



# **ATL Induction Toolkit for Independent Schools**

**A reps guide to recruiting and engaging new members.**



## Introduction

Members are the lifeblood of ATL. As an active member in your workplace, you have an important role in persuading new members of staff to join. ATL believes in the ethos of the whole school community and that the contribution of all staff is equally important. Therefore membership is available to teachers, support staff, librarians, technicians, ground and maintenance staff and office and admin workers.

The main reason given as to why people haven't joined a union is because no-one has ever asked them! And this is where we hope you can play your part.

This toolkit aims to help you to approach new members of staff in your workplace to join ATL by using different methods such as induction presentations, face to face conversations and by letter and email.

There is no better person than you to carry out this important task. Existing members sharing what they know and like about their union is a very powerful message to potential and new members. And the more ATL members there are in your school or college, the more influential ATL can be in protecting and improving your working lives.

## Recruitment tips

Not many of us feel comfortable in talking to potential new members about ATL. This is understandable, so listed below are a few tips to follow which will make the job easier. Just remember, you will not know all the answers so if you are asked anything you are unsure of, get in touch with ATL for advice and guidance.

- ✓ Face to face recruitment always works best one to one or in small groups or as part of the induction for new staff in your workplace.
- ✓ Encourage those existing colleagues not in a union to join ATL there and then. Thinking about joining will not give them protection against false accusations or personal injury. Life is so busy that people forget to act on good intentions. Always keep a supply of application forms and union information handy.
- ✓ Understand the different categories of membership and the cost. Up to date information can be found on the ATL website. New members can also join there and then by telephoning the ATL membership hotline 0845 457 7000 or online at [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk).
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the information provided by ATL Use publications and newsletters to keep any notice boards up to date. This is a really easy way of keeping the ATL profile high.
- ✓ Keep details of telephone numbers for your Branch, Regional Official, ATL offices and ATL dispatch handy.
- ✓ When you recruit a member, share your success, whether you recruit one member or ten, let us know the good news.

## Toolkit resources

Induction presentations - School induction sessions provide an ideal opportunity to speak to new members of staff, support staff as well as teachers, about the benefits of joining ATL. If your school has a Union recognition agreement with ATL, you may well have the right to attend the induction training for new entrants. If not, then why not ask? Many Head Teachers and members of the senior management team are union members themselves and will be



happy to support you in securing an opportunity to talk to new members of staff. There is a power point presentation included in the toolkit along with some speaker notes. This will help you to deliver a short session introducing ATL in the independent sector to new colleagues.

Talking to potential members - If your school does not have a formal induction process, or if you are unable to secure access to it, then you can approach new members of staff face to face, either individually or in a small group. Introduce yourself as the ATL representative and ask them how they are finding their new position at school. Have a ready supply of application forms to hand and engage them on the benefits of joining ATL, whilst listening and making it relevant to them as an individual e.g. talking about the offer of free membership for newly qualified teachers, or the opportunities for training and development. If colleagues are busy then leave them with a recruitment flyer and arrange to go back and see them another time.

Letters and email communications - If talking to colleagues face to face is not practical, perhaps because of multiple sites or the sheer number of new staff, then the toolkit provides a series of letters for NQ's, teachers and support staff which can be sent by post, put in pigeon holes or in an email. To make them more personal to you and the school, they can be amended to include your contact details.

When sending a letter to a new member of staff, always enclose an ATL application form and insert the ATL website link for colleagues to join online - [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk) or phone 0845 057 7000

When you do get a chance to talk to new colleagues, you can always refer to the letter as an opening to talk about ATL.

## Joining ATL

ATL is the largest single union in the independent sector with approximately 20,000 members in 1700 schools. We represent more teachers and support staff working in independent schools than any other union.

For all members ATL provides individual advice and representation for grievance and disciplinary hearings, contracts and conditions of service and a whole range of issues affecting our members in schools every day. ATL offers practical advice, information and specialist support through our superb range of publications, our Branch and Regional Official network and through our London, Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh offices.

We give members a head start by keeping them up to date with developments in education through our magazine *Report*, the *Independent Schools* newsletter and a wealth of information on our website. Being a member of ATL gives you and your colleagues a voice in the future of your profession and an opportunity to get involved.

In addition to this, ATL offers members:

- Competitive subscription rates
- Professional development opportunities, including free training
- Individual and collective advice and support on issues that matter to members
- Free legal representation on any work-related issue
- Insurance protection and Personal injury protection
- A wide range of publications



As a modern trade union, ATL believes in the ethos of the school community and that the contribution of all staff is equally important. Consequently, ATL welcomes into membership all staff working in the independent sector.

ATL recruits into standard membership teachers, lecturers and those involved in the delivery of education such as classroom assistants, technicians and librarians. Caretakers, catering, and administration staff and other staff who do not directly work in the classroom can join ATL as Individual Affiliate Members, with all the benefits of standard ATL membership.

Up to date membership subscription rates can be found on the ATL website or in the application forms. The ATL membership categories are as follows:

Student membership	Free membership for the length of their course
NQ member	Free for the first year, 50% discount for the second
Standard Teacher	50% discount for the first year, standard membership rates apply for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year.
Support staff membership	Three different subscription rates depending on hours worked.
Individual Affiliate membership	For support staff in education who don't have direct contact with students, support staff rates apply
Group affiliate membership	For members of the Exam Officers Association, National Association of School Business Management and Independent Schools Bursars' Association.
AMiE membership	For head teachers, principals and other senior leaders who are not already members of ATL. Pay for 12 months' membership with an annual Direct Debit and get one month for free

## Engaging ATL members

By carrying out an ATL role in your school, you are making an invaluable contribution to the development and profile of ATL as well as your colleagues and you play an important role in recruitment and retention of members. Depending on the number of ATL members in your school and to help you in your role, you could look to build the ATL team of reps and active members. You could ask colleagues in different departments if they will assist you in distributing information, asking new starters to join ATL, and putting up a poster in a faculty/department staffroom.

There are a variety of rep roles in schools, including ATL rep, health & safety rep or union learning rep. Full training is available for all of these positions. Encouraging other members to get involved in ATL can help share the workload and help all members in your school. You might also want to try and identify a rep from the support staff to work alongside you in your role who can specialise in organising support staff in the school. The role of your active members could include:



- ✓ raising the profile of ATL
- ✓ keeping your members informed and involved
- ✓ keeping ATL up to date and informed about the issues and concerns of your members
- ✓ ensuring members know you are the ATL representative and how to get hold of you or who to contact if you are not around
- ✓ building relationships with all potential members including students and NO's
- ✓ regularly update your notice board with application forms, posters and membership benefit information
- ✓ encouraging your members to take part in ballots and consultative exercises
- ✓ advertising ATL's successes

Another way to get members involved is to ask their views. Views can be aired at ATL school meetings, through your local Branch or at the Independent and Private Sector Advisory Group. Participation brings relevance to members. Members can also get involved by attending one of ATL's training courses, network events or ATL's Independent or Annual Conference.

ATL works with members in non recognised workplaces to achieve positive change. Positive change can be reflected in increased consultation of staff, responding to staff/union ideas etc. This can be achieved by consulting with your members on the issues that they are concerned about and organising around them. This can be done through surveys, member meetings and individual conversations. Aim for small achievable successes at first and build on the gradual increase in influence ATL will have in your workplace by working together as a membership unit. As membership increases and the influence of the union becomes apparent then it might be the time to look at getting ATL recognised in your workplace.

Once ATL is recognised, it is important that members engage in the recognition agreement. This will ensure members are influencing the working conditions of all staff. At an individually recognised workplace a key element is making sure members views are reflected in regular meetings with the Head. This can be done through member meetings, surveys or individual conversations or emails. With national recognition agreements (such as UCST & GDST) make sure your schools' voice is heard by communicating with the union side on the national negotiating bodies such as the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

We appreciate that you already have a demanding job to do but the work you do for your Union is important and your contribution is valued – ATL would not survive without the participation of our members. Also bear in mind that in recognised workplaces, you are allowed to take reasonable time off to carry out your ATL duties.

At ATL we are here to give you all the help and support you need to be an effective representative. For further advice or support then please email [organise@atl.org.uk](mailto:organise@atl.org.uk)

You can order recruitment materials and ATL publications and resources online [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk) or by telephoning ATL despatch 0845 450 0009 or email [despatch@atl.org.uk](mailto:despatch@atl.org.uk).

