

Guide to working with business volunteers

This checklist is intended to help you get the best from a business volunteer visit to your school. Some of the most obvious things can easily be overlooked when you're busy but can have a big impact on the impression that a volunteer gets!

Clear outcomes

Clearly explain the aim and purpose of the activity and the benefit it will have on students, both now and in the future - a volunteer is more likely to give up their time again if they are clear about how they are making a difference	✓
Make sure the volunteer understands the benefits to their organisation too e.g. raising awareness of their career opportunities with potential future workforce	
Establish what the volunteer's business objectives and desired outcomes from the activity are. If they don't exactly meet yours, discuss whether it is possible to incorporate them e.g. offer a short timeslot for them to talk about their business	

Managing expectations

Ensure the volunteer is clear about what they are committing to, how much time is required and any future expectation of them	✓
Let them know whether they are the only person attending, or if there will be others, to help them understand the level of dependence you're placing on them	
The volunteer may also want to know (without pressure) what the potential next steps might be, such as getting involved in further activities or work placements	

Preparation

In advance, explain clearly what will happen on the day and what will be required of the volunteer to give them an opportunity to prepare e.g. what sort of questions they will be asked	✓
Make sure they know what key points you'd like them to get across	
Share in advance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students in the group • Age, level, experience and attitude of the group • Focus of the session • Outline of what has already been covered on the topic and what's next 	
Find out if the volunteer will need any equipment on the day, such as a projector or internet access	

Communication

Establish a preferred channel of communication and ensure the volunteer has a named contact or contacts and sufficient contact details	✓
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Tell the volunteer exactly where they need to be and at what time including directions to reception if it's not obvious	
Include information about how to find the school and where to park e.g. directions, SatNav postcode, public car parks/transport	

Notice and changes

✓

Make sure you give as much notice as possible to enable the volunteer to schedule in your activity and try to avoid last minute requests	
If you need to cancel or rearrange an event, give the volunteer as much notice as possible	
Double check that the volunteer has received your message to avoid them turning up unnecessarily	

In school

✓

Make sure the volunteer is expected by reception at the time they arrive and that they're not kept waiting too long	
Offer the volunteer a drink when they arrive and make sure sufficient refreshments are available for the length of time that they are in school	
Make sure they know where the toilets are and ensure they have time for a break if they are in school for any length of time	
Ensure a member of staff is in the room with the volunteer to introduce them and deal with any student issues so that the volunteer can focus on their input	
Ensure workshop group sizes are manageable e.g. assign students in advance and ensure they stick to the plan to keep group sizes consistent	

Follow up

✓

Send a follow up email thanking the volunteer for their time. If possible include some detail about what the students gained from the experience	
Explain that any follow up communication with students will be managed through a member of staff	
Discuss any publicity that you and/or the volunteer may do following the event to celebrate its success e.g. a school newsletter or company website news article	
Make sure they are clear on use of photos and student names	
Strike while the iron is hot! Let the volunteer know about other opportunities to engage with your students following an enjoyable and valuable experience	

If you have any top tips that you would like to add, please email them to skills@oxfordshirelep.com.