

Previous version	3 December 2024
Frequency of update	Every two calendar years
Next update due	December 2027

Aim: To document how we recruit, support, and learn from volunteers. 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.

In this policy, 'HoO' stands for Head of Operations, 'ISV' stands for In-School Volunteer, 'SRM' stands for School Relationship Manager.

About us

Our ISVs provide weekly one-to-one sessions to help children who are struggling with maths. A volunteer uses games and other creative activities to engage the child and to enable them to build confidence and skills and so overcome the 'maths barrier'. Helping the children at this early stage puts them back on track to achieve their full life potential, in a world where some fluency with maths and numbers is such an essential building block.

Former teachers provide both induction training and mentoring to ISVs.

The power of volunteers

We chose a volunteer-based model for two key reasons.

Firstly, because we want our programme to be accessible to as many children as possible. By engaging volunteers, we are able to offer the support to schools for a minimal cost.

Secondly, we see volunteering with Number Champions to improve children's educational outcomes as a fulfilling opportunity which can be life-enhancing for many people. We provide training and ongoing support and truly value all our volunteers. We aim to link volunteers with other volunteers at their school and with the wider Number Champions community. Thus, we see maintaining a corps of volunteers as fulfilling a societal goal alongside the core mission of the charity to support children

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 ISVs and for Mentors to support these. From time to time, we will need new trustees for our Board or volunteers in other areas. All our volunteer opportunities will be on our website

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 interview prospective volunteers online 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 references and documents verifying their identity. We also have policies on safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality, and health & safety. As part of their induction, volunteers have to read these policies and sign that they will abide by them.

We also require volunteers to sign our Volunteer Agreement which details the reciprocal commitments of the organisation and the volunteer. There are separate versions for ISVs and other types of volunteer.

DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service) and safeguarding

Our ISV role involves working with children in an unsupervised environment; this is a 'regulated activity' and it therefore requires an Enhanced DBS check including a check of the child barring list. Number Champions processes the DBS check. On occasion, some schools prefer to manage their own checks.

Our Trustees are required 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. Mentors are also required to have an enhanced DBS check as they may go into schools to join ISVs for their sessions. Other volunteers that will never work with children do not need a DBS check.

Our safeguarding policy is on our website at <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/forms-and-policies/>.

Induction and training

We give ISVs in-person induction training before they are assigned to a school.

We aim to have refresher training for returning volunteers on safeguarding and also on working with children on maths. Through the year, we also aim to provide periodic optional online training or information sessions for all ISVs.

ISVs at each school are assigned a Mentor so that they have a personal contact for support on educational and behavioural topics. Where logistics allow, the Mentor can join the ISV at the school for a session with a child to provide further support and advice.

For other types of volunteers, including Mentors, 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

For ISVs, our Mentors and our staff will give support on educational, behavioural and administrative issues respectively. In addition, all volunteers can contact our CEO at beth@numberchampions.org.uk if they need to escalate a matter. If there is a matter that a volunteer feels that speaking with staff cannot resolve, they can contact the Chair at bernard@numberchampions.org.uk.

Mentors receive support directly from the HoO.

Our safeguarding policy gives contacts for where a volunteer has concerns about harm or potential harm to an individual.

To provide an alternative support mechanism where a volunteer feels that the contacts listed above are not appropriate, 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 lisa@numberchampions.org.uk.

Whistleblowing

Where a volunteer believes there is a realistic possibility of harm to an individual, wrongdoing or serious mismanagement of Number Champions, we request that the volunteer follows the provisions in our Whistleblowing Policy, which is on our website under "Forms and Policies":

<https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/forms-and-policies/>. The policy includes details of the following routes:

- If you believe that there has been criminal activity or that this is a risk, you should contact the police.
- You can contact the whistleblowing charity, Protect: 020 3117 2520.
- If the issue concerns safeguarding, as per our Safeguarding Policy you can contact the NSPCC on 0808 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 volunteer 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 in-person social events for volunteers 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 volunteering for the charity. We will therefore reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. We expect these to be mainly travel expenses and administrative costs such as printing or photocopying.

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

ISVs

ISVs should agree expenses in advance with the HoO.

Public transport travel expenses

We will reimburse reasonable bus or rail travel costs. ISVs should ideally retain tickets or receipts or electronic records as evidence of their expenditure. Where this is not practical, we will generally agree to accept a schedule of dates, route used, and costs.

Own vehicle costs

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 for petrol cars will be at £0.35 per mile. For electric cars the figure will be £0.25 per mile. These figures are estimated as £0.22/£0.12 per mile for petrol/electricity plus £0.13 for wear and tear and an allowance for price variations. For other vehicles we will aim to agree a rate per mile based on a similar calculation. Journey distances should be calculated from Google Maps or similar.

Administrative Costs

We will reimburse reasonable administrative costs. ISVs should obtain a receipt for such expenditure.

For ISVs, claims should be made no later than a month after the end of the term in which the expenses were contracted.

How to submit expense claims

ISVs must record their expenses on the Volunteer expense form which is available on our website under 'About' then 'Forms and Policies': <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/forms-and-policies/>. Claims should be made monthly or every half term. However, the HoO will aim to find appropriate arrangements for an ISV who requires more frequent reimbursement.

Other Volunteers

For volunteers other than ISVs, we will reimburse travel and other expenses necessary for the role. Claims should again be on the Volunteer expense form. 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. For these other volunteers, claims should be made at most a month after the end of the month in which the expenses were contracted.

Other volunteers should agree expenses with, and submit claims to, the HoO.

Trustees

Trustees should agree expenses with, and submit claims to, the CEO or Chair.

The Chair's expenses must be approved either by the CEO or by an independent trustee.

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.

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 defines health & safety responsibilities for employers. As well as our specific responsibilities under this Act, we use the overall standard it defines 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/forms-and-policies/>.

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 our ‘four policy acceptance’.

If volunteers consider that they are being asked to volunteer 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 a fixed agenda item at each meeting to review risks and to maintain a risk register.

Confidentiality

As above, we require all volunteers to read our confidentiality agreement and our data protection policy and to signify by signing our ‘four policy acceptance’ 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/forms-and-policies/>.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Number Champions is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. We serve the diverse population of London children; accordingly, we seek to have a volunteer base from all ethnicities, orientations, and backgrounds, including those with disabilities.

Our position is set out in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy, which is provided on our website under ‘Forms and Policies’: <https://www.numberchampions.org.uk/forms-and-policies/>.

The trustees keep our EDI processes under regular review and welcome any feedback on this from volunteers.

Bullying and harassment

We encourage a culture where everyone treats others with respect and where bullying and harassment are not ignored or accepted. The charity will regard any proven instance of bullying or harassment by a volunteer as ‘misconduct’ for the purposes of the section below on ‘Terminating a volunteer’s involvement with Number Champions’. It will treat equivalent behaviour by staff with equal seriousness within its staff management processes.

If you believe you have witnessed bullying or harassment of someone else (whether a volunteer or staff member or an outside person involved in the activities of the charity), please take appropriate action. This could involve supporting the victim and encouraging them to take action as described here, informally challenging the perpetrator, or reporting the incident to a Number Champions staff member or trustee.

If you are being harassed or bullied, either by Number Champions volunteers or staff or by other people in the course of your activities for the charity, and you feel you cannot raise this directly with

the person responsible, then you should explain the situation to a Number Champions staff member or trustee.

The Number Champions staff member or trustee will take timely action to investigate and to resolve the issue. They will maintain confidentiality, and in particular will not reveal the name of a person raising an issue without their direct permission.

If these steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally to our ombudsman as described under 'Support and resolving problems' above.

Terminating a volunteer's involvement with Number Champions

If a volunteer is not performing as defined in their role specification or as communicated to them by school staff, the HoO, SRM or Mentor (for an ISV) or Number Champions staff or trustee, we will do our best to give support to help them improve. If adequate improvement does not take place in a reasonable time as evaluated by the CEO after appropriate review, then the CEO will arrange a meeting with the volunteer on how to resolve the situation. If the situation cannot be resolved within an agreed timetable, we will ask the volunteer to leave the organisation. If a volunteer wishes to appeal such a decision they can contact the Chair.

If a volunteer is suspected of engaging in misconduct, Number Champions will make immediate investigation to see if the suspicion is reasonable; such a determination will not be taken to imply that any actual misconduct has taken place. If the suspicion does seem reasonable, we will immediately suspend the volunteer from their role and arrange a meeting to discuss with them how to resolve the situation. (We may also continue investigations separately as appropriate). 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.

If a volunteer is suspected of engaging in misconduct and, after investigation, this accusation proves unreasonable or unfounded, Number Champions will give full support to the volunteer.

The CEO will report to the board any instances of volunteers who have been asked to leave in the above circumstances.

Leaving your volunteer role

We very much hope you will want to stay with Number Champions for a long time. When you do eventually decide that you wish to stop volunteering at Number Champions, we will ask you to provide details on why you are leaving. We will send you a short survey to complete, but you can also let us know by email or by phone. We very much wish to understand the reasons why volunteers leave. If a volunteer cites shortcomings of the organisation as reasons for leaving, we will consider this 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 ISVs, where we do not want to leave children unsupported.