



Citizenship Foundation

Many schools benefit from bringing other professionals into the classroom. But, in the hustle and bustle of the teaching day, it can be easy to forget that such visitors are not familiar with school environments.

In this two-part series for teaching staff, tips from our [Lawyers in Schools](#) team can help make those visits a friendly, useful and rewarding experience. Part one focuses on pre-visit preparation, and part two on the visit itself.

Part one: preparation

1) If you are using a broker, ensure you meet with them – and, if possible, the visitors themselves – to discuss the programme in advance.

Let the broker know the best ways of contacting you and, in the run-up to the visit, keep them updated as much as possible. They'll have lots of helpful information and they're there to solve problems, so make use of them!

2) If you won't be in charge of the class, discuss the programme with the teacher who will.

It will help them to understand the full value of the programme and its aims, as well as giving an idea of what is expected of them. It will also help to remove any discomfort that they might have about people they don't know coming into their classroom.

3) Find out what messages the broker gives to visitors about child protection and whether your school has additional requests.

Depending upon the activity, schools will often accept visitors who have not been CRB checked, provided they are always accompanied by a member of staff. Some schools require a list 99 check – does yours?

4) How many visitors will there be? Will they be working in small groups?

You may need to rearrange the classroom furniture – to clear spaces, or provide more chairs – to accommodate. If the young people are going to be working in groups, the class teacher should decide the groups beforehand, to ensure a good mix of personalities and abilities.

5) Will the visitors require access to equipment, like computers or a projector, or stationery? Is there anything else you could provide to make things easier for them?

For example, it might be a good idea for students and visitors to make nametags from sticky labels or scrap paper.

6) Brief the visitors about the general character of the class and any behaviour issues or special needs that they should be aware of before they start the session.

7) If the visitors are going to be working with your students all day, will you need to – and will you be able to – provide refreshments and lunch?

8) Ideally, arrange any relevant photo permissions and release forms in advance, so that photos or video can be taken on the day and used in marketing materials.

9) Use newsletters and bulletins to help spread the word to the whole school – especially senior management – about the work the visitors are doing and why.

This ensures that staff feel informed about employee engagement, which in turn may lead to ideas for further links for things like work experience.

10) Ask about other opportunities.

Do enquire whether the visitors' organisations have any other opportunities, such as work experience or student bursaries, and whether they would be keen to support your school in more ways.

Part two: in the classroom

1) Ask the visitors to arrive early so that you can give them a tour of essential parts of the school building that they will need, like the loos and the staff room.

2) Make sure you set the scene in the classroom.

This means warning the children that they will have a visitor and explaining why they're there.

3) Introduce the visitor to the students.

Remind the students how you expect them to treat guests and how you expect them to behave during the session.

4) Many visitors will have not been in a classroom for years and might not have any experience of working with young people, so it can be intimidating for them.

It's likely they will have had little or no training in the classroom. As the educational expert, you'll need to be on hand to fully support them with class management.

5) Equally: don't feel intimidated by the visitors.

This is your chance to ask them questions and clarify your knowledge about their specialist area.

6) Try and give a five minute warning before the end of the session.

In our experience, visitors will keep talking, and students will keep asking them questions, until you stop them! When time is up, announce that the session has finished and ask everyone to pack up. Remember to thank the visitors and the students.

7) After the session, arrange for the visitors to be led back down to reception.

This is a good time to ask how they found the experience and whether they have any questions or concerns. Do you have any questions or concerns that *you'd* like to discuss?

8) Arrange a full review meeting for a later date.

Here, both parties can share what did and didn't work well – what they enjoyed and what could be improved.

9) If you are asked to complete any evaluation forms, do try and complete them fully and quickly, as they will be used to show the impact of the programme and why it should continue.

10) If you will be working with the visitors again, arrange provisional dates for contact to make arrangements.

When will you know next year's timetable? Will you still be the person to contact? If not, who will be – and can you arrange a hand-over meeting?