

Your guide to being an ATL contact



ATL contact toolkit



Your role as an ATL contact

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Thank you for becoming the ATL contact in your workplace. You have joined thousands of members of ATL working as ATL representatives and contacts in schools and colleges throughout the UK. Together you make a huge contribution to ATL as the union for the education workforce.

The role of an ATL contact includes the following:

- keeping members in your school/college informed of ATL's work by circulating ATL national and local information
- making sure the ATL noticeboard is up to date with the latest posters, newsletters, reports, etc from ATL
- acting as the 'eyes and ears' of ATL in your workplace, reporting back to ATL on the issues your members care about
- recruiting new members to ATL.

This guide is designed to give you an overview of your role and some basic tips on the above. It also outlines all the further information, resources and support that are available to you, including key contact details.

As an ATL contact, you are not expected to represent members formally with your employer, ie your head or principal. In the workplace, this role is performed by ATL reps. However, members may well contact you about such issues. Your job is to refer them on to your branch secretary or ATL's offices for further assistance (see 'Your key contacts' on pages 13-15 for details).

Many ATL contacts develop into ATL reps, for whom we provide more detailed advice and bespoke, accredited training.

If you are interested in becoming an ATL rep please contact your branch secretary or email organise@atl.org.uk.

You can also find out more about the role of a rep at www.atl.org.uk/get-involved/getting-active/ATL-reps.asp.



Your rights

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As an ATL contact, you are entitled to:

- somewhere in your workplace to display ATL materials (ie noticeboard in your staff room)
- use of school/college facilities, such as a photocopier to enable you to share documents with members, email, telephone, etc
- approach new staff about joining ATL.



Communicating with and engaging your members

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As an ATL contact, you will act as a communications link between your members and ATL. This means keeping members up to date with current ATL issues and campaigns both locally and nationally, but it's also about keeping ATL informed of your members' views to ensure that your union is truly member-driven. The following are some suggestions of how to go about this.

Displaying and distributing information from ATL

It is important that ATL has a strong workplace presence; potential members often judge an effective union by its presence in the staffroom.

In your pack, you will find ATL's noticeboard header, an ATL lanyard, plus a variety of the latest posters and flyers from ATL. Start by wearing your lanyard and putting up these items in your staff room. You are entitled to use the staff noticeboard (or ask to erect an ATL noticeboard).

ATL will continue to send you regular updates to these items, as well as new posters or other items about issues we know are affecting you and your members. Watch out for these in your *Report* magazine mailing so you can continue to keep the noticeboard refreshed.

It is also a good idea to keep up to date with the latest campaigns and issues that ATL is working on nationally, for example on pay or workload. There will often be a factsheet or a statement available to order or to download from the 'Publications and resources' section of www.atl.org.uk, which you can pin up or email to your members so they always have their union's latest advice.

Set up an email group of your members

Email is a quick and effective way to let ATL members know what is going on and get their views. You are entitled to use the email in your school/college; the ACAS code states that "employers must respect the confidential and sensitive nature of communications between reps and their members", and that employers "should not normally carry out regular or random monitoring of union emails" (and in this respect ATL contacts would be regarded in the same way as ATL reps). But do inform management first that you intend to use this facility, and take care to respect and maintain the confidentiality of information you are given access to.



ATL will send you a list of the members in your workplace at least once a year. Please check that it is up to date. You can also check on members in your workplace using the 'My membership details' button in the bottom right of the ATL website. Try to obtain email addresses for all your members and encourage members to keep ATL's membership department informed of any changes, either by using the 'My membership' facility or via email at membership@atl.org.uk.

Surveys and task groups

ATL often runs surveys, networks and task groups to find out member opinion and experience, and to help inform ATL's policies and negotiations.

Surveys are often advertised in *Report*, via email or in the 'Join the debate' section of www.atl.org.uk, where you will also find information on the latest specialist task groups (STGs).

STGs are groups of members set up to develop ATL's policy on a particular issue. STGs are limited in their lifespan with a single-issue focus. There are face-to-face STGs, where a group of between 8 and 12 members meet a specified number of

times, supported by email communication between meetings. We also have larger email STGs where virtual networks discuss particular issues in order to support the work of the face-to-face STG.

Keep an eye on what surveys and STGs are taking place and, if you think you and your members have something to say on the issue, encourage them to take part.

Your local branch

As an ATL contact, one of your key points of contact is your local branch secretary (see 'Find my branch' at www.atl.org.uk if you are not sure who this is). Keep members up to date as to when local branch meetings are taking place (meetings generally last an hour and are usually once a term) and of issues the branch is raising with employers. Similarly, if an issue arises in your school or college which affects a number of members, tell your branch about it.

Branches will often produce useful local information and guidance – see the branch website or newsletter and encourage members to take a look as well. If your branch carries out a survey, give it to members stressing the importance of them taking five minutes to complete and return it to you.



Your sector/role network

ATL welcomes members from across the education workforce. As a consequence of our diverse membership, we know that you may encounter issues that are specific to your sector or role. With this in mind, we have specific groups set up, comprised of ATL members and staff, who you can communicate with as follows:

- Independent and Private Sectors Group
- Further and Higher Education Sectors Group
- Support Staff Members' Working Group
- ATL Future (students and NQs).

In addition, headteachers, principals and those in other leadership roles can be members: the Association of Managers in Education (AMiE) is a partnership between ATL and the Association for College Management. So if you, or any of your members, are leaders, AMiE can provide dedicated advice, support and representation.

See www.amie.uk.com for more details.

For more information on the work of these groups, or to get in contact, visit:
www.atl.org.uk/memberworkinggroups.



Recruiting to grow your union

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Members of the union are the lifeblood of ATL. As contact in your school/college you have an important role in recruiting new members to join ATL. Teachers, lecturers, newly qualifieds, supply teachers, headteachers, students and education support staff can all join ATL.

First of all, ensure that ATL is visible in your workplace with posters on the staff noticeboard and a sample of publications available in your staff room. Your colleagues will join a union they can see is present in their workplace.

Next, arm yourself with information about what membership of ATL can offer. Look up the section entitled 'Why join ATL' on the top toolbar of ATL's website at www.atl.org.uk, which lists many of the major benefits of membership. You will also find information on the different membership categories and rates.

Top recruitment tips

- Face-to-face contact is the best way to recruit.
- Do a mapping exercise of the staff in your workplace to identify members and non-members of ATL. Find out who is not in a union and target them.
- During the autumn term, talk to new staff members (including supply and student teachers/lecturers, and support staff) about the benefits of joining ATL.
- If a colleague is busy, leave them a recruitment flyer and arrange to talk to them another time.
- Listen to the needs of potential members and demonstrate how ATL's services and benefits meet those needs.
- Have a ready stock of recruitment flyers, postcards and posters, which you can download or order from www.atl.org.uk/reporderform.
- Where possible, seal the deal yourself – call **0845 057 7000** to enrol the potential member or enrol them online at www.atl.org.uk/join.



Students and NQs

If starters are new to the education sector, or newly qualified, explain that union membership is vital in schools and colleges from their first day in the job.

Remember most schools/colleges receive new student placements throughout the year. Build up a rapport with student and newly qualified members in your school/college. Ask them how things are going and refer them to ATL's website dedicated to student and newly qualified teachers/lecturers for advice at www.new2teaching.org.uk. Ask these colleagues if they have joined ATL and, if not, encourage them to join.

Leaders

Headteachers, principals and others in the leadership team can also be members via the Association of Managers in Education (AMiE), ATL's partnership with the Association for College Management. And if one of your ATL members is promoted to the leadership team, let him or her know that, at no extra cost, he or she can become a member of AMiE as well as ATL, giving access to dedicated leadership support and representation. For more details, see www.amie.uk.com.

Your branch secretary and members of ATL's national organising team will be more than happy to assist you with advice to support your recruitment of new members – just email organise@atl.org.uk.



Developing your skills

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If at any time you want to become more active in ATL, we can help you develop your role into that of ATL rep. Additional responsibilities of workplace reps include:

- representing members
- providing members with a voice at work.

Reps are fully trained in all aspects of the role via our regional or national training course, 'Being an ATL rep'. Other rep roles that you might like to consider include that of health and safety rep and union learning rep (ULR) – ULRs support and help members with their continuing professional development.

School and college reps, including health and safety reps and ULRs, have a statutory right to time off with pay during working hours for training related to the role.

“It sounds like a cliché but one of the reasons I’m so involved is that you can really make a difference. It’s about advising others on their options and rights.” ATL rep

For more information on this, visit www.atl.org.uk/repstraining or email organise@atl.org.uk.

How ATL will support you in your role

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Resources

Being a rep newsletter

Each term you will receive a copy of *Being a rep* in your *Report* magazine mailing. Designed for members who are performing the role of rep for ATL, the newsletter helps keep you up to date on the latest advice and guidance, campaign issues you may wish to discuss with your members, and information on health and safety and learning and development issues.

Once you have finished reading your copy, you may wish to pass it on to a colleague or cut out any relevant items and stick them up on the noticeboard. Copies of the latest and back issues are always available in the 'Publications and resources' section of www.atl.org.uk.

E-communications

In addition to *Being a rep*, you will also receive regular e-bulletins, with up-to-the-minute information relevant to your role or sector.





Reps toolbox

On the top toolbar of ATL's website you will find a section called 'Reps toolbox'. Although this is a section of the website dedicated to ATL reps, it does also include lots of information and guidance, as well as downloadable resources, that you may find useful as an ATL contact.

My membership details

On the bottom right of ATL's website you'll find a button called 'My membership details', which enables you to check what members you have in your workplace. You can also use this facility to update your own membership details, or encourage members to use it to update their details.





Recruitment posters and flyers

ATL will regularly send you the latest posters and flyers designed to help you recruit new members. You can always check out what is available or order extra copies at www.atl.org.uk/reporderform.

Help and advice information

There are several places you can signpost members to in order to help them find answers to their questions regarding their work and professional practice.

ATL's website: Firstly, look up the help and advice section of ATL's website. Covering over a hundred key topics from bullying and workload to parental rights and disciplinary procedures, each page also includes downloadable resources, useful links and the facility to email the information to a colleague with one click. The website also includes extensive sections on pay, pensions and health and safety.

Advice factsheets: ATL has produced a series of downloadable factsheets in PDF format, which cover lots of common issues from sick leave, observation and cyberbullying to allegations and teachers' pay. Not only are they an excellent resource for you, they can also be given to members to keep and use when necessary. You can find the full list of factsheets at www.atl.org.uk/factsheets.

Position statements: ATL produces regular position statements, which outline our policies on a wide range of education topics, based on extensive research by member-led groups and decided by ATL's Executive. See a full list at www.atl.org.uk/policies.





Publications: ATL publishes a number of high quality publications from legal advice titles such as *Taking students off-site* to those aimed at helping with classroom practice such as *Managing classroom behaviour*, and publications specifically for students and NQs like *Induction: making it work for you*.

Encourage colleagues to order publications – all resources are free for ATL members and can be ordered online using the ‘Publications and resources’ section of www.atl.org.uk, or via our publications despatch line: 0845 4500 009.



Your key contacts

Branch secretary

Your branch secretary is trained in all aspects of employment and education. He or she is a valuable source of information, especially with regard to local issues and contacts, and can give help, support and guidance on a whole range of issues.

Branches look after the local affairs of ATL, particularly in relation to contact with the local authority and the employing body in independent schools, and FE and sixth form colleges.

You might wish to attend branch meetings to keep up to date with local issues. Keep your branch secretary informed of members' views and issues in your school/college which you feel are not being addressed or listened to. They will be only too happy to assist you.

If you don't know who your local branch secretary is, use the 'Find my branch' facility at www.atl.org.uk.



Regionally based ATL staff

Regional officials: the union employs regional officials who undertake casework referred to them by branches.

Organisers: ATL's professional union organisers work across all the regions of the UK to support and help reps, contacts, members and branches in building a stronger union. For details of who is the organiser for your area, scroll down www.atl.org.uk/repssupport or you can email organise@atl.org.uk.

Learning organisers: ATL's professional union learning organisers work across all the regions of the UK to support union learning reps (ULRs) to promote access to personal and professional development amongst members. ULRs work with learning organisers to survey members about their learning needs, hold learning events and access learning opportunities locally and nationally. For details of who is the learning organiser for your area, scroll down www.atl.org.uk/repssupport or you can email ulr@atl.org.uk.

Specialist staff in our ATL offices

ATL employs a number of professional staff – specialists who will assist you regardless of the issues or problems you encounter.

Our staff can provide expertise in all fields of education, including the following issues:

- employment law and contracts
- pension and tax advice
- salaries and conditions of service
- health and safety.

National officials: we also have national officials who can provide specific advice and support for education professionals in independent schools, and FE and sixth form colleges, and for leaders and support staff. Look them up and contact them at www.atl.org.uk/repssupport.

General enquiries/legal advice: for all general enquiries or to speak to a member advisor on a legal or professional matter, call ATL's London office, tel: **020 7930 6441** or email info@atl.org.uk.



Out-of-office-hours helpline: don't forget the out-of-office-hours helpline. Monday to Friday, 5-8pm during term time, tel: [020 7782 1612](tel:02077821612).

ATL's regional officials are available to speak to you about work problems.

Pension enquiries: [020 7782 1600](tel:02077821600).

Membership enquiries: for information regarding member details, membership lists, membership categories, subscription rates and payment methods, call ATL's membership department, tel: [020 7782 1602](tel:02077821602) or contact them via email: membership@atl.org.uk.

Joining: remember that new members can join ATL by tel: [0845 057 7000](tel:08450577000) or at www.atl.org.uk/join.

Personal injury claims: for ATL's appointed solicitors, Morrish and Co, tel: [0800 083 7285](tel:08000837285) or visit: www.atlinjuryclaims.org.uk.



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