BHA School Speaker Application Pack

Thank you for your interest in becoming a BHA School Speaker. This application pack provides you with all you need to know to decide whether you would like to continue with the application

# Overview

Have you ever:

* Wished that you could make a difference to someone’s life?
* Considered the importance of fostering mutual understanding of others’ beliefs?
* Thought about how you could use your knowledge and your life experience to help young people learn about Humanism?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you could make a successful school speaker as part of the BHA’s School Speakers Programme. The BHA provides a high-quality, professional support service to schools via visits from trained volunteers. We are training BHA members to work with teachers to raise student’s understanding of Humanism and have a meaningful impact on the intellectual development of young people. Using their life experience and knowledge, school speakers can bring an added dimension to students’ learning by helping children and young people think about issues from an alternative perspective.

**About the BHA and our work in education**

The BHA’s education work supports its strategic aim to arrive at a situation where **Humanism is understood as an ethical and fulfilling, non-religious approach to life involving a naturalistic view of the universe.** In November 2015, the [High Court ruled](https://humanism.org.uk/2015/11/25/judge-rules-government-broke-the-law-in-excluding-humanism-from-school-curriculum/) that the school curriculum must treat non-religious worldviews with equal respect to religions. **Through our provision of education resources, teacher training, and school speakers, we aim to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to learn about Humanism.**

We support a broad and balanced education for all young people and recognise the value of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students. It is vital that young people have the opportunity to explore the full range of beliefs and values present in the UK and to be made aware that many people do not follow a religion yet still live ethical, happy, and meaningful lives. The BHA believes all children deserve the opportunity to engage with thought-provoking and challenging questions. They also deserve guidance on ways to discover truth, meaning, and value in their lives, and how to judge what is right and wrong. If the goals of education include fostering social cohesion and respect for others, then it is vital that it offers humanist perspectives.

**Is it for me?**

There is no strict expectation about the amount of time you’ll need to commit to visiting schools. You may have plenty of time and be able to offer regular visits to a number of schools in your local area. You may have other commitments and so only be able to offer occasional visits. Often school speaking can work around your other commitments and you’ll be given advanced notice of any requests to visit a school. As well as the obvious benefits of raising young people’s awareness and understanding of Humanism, you’ll have the opportunity to build new partnerships with members of the local community, to develop your own communication skills through working with teachers and children, and to become part of a growing community of humanists who are keen to support the education of young people.

**Volunteer role description**

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| Role title | School Speaker |
| Reporting to | The Head of Education |
| Role context | The BHA is building a network of school speakers to visit schools and raise the awareness and understanding of Humanism amongst children and young people. |
| Main purpose | School speakers will work alongside teachers to find engaging and effective ways to educate children and young people about humanist beliefs and values. |
| Key activities | * Visiting school during the school day or after-school to deliver talks and sessions about Humanism. This could include:   + Talking about humanism in classroom or assembly   + Sharing personal stories and providing accounts about how humanism affects your daily life   + Offering a humanist perspective on contemporary ethical debates   + Contributing more fully to classroom activities   + Taking part in an ‘Multi-belief’ panel   + Taking part in a specialist day (‘collapsed’ or ‘off timetable’ day)   + Working directly with the teacher to provide specialist information or material * Following school’s policies and procedures * Working with other local speakers to find and coordinate opportunities to visit schools through local promotion of the school speakers programme * Promoting the BHA’s education resources * Operating within the terms of the School Speakers Handbook and Code of Practice * Following the key school speaker processes * Being prepared to undertake continuing professional development (CPD), which might include future training, peer-observation, and online discussions * Reviewing and reflecting on ones practice * Seeking support from, and offering support and guidance to, other school speakers, through dialogue and sharing resources * Contributing to the development of the school speakers network and training programme by participating in dialogue with the BHA and fellow school speakers |
| Tenure | This is an open-ended role, but is subject to periodic review to ensure that both the BHA and the school speaker are happy with the work being done. |
| Remuneration | This is a volunteer role and no remuneration is expected. If required, it is reasonable to ask the school to reimburse travel expenses, but this should be agreed with the school in advance. |

**Person Specification**

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| **VOLUNTEER ROLE TITLE** | **School Speaker** |

| **CHARACTERISTICS:** | **ESSENTIAL** | **USEFUL** |
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| **QUALIFICATIONS** | * Membership of BHA * No other qualifications required | * Any qualification in education: e.g. qualified teacher status (QTS) |
| **EXPERIENCE** | * No specific experience is essential, although relevant experience may make it easier for school speakers to become effective more quickly | * Work in an education environment or knowledge of the education system: e.g. teacher, teaching assistant, university lecturer, school governor * Volunteering experience * Inter-belief / dialogue work as a humanist |
| **KNOWLEDGE** | * General knowledge of Humanism and the BHA | * Awareness of education and schools * Knowledge of how to work with children and young people |
| **SKILLS** | * Excellent communication and inter-personal skills * Timekeeping * Patience and flexibility * Ability to be reflective * Understanding of appropriate boundaries and ability to work within them * Ability to recognise one’s own limitations | * Teaching skills * Handling potentially hostile questioning |
| **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**  **(All essential)** | * An interest in raising awareness and understanding of Humanism * Willingness to work with a diverse range of people and the ability to respect views different to one’s own * The ability to be non-judgemental, empathetic, and compassionate in dealings with people * Willingness to accept advice and criticism * Willingness to follow school policies and meet the requirements of teachers * Willingness to work under the general guidance of BHA and abide by their code of practice * Willingness to undertake regular reflective practice and to seek opportunities for development of skills and knowledge such as CPD * Willingness to support the development of the school speakers network * Ability to travel |  |

# How do I become a school speaker?

**Application**

When a training course is being set up, those who have registered their interest in becoming a school speaker will receive an application form to complete. The role description and person specification should give you key information about what we are looking for. The application form should be returned to [schools.training@humanims.org.uk](mailto:schools.training@humanims.org.uk). If the date or location of the course is not convenient for you, then you will remain on our list of potential school speakers to be informed about future courses.

Your application form will be viewed and you will be informed about whether you have been offered a place on the training course. Please note, following your application, you may be asked to undertake a short telephone interview. In prioritising applications, the BHA will apply its equal opportunities policy to all volunteers.

**Training course**

The objectives of the training are to:

* Develop your knowledge of how primary and secondary schools work today
* Provide information about good practice and guidelines for keeping safe in schools
* Raise your confidence to work with teachers and children
* Model good practice and provide you with methods and resources to provide stimulating and engaging opportunities for children to learn
* Help you market yourself, coordinate promotion with other local volunteers, and build and maintain relationships with teachers and schools
* Answer your questions

You will also receive a copy of the BHA’s School Speakers Handbook which will provide additional information and resources to help you in the role.

Before the course you will be asked prepare a short presentation task. On the afternoon of the training day, you will be required to present your presentation to enable the trainers to assess your suitability for the role.

**Accreditation**

To be accredited as a BHA School Speaker, the following need to be completed to the satisfaction of the Head of Education and the BHA’s school speakers training team:

1. The BHA school speakers training course
2. The training course evaluation form
3. Signing of the school speakers code of practice and agreed school speaker processes
4. An observed visit to a school

Once the above have been satisfactorily completed, you will receive a certificate of accreditation.

Speakers can visit schools once they have completed items 1-3 above, however, accreditation is not complete until a speaker has been observed. The BHA aims to match up new speakers with more experienced speakers (mentors) who can support them, and to offer CPD to all school speakers.

If we feel that you have not demonstrated the key skills on the training course, or during the observation, then you will not be accredited. A phone call will be arranged to explain why.

The accreditation of volunteers ensures that they have been accepted as having appropriate characteristics to work under the banner of the BHA, and have achieved the minimum standard of knowledge and skills to be endorsed by the BHA as a school speaker. It allows schools and other stakeholders to be confident we are providing a high-quality service.

When a volunteer receives accreditation they are entitled to describe themselves as an accredited BHA school speaker when seeking opportunities to work in schools. Once accredited, you will be a member of the BHA school speakers network. The network aims to be a supportive community of practice, whose members commit to support each other and provide high quality learning opportunities in schools.