



# Co-ordinator Handbook

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# What is Number Partners?

## Aims

The main aim of all Number Partners schemes is to support schools in raising levels of achievement in numeracy. This is accomplished through the provision of volunteer numeracy support in the classroom. These schemes have proved to be both popular with companies and very successful in inspiring the children to succeed.

The Number Partners scheme, set up in 1998, provides schools with individual maths support for pupils. Evidence indicates that not only do volunteers help in supporting children's maths but they are also vitally important in the development of personal and social skills. Number Partners are highly valued in schools and they are in great demand.

As learners, young children need interaction with caring adults who give them support and encouragement. It is generally agreed that a committed adult can be a crucial factor in encouraging pupils to see maths as fun and exciting. Support, praise for their efforts and patience are key ingredients in that child's progress.

As well as teaching children a variety of strategies to support their mathematical development, teachers use many creative ideas to motivate children in maths lessons. Recognising that volunteers can play a role that complements their own, teachers welcome caring and committed volunteers who spend time sharing the pleasures of playing number games with children.

This tried and tested approach capitalises on the relationship between the child and adult, and demonstrates the benefit for both participants of regular periods of uninterrupted time to enjoy the experience of playing number games.

The overall objective for the Number Partners scheme is to support schools in raising attainment in numeracy. The specific aims are to:

- use number related activities as a means of developing children's number skills
- enhance children's mental skills in numeracy
- develop children's confidence and motivation to learn
- give children a positive insight into the business world.

## How it works

Volunteers from local companies and organisations spend time with two pupils playing number games for half an hour each week, often at lunchtime. Usually one company 'adopts' a particular school and a group of volunteers visits the school on a weekly basis, forming a partnership with the pupils.

Volunteers commit themselves initially to visit the school for just one term but are encouraged to continue for the academic year. Often volunteers enjoy the experience to such an extent that they become very committed to their partners.

Each Number Partners scheme is tailored to individual needs and the times volunteers are available. Schools choose which pupils they wish to target. Some choose to keep all the volunteers in one class and others prefer to select pupils from several classes.



## What happens in a typical visit to a school

"I usually arrive at the school five or ten minutes before my session starts, so I can have a quick chat with the teacher and catch up on what's been going on with my kids.

Pamela and Abdul collect me from the main corridor and we go along to the library with the other Number Partners. It usually takes a while to get them going, so we have a chat about what they've been doing in class in the past week.

Then we choose a game which we play together for about 20 minutes. I try to get them to tell me how they arrive at their answers, and they're sometimes not very confident, but now that I've been working with them for three months, they're getting better.

At the end of the session, we fill in the diaries which I leave for their teacher, before heading back to the office."

## Benefits of the scheme

### To companies

- Raises motivation and morale among employees.
- Provides opportunities for self-development.
- Promotes team building.
- Builds a positive company image both internally and externally.
- Develops time management skills.

### To employees/ volunteers

- Contributes to the achievement of young people.
- Develops interpersonal and communication skills.
- Provides an opportunity to do voluntary work with young people.
- Encourages collaboration with colleagues on a worthwhile project.
- Fosters understanding of maths techniques which will assist in their own families.

### To school pupils

- Provides access to a broad and enriched education.
- Gives individual numeracy support and attention.
- Allows regular opportunities for one-to-one discussion to improve their mathematical skills.
- Promotes interaction with positive role models from working life.
- Generates support and interest in their progress from an adult outside the family unit.
- Allows the chance for a type of dialogue they may not have access to.



# Creating a successful partnership

Since Number Partners started in 1998, it has successfully brought together people from all sections of the community, providing extra help with maths for young people. The Government actively encourages community and business involvement in education and that's where you come in!

Having already decided that your company or school is interested in being part of a Number Partners scheme, you will need to contact your local Education Business Partnership (EBP). It is the role of the EBP to pair local schools and companies in volunteer schemes. Once the initial agreement has been confirmed, it will be your role to organise and monitor the Number Partner links.

## Notes for the company co-ordinator

Your role as company co-ordinator is pivotal in keeping everyone informed and involved in the scheme. You will be the internal point of contact for the EBP and the school co-ordinator. One of your key responsibilities is to recruit Number Partners as and when required and to ensure that all the employees involved are able to attend on a week-by-week basis. As company co-ordinator, you will help in the evaluation of the business people participating in the scheme and attend review meetings where necessary. Plus, you will need to help organise any spin-offs that result from the partnership, such as visits to the company for pupils.

Your company's commitment to the scheme should be championed by top level management and promoted at every level. However, as company co-ordinator, you will need to take into account how much time your company will realistically be prepared to commit to the Number Partners scheme. For example, how many volunteers can your company regularly provide?

You need to consider and establish exactly what your company expects from the Number Partners link with a local school. Do they expect to be the school's only link with the business community? Is the company expecting to establish a small pilot scheme initially and then build on this? You will need to think about these considerations from early on in the scheme.



## Running a successful scheme for your company

### STEP 1 – A variety of volunteers!

No two Number Partners schemes are ever alike. It is often the case that the more successful the scheme, the more it seems to evolve on its own. There are no hard and fast rules when setting up a Number Partners scheme but this booklet does have some guidelines and tips that you might find useful.

Once your local EBP has established a Number Partners school to link with your company, there a number of simple steps which need to be taken to get the scheme on its way. Don't worry, it really is all common sense!

A key part of your role is to recruit volunteers for the scheme. There are a number of ways to do this but internal communication is probably the most accessible and direct. This could include bulletins, e-mail, posters, flyers, voicemail drops and internet sites for example.

It could also be part of your company's induction for new staff or maybe you could invite people to a brief meeting with the EBP, a teacher from your link school and a volunteer from another company. This would be a good way to promote the scheme and present an opportunity to ask questions of an experienced team.

Whichever method you decide to use for your recruitment, always emphasise the real benefits to staff. It is rewarding, beneficial to the pupils and clearly gives something back to the community. And don't forget, it's all about helping young people (and the volunteers) have fun with maths!

### STEP 2 – Meet the school

Your EBP will help you set up an initial meeting with your link school. This is a good time to meet your Number Partners co-ordinator at the school, who is equally important in ensuring the scheme's success. The school co-ordinator will be your internal point of contact for the school and the pupils. They also decide which pupils will benefit from the scheme.

During the visit, you will learn about the school's maths policies and confirm suitable times for the sessions, including a start date for your volunteers. You will need to know how many pupils the school is intending to select and who is going to provide the games.

It is also helpful at this point to establish where the volunteers will spend their time in school, for example will they be in the classroom or library? Finally, exchange contact details and take note of key term dates (don't forget half term!).

### STEP 3 – The serious stuff

As soon as your Number Partners volunteers have signed up, they will need to complete a local authority police check form. Your EBP will supply and process the forms. They must be completed before the volunteers start their school visits.

Alongside this, you need to consider training requirements. Training is an essential part of the scheme. There are different levels of training provision for volunteers. Most training uses videos, games and other resources to support volunteers in playing number games with their partners. Training is arranged and given by your EBP.

You will need to provide your volunteers with a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. This can be photocopied as required and collated into ring binders. It contains lots of useful information and tips. If volunteers are unable to attend any of the training sessions, reading the Volunteer Handbook will provide them with enough information to successfully carry out their partnership. It also contains a Code of Conduct which should be adhered to, plus some simple maths games which will be useful in schools.

Volunteers can use various games in their sessions with the pupils. The school will provide many of these. However, many companies purchase a set of games for use in school. The Number Partners scheme uses Number Challenge board games produced by BEAM Education ([www.beam.co.uk](http://www.beam.co.uk), 020 7684 3323). The games were trialled extensively by Number Partners, and are well adapted for use as part of the scheme.



## STEP 4 – Volunteers go back to school

There are many other games that would be useful, such as the 24 Game® from Summus ([www.math24.com](http://www.math24.com)), Smile activities ([www.smilemathematics.co.uk](http://www.smilemathematics.co.uk)) and ATM games and books ([www.ATM.org.uk](http://www.ATM.org.uk)).

The first visit to school should ideally be an initial induction for the volunteers taking part in the scheme. It should take place at the school and should cover all the practical arrangements of the link, such as: how and where to enter the building, where to sign in and out, where they will meet their partner each week, where the session will take place and the location of the staffroom, toilet facilities and fire exits.

Volunteers may or may not meet their partners on the initial visit to the school. However, they should be given a quick introduction to the types of maths areas their pupils will be working on in school and the structure of the time they will spend with their partner.

The Number Partners sessions usually last no more than 30 minutes, usually with two pupils, and will focus around a maths game. The class teacher will most probably provide the maths game which they would like to be played in the session. However, this is not always the case and there are lots of simple games in the Volunteer Handbook which they can use.

If for any reason a volunteer is unable to attend their Number Partners session at the school, it is your responsibility to either provide another volunteer, or for you or the volunteer to telephone the school in plenty of time so that pupils are not left waiting on their own. Likewise, the school co-ordinator should inform you if your volunteers are not needed for that week.

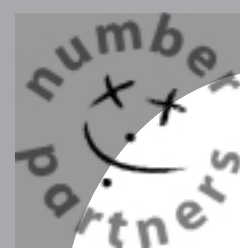
At the end of every session, volunteers will need to complete the Number Partners diary which outlines any learning which has taken place. This needs to be returned to the teacher so it can inform the next maths lesson and/or Number Partners session while providing a valuable link between the volunteer and the teacher. You will need to make photocopies of the blank diary page and make them into a booklet for your volunteers.

Certificates have been designed to recognise the pupils' commitment and achievements in maths as a result of Number Partners. If the school decides to use the certificates, they are usually presented at special assemblies which volunteers may be invited to attend.

You will need to set up a meeting at the end of the school term to review how both parties feel the scheme has developed and its success. This is a good opportunity to plan for the term ahead and incorporate any changes required.

Although it is important that the company and school have ownership of their scheme, it is equally important that both parties feel supported and able to develop the scheme further if they choose. Continued support and advice will always be provided by your local EBP. If necessary, they will also be available to both parties to mediate in the event of any difficulties.

## STEP 5 – Development and review



## Notes for the school co-ordinator

The school co-ordinator is essential to the success of the Number Partners scheme. It is your role to take responsibility for the running of the scheme within your school. You should have the support of the headteacher and your local EBP. It would be ideal if you could have access to a telephone, fax or e-mail during the school day.

You need to negotiate, with the head and teaching staff, the school's commitment to release pupils from their lessons or their lunchtime. You also need to consider what is the minimum number of volunteers that the school will need in order for the scheme to be viable. Also, think about the maximum number of volunteers the school could manage.

You should also be aware of what your school hopes to achieve by establishing a relationship with a local business. Is the school interested in developing further links with the company?

Part of your role is to choose suitable pupils to take part in the scheme. Number Partners is particularly suitable for those Key Stage 2/P4-7 pupils who would most benefit from extra support with maths (but they should not have special educational needs or behavioural difficulties). Each volunteer ideally works with two pupils.

To ensure that good relationships continue between the volunteers and the school, you should try to advise the company co-ordinator if, for any reason, the volunteers are not required any given week. The volunteers should fill in a diary for the pupils at the end of each session, which they will leave in school, to help you monitor the pupils' progress.

## Building a lasting relationship

Many partnerships based on the commitment and enthusiasm of both the volunteers and the school are extremely successful and rewarding. However, some partnerships evolve and develop further in a way that suits the ethos of both the school and the company. You will be key in facilitating this development.

This may include organising a trip to the company offices for the pupils, for example, or hosting a Christmas party, including games and a visit from Santa! The school might invite the volunteers to attend school concerts or assemblies or arrange a tea party to say thank you. It might be receiving letters from the pupils – don't forget, these will need answering! If the decision is taken to develop the scheme further, make sure it's fun and it will always be rewarding!

### Evaluation

As company or school co-ordinator, you will be expected to complete an evaluation form at the end of each year, so that the scheme can be properly appraised. There are also forms for:

- volunteers
- pupils

The company co-ordinator will need to photocopy and distribute the forms, which will be dealt with by your EBP contact.

The comments made by those involved in the scheme provide valuable information for the scheme's development and progress.



## Number Partners in 10 easy steps!

1. Company registers for the scheme.
2. Education Business Partnerships or other education partners match local companies with schools.
3. Company co-ordinators recruit volunteers.
4. School co-ordinators select appropriate pupils.
5. Volunteers briefed about the scheme by education partners and trained as Number Partners.
6. Games and other materials available for the volunteers at the school.
7. Volunteers meet teachers (e.g. maths co-ordinator or headteacher) and pupils, for introduction to the school's background and aims.
8. Volunteers go into schools once a week to work with two pupils.
9. Co-ordinators check scheme is running smoothly and arrange a review.
10. Evaluation forms completed by all involved.



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The national Number Partners founders are Business in the Community, Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein, Educational Communications, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, HSBC, KPMG and Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership.

## Acknowledgements

The following organisations have provided material for this handbook

BEAM Education

Educational Communications

KPMG

Lambeth EBP

Lloyd's of London

Tower Hamlets EBP





