



# Effective Employer Engagement: Top Tips for Businesses

1. Check with the school what **age** the students are and what the **ability** of the students you'll speak to is, will there be students with additional needs? (ask if you don't understand any acronyms!)
2. **Be mindful of school safeguarding policies** and if/when you need to be accompanied by school staff – read the information you're given and ask if you have queries.
3. **Agree to sessions you can definitely commit to** – bringing in employers takes a huge amount of school organisation to take students off timetable, change rooms, staffing and curriculum plans – a last minute cancellation can really disrupt the school day and student's learning. **If you need to cancel, give at least 2 working days' notice, or even better, find a willing colleague to take your place!**
4. **Find out what the school are hoping you can cover and how you can add value:** What's the purpose of the session? How does it fit with what students are learning? What are pupils and teachers looking for you to add?
5. Don't feel silly about asking for advice about the best ways to engage with pupils – **engaging with young people is a skill and doesn't come naturally to everyone**, a few pointers from school staff may help.
6. **Communicating with a school can take time** - schools don't utilise emails in the same way as businesses do and school staff will often be teaching. You could try lunchtimes or straight after the school day, but school staff likely won't be able to communicate throughout the day.
7. Using social media is a brilliant way to share what you've been up to but it's **essential to check with school what it's appropriate to share.**
8. Finally, make sure you're ready to **"get stuck in"** – schools are busy places and every encounter between you and a student can make a difference. Turn your phone off to avoid checking emails and answering messages during sessions – make the most of a bit of time out!
9. **Feedback to the school about your experience;** the good, the bad and the ugly! Much like in business, schools are keen to develop their activities and learn from each event.
10. **Think about the timetabling of the school day** – you may need to fit in with set timings around lessons.



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- 1. Publish the name and contact details of one main point of contact** so an employer can easily speak to the right person rather than calling a busy school office. Tell employers the best times for you to be free to speak and build a relationship. Communicate regularly!
- 2. Be specific!** Be really clear about what type of person you are looking for and exactly what you will expect them to do. Giving employers a list of options to choose from works well.
  - What do you want them to talk about? (e.g. their sector, career journey, breaking down stereotypes, typical working day ...)
  - Why have you invited them in for this session? What do you hope students will learn from an employer that's different?
- 3. Welcoming & Hospitality ...** employers who are giving up their time will expect to be welcomed and make comfortable
  - Brief reception with the name of the employer(s) who are coming in
  - Have someone ready to greet them (ask students if you're too busy!)
  - Provide tea, coffee and refreshments
  - Signpost the nearest facilities (as you move around the school site)
  - For longer events, provide a base room for employers to prepare themselves and de-brief
  - Provide copies of your programme, handouts and resources
- 4. Make their role in the session clear**
  - Introduce them to the teacher/facilitator for the session they're joining (make sure the teacher is expecting them and has a plan to involve them)
  - Make speakers aware of disruptive students or any who need additional support – what are the best ways to engage?
  - What should they do about bad behaviour? Who do they tell?
  - How do you want them to be involved and when? If students ask questions during the lesson, should they talk about their job/career/life or focus on the work in hand?
- 5. Be clear what an employer will get out a session**, e.g. opportunities to network (larger events can be more appealing for employers), potential to tap into a future talent pool, personal CPD for more junior staff.
- 6. A personal thank you email (or a card) goes a long way!**
  - Send a thank you email to show you value their time and input & tell employers what the students got from their presence
  - Ask for their feedback about what they enjoyed, what they thought worked well and what could be improved ... tell them how you will use/have used their feedback for next time!
- 7. Don't use education acronyms** without checking employers know what you mean (e.g. Year groups, phases, exams, subjects)
- 8. Ensure staff who may be supervising the event/session understand what they are supervising.** They should engage/support/join in with the employer/students and not use it as an excuse to catch up with marking!