

Top Tips for Developing a Relationship with a Community School

Questions to underpin our support

How can we bless the school community?

How does our contribution contribute to pupil's flourishing, especially spiritual flourishing?

How can we partner to serve this local community?

In Schools E is for Education not Evangelism.

Issues for schools that may present barriers to church involvement.

History There may have been problems with a previous person from the church who visited.

Fear of parental complaints Schools are receiving unprecedented numbers of parental complaints which take time and energy to resolve.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) There are an increasing number of pupils with SEND, these pupils require adaptations to enable them to engage and learn. Schools may be concerned that any visitors, not just church visitors, will not understand the adaptations that they have in place to support pupils with SEND. E.g. fidget toys

Equality of Faith and Beliefs Some schools feel it is important to be equal in which faith and beliefs are invited into school. It can be helpful to be part of an inter faith day and event. If you have contacts within the local faith and belief communities the school may welcome an introduction.

Misunderstanding about our purpose. Fear that the church wants to come in and make the pupils take part in Christian practices.

Don't reply on emails. Find someone in church who already has a role in school who can broker your introduction. Visit the school and ask to make an appointment to meet the headteacher. Take a gift for the staff. Ask how you can support the school also have a few concrete suggestions that you could do. If they are asking you for involvement check who you should liaise with going forward.



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Keep on offering support. The start of the academic year in September is usually a reset moment in schools. This offers the opportunity to change what you are doing.



Bless the staff take in biscuits or cakes and a card. Don't forget the office staff and the premises staff who may not get into the staff room much. Keep doing this.



Tell the school about what you already doing for the community The school want to support their families; some activities may support parents at the school. E.g Food bank, Toddler group



Be reliable do what you've promised, arrive on time, don't over run!

Be flexible things frequently change at the last minute.

Be transparent write a detailed plan of what you will do and send this to the school in advance.



Assemblies / Collective Worship. Start with the main festivals and then offer more. If you haven't worked with a community school before do attend training. It is slightly different. *We offer training.*



Religious Education (RE) offer to support the RE curriculum, the school will want to include the lived experience of people of faith. The best person to contact is the RE Subject Leader in a primary school, or Head of Department in a secondary school. It can be helpful to go in with a specific offer, such as a visitor '***For Christians, is Communion a celebration, or an act of remembrance?***' *We offer training*



Visits to the Church to support the curriculum. It is worth investing time and energy in making these high quality, make sure you are providing what the school want, don't assume what they should have. Have someone from the church there whose role is to look after the staff and parent helpers.



Involve the church community in your work with the school. E.G contributing to goodie bags, buying Bibles for the school, involve your mission partners in sharing their work with the school.



Offer to **set up and host a Prayer Space or Quiet Space** to support pupil's mental health and wellbeing. *See our separate leaflet on Prayer Spaces in Community Schools.*



Offer a **lunchtime or after school Christian club** *See our separate leaflet on Resources for After School Clubs*