



This policy was approved by the trustees of the charity on 25 November 2020, and for each subsequent calendar year it will be reviewed and updated by the year end. The previous version of the policy was approved on 13 November 2019.

About us

Number Champions is a charity set up in 2018 to help UK primary school children who struggle with maths. Our in-school volunteers run one-to-one sessions in schools with year-2 and year-3 children whom the teachers select as having fallen behind in acquiring maths skills. We provide training and support so that these in-school volunteers can work with mathematical games and other activities to help children acquire skills, confidence, and enjoyment in maths, thus improving their life chances through education.

As at November 2020, we have about 40 active in-school volunteers and are working with over 100 children in 12 schools in 6 North London boroughs. We plan to be in 24 schools in school year 2021-22.

As well as in-school volunteers, we have volunteer mentors. These are experienced former (or current) teachers who provide support. They also provide training and observe sessions and provide feedback to assist the in-school volunteers to improve what they do.

We have other volunteers who work in organisational or governance roles. This includes Area Leaders who recruit and support the in-school volunteers in a geographical area, and also our Board of Trustees who set strategy and manage its implementation.

Why we have volunteers

Using volunteers allows us to benefit children at a cost which is affordable to schools. We believe that there is a large pool of potential volunteers who want to help improve children's educational chances and who will respond well to an organisation which supports them and values their contribution.

Our strategy envisages our employing paid operations staff from school year 2021-22, but we plan to always use volunteers in our front line in working with children and in mentoring. This will help keep our service affordable to schools and support an organisational culture of self-reliance and mutual responsibility.

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy documents how we recruit, support, and learn from volunteers. It is designed to give people the confidence to volunteer with us, to let them understand what Number Champions expects from its volunteers, and to enable volunteers to hold us to account if we do not live up to our own policies and culture.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteers are vital to our mission of helping to improve the life chances of young children.

Number Champions will train and support volunteers, will communicate with them and listen to them, and will give them opportunities to meet other volunteers and to discuss all aspects of the charity so that they can feel part of a community with a common goal.

Attracting volunteers and our volunteer agreement

As we increase the number of schools with which we work, we will have a continuing requirement for additional in-school volunteers and for mentors to support these. We will also need volunteers to help with organisation, and from time to time we will need new trustees for our Board. All of our volunteer opportunities will be on our website <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/>. You can apply for any role or ask questions about volunteering by writing to us at volunteer@numberchampions.org.uk.

When we receive an email from you, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together if there is an option which matches your interests, skills, and time availability, together with our needs.

We meet with prospective volunteers (currently mainly through video calls) to assess their suitability for working with Number Champions and to give them an opportunity to satisfy themselves on the details of the role they are applying for. Before volunteers take up a role, we require two references and sight of documents proving their identity. We also have policies on safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality, and health & safety which all volunteers have to read and agree to abide by. Part of volunteer' training will cover these policies.

We will require volunteers to sign our Volunteer Agreement which details the reciprocal commitments of the organisation and the volunteer. There are separate versions for In-school Volunteers and other types of volunteer.

DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service) and safeguarding

Our in-school volunteer role involves working with children in an unsupervised environment, and it therefore requires an enhanced DBS check including a check of the child barring list. This is generally administered by the school the volunteer will work in, but we occasionally administer these ourselves.

We ask our trustees to have an enhanced DBS check without a check of the barring list; this is strongly recommended by the Charity Commission for organisations working with children. Our mentors currently do not work unsupervised with children and therefore do not need a DBS check, but we are keeping this under review as the mentor role develops. Other volunteers typically will never work with children and therefore will not need a DBS check.

We have a safeguarding policy which is available from our website at <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/200610-safeguarding-policy.pdf> All volunteers are required to read this policy and sign a note confirming that they have read and understood it. This is a part of the volunteer induction process.

Induction and training

We aim to give volunteers an initial induction and periodic training appropriate to their role.

Before an in-school volunteer is assigned to a school, they receive induction and initial training delivered mainly by our mentors. We will also organise periodic opportunities for volunteers to meet each other, with an appropriate training session included. Annually, we have refresher training on safeguarding and health & safety. We will deliver this training remotely, where this is appropriate.

For each in-school volunteer, a mentor will observe a session with a child at least once a year and give feedback. The first such session should be by January. However, this may not be possible during the Covid pandemic.

For other types of volunteers, including mentors and Area Leaders, we will provide an appropriate induction based largely on peer support, and we will provide training where this is identified as necessary.

Support and resolving problems

We are currently a small organisation, and all volunteers can speak directly with the chair as necessary for support or for resolving problems. In addition, for in-school volunteers, our mentors and Area Leaders are available to give support.

We are developing the role of Area Leader to provide administrative support for in-school volunteers in a geographical area. We are also extending the role of the mentors, so that they will provide more educational and pastoral support and will liaise with the schools as well as with the in-school volunteers. Both of these developments are works in progress, and require us to recruit the appropriate number of Area Leaders and mentors.

In order to provide an alternative support mechanism where a volunteer feels that the mentors or the chair are not appropriate people to help, the board has appointed our trustee Lisa Baglin as our volunteer ombudsman. She will discuss all matters in confidence and in particular she will not report to the chair or board without the volunteer's permission, other than the fact that she has been approached by a volunteer and that the matter has or has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the volunteer. Note that this duty of confidence cannot override any legal duty to report potential criminal activity. Lisa can be contacted at lcbaglin@outlook.com.

Whistleblowing

Where there is a problem which you cannot resolve by the route above, and where you believe there is a realistic possibility of harm to an individual or serious mismanagement of Number Champions, you are encouraged to approach an appropriate external organisation.

We do not yet have formal structures for this, but we offer the following as potential routes.

If you believe that there has been criminal action, you should contact the police.

If the issue concerns safeguarding, as per our Safeguarding Policy you can contact the NSPCC on 0800 800 5000.

You can approach the Charity Commission. They have information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

If the issue is not clear cut you may wish to approach the Head of the school where you work (or with which you have a connection through your role) for a confidential discussion.

Recognition and reward

We cannot do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say "Thank you" and show appreciation for a job well done.

We will hold social events for volunteers each year to thank them and to celebrate our joint achievements.

As the charity grows, we will look to develop further ways of recognising the contribution of individual volunteers.

Expenses

We appreciate the work that volunteers do and the time they give, and we do not expect them in addition to pay for the expenses they incur in their work for the charity.

We will therefore reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. At this stage of our development this is mainly travel expenses.

For in-school volunteers, we will pay expenses for using public transport. Where public transport is not practical, we are willing in principle to reimburse car or motorbike miles, but this has to be agreed in advance. Reimbursement will be at HMRC rates. Expense claims should be against receipts or, if agreed up front, against a log book. For in-school volunteers, claims should be made at most a month after the end of the half term in which the expenses were contracted.

For volunteers other than in-school volunteers, we will reimburse them where they incur travel and other expenses necessary for the role. Total expenses over £50 in a month must be agreed up front. Again we ask volunteers to use public transport, selecting the cheapest practical option, and to provide receipts or agree up front the use of a log book. For these other volunteers, claims should be made at most a month after the end of the month in which the expenses were contracted.

We are prepared to reimburse extra costs related to the Covid pandemic, but we would wish to agree these in advance.

We will make every effort to reimburse legitimate expense claims by bank transfer within 21 days.

Insurance, health and safety, accidents, and risk assessment

Number Champions has insurance for Employer's Liability which covers volunteers. We also require our partner schools to have their own Public Liability insurance which covers our volunteers when they are on school premises. In addition, we require partner schools to give volunteers an induction on their health and safety arrangements.

We currently have no staff and are therefore exempt from the Health & safety at Work Act 1974 which defines health & safety responsibilities for employers. However, we use the overall standard defined by the Act to interpret our duty of care in this area as 'to endeavour to ensure health, safety, and welfare of our volunteers and of others who may be affected by our actions, as far as is reasonably practical'

We have a separate Health & Safety Policy available at <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/200812-Health-Safety-policy.pdf>. This details the steps we take to exercise our duty of care. As above, as part of their induction, volunteers are required to read the Health & Safety Policy and to signify acceptance by signing a copy,

If volunteers consider that they are being asked to work in an environment which is unsafe or to take any action which creates a risk to their health or safety or to the health or safety of others, they should refuse and should immediately escalate the issue as described above under 'Support and resolving problems'.

The Board of Trustees has an annual agenda item to review risks and to maintain a risk register.

Confidentiality

We require all volunteers to read our confidentiality agreement and our data protection policy and to sign a note confirming that they have done so and will comply with them before they start as a volunteer. This is part of the induction process for volunteers.

The data protection policy is available at <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/201125-Data-Protection-Policy.pdf>

Equality, diversity, and Inclusion

Number Champions is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. We expect volunteers to uphold these values in their roles. As we are small we do not yet have systems in place to review our performance in this area; we will consider if it is appropriate to introduce such systems as part of the annual review of this policy.

Terminating a volunteer's involvement with Number Champions

Where a volunteer is not performing as expected in a role, we will do our best to give support to help them improve. If adequate improvement does not take place in a reasonable time, then we will arrange a meeting with the volunteer on how to resolve the situation. A trustee will attend this meeting. If the situation cannot be resolved within an agreed timetable, we will ask the volunteer to leave the organisation.

Where a volunteer engages in misconduct or is reasonably suspected of engaging in misconduct, we will immediately suspend them from their role and arrange a meeting to discuss with them how to resolve the situation. A trustee will also attend these meetings. If the process identifies that there has been misconduct, we will ask the volunteer to leave the organisation and we will take such other action as seems appropriate or as is legally required.

When the organisation is larger, we may change this policy to have a designated person replace the trustee in these meetings.

The Board of Trustees will receive a report of the number of volunteers who have been asked to leave in the above circumstances as part of the Key Performance Indicators produced monthly.

Leaving your volunteer role

When you decide that you wish to stop volunteering at Number Champions, we will ask you to give feedback on why you are leaving. This can be in writing or verbally at your choice. We very much wish to understand the reasons why volunteers leave. Where volunteers cite shortcomings of the organisation as reasons for leaving, we will consider these seriously, and the Board of Trustees will review these reasons at least annually.

We ask volunteers to make every attempt to give us good notice, ideally several months, if they intend to leave. This is to give us the opportunity to find a way of covering the role being vacated. This is particularly important for in-school volunteers, where we do not want to leave children unsupported.