rather than on a week by week basis. Please make you sure you keep your receipts so that we are able to reimburse you. Some volunteers choose not to claim as a way of supporting our charity – but this is entirely down to personal choice.

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

We ask all of our partner schools for the SATs and GCSE results of the pupils we support. Unfortunately we do not always receive this information for every child. If you would like to find your pupil's results, please do make a note of their names and get in contact in late July for SATs and mid-September for GCSEs. If we have the information we are more than happy to share this with you. We endeavour to get as many results back as possible.



“I wanted to become a volunteer tutor because I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to gain a range of skills, while helping others to do better in maths, a subject which I used to struggle with as well. Volunteering has taught me to become a more committed individual who can handle pressure and not give up. I think since I joined Action Tutoring I have become better in time management and become more confident and comfortable working with people I don't know.”

Flora, maths tutor and student (BSc Geography with Economics)

“Even though I have a very busy job, the actual time commitment [of tutoring] is manageable. As a tutor you are well supported by Action Tutoring, in and out of the classroom, and the materials that are supplied are simple to follow and allow for good interaction with the pupils. It is a commitment not to be taken lightly but I would fully recommend others sign up as it is an experience unlike any I have encountered in my working life.”

Jim, English tutor and Relationship Director RBS





Thank you!

Thank you once again for signing up to volunteer with Action Tutoring. Your support will make a huge difference to the lives of young people across the country.

"I like my tutor because she makes learning fun and we still learn a lot. Before tutoring happened I was not very good at English but now I can write amazing stuff. Thank you."
Pupil, Camelot Primary School, London

"I really enjoy my tutoring. My tutor is really nice and my confidence in English has really shot up!"
Pupil, Bellerive FCJ Catholic College, Liverpool

"My tutor was pretty much the best person I have ever met in my life."
Pupil, Heartlands Academy, Birmingham

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