



# Tips for Contacting Schools

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*Advice to facilitators on how to contact schools for outreach.*

## Preliminaries

- ✓ Read the Water for the World introduction documents carefully.
  - ✓ Find out the contact for the school (email and telephone), typically listed on the Internet.
- ✓ It may be best to start with general reception before moving on to a specific teacher if you are unsure of which person to contact.

## Calling schools

- ✓ Have a pen and a piece of paper ready, or something else to take notes on.
- ✓ It may also be helpful to sit in front of a computer with the relevant documents opened.
- ✓ It is generally best to call during the hours of 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.
- ✓ Typically you will need to call the reception first, though if you have the phone number of the specific teacher this may be better. Be prepared to briefly introduce yourself to reception (name, organisation, and one or two sentences about running an outreach module based on water). Ask to be put through to the relevant teacher; if you don't have a name, ask if you can be put through to someone in science or geography.
- ✓ If you get through to a teacher, see the next section. If not, ask the reception for an email address or the person's office number if there is one.

## Speaking with teachers

- ✓ Introduce yourself as above for reception (name, organisation, one or two sentence sell on the outreach module based on water).
- ✓ In the case of a geography or science teacher:
  - Give a brief (e.g. 30 second) introduction of EWB to the teacher.
  - Explain what Water for the World is, particularly about the interactive filter-building activity, the learning outcomes, and how it links in with what the schoolchildren study. Tell them also that the program has had much success throughout the UK and has been very popular with teachers and kids, and also about any positive feedback your group has received from past runs (if applicable).
  - Ask for email address to send more detailed information (they often ask you to do so before you say it). Point them to the web address of the programme and tell them that they can check the presentation and activity online.

- ✓ In the case of a school principal or a teacher not in a related field, you can say essentially the same things as above, but add you'd like to be forwarded to the geography or science department. Ask them the name of the teacher you should contact and their email address if possible (otherwise they may wish to forward your email themselves).
- ✓ Don't forget to thank the teacher for their time!
- ✓ Email the teacher right after the call. See the next section for advice on this.
- ✓ Phone again if you don't get a response in 3 or 4 days. In the follow up call, mention you called before and ask them how they think about the project. If they show positive interest, ask them for a possible date and time. If not, say you can do it when the school is less busy, such as in the next term.

## Emailing schools and teachers

- ✓ Send the email to the most specific contact you have (i.e. a science teacher is preferable to the principal or generic reception).
- ✓ You can adapt and use the email template provided in the facilitators' pack.
- ✓ If you have phoned the school before, send them the email right after the call.
- ✓ Follow up with a call or another email if you haven't received a response

## Other tips

- ✓ Keep an archive of contacts that can be used next year, particularly if the teacher is happy with the presentation and would be keen to do it again. This saves repeating the process of finding the appropriate contact and selling them on the module's benefits.
- ✓ It is advisable to contact multiple schools: if only a fraction of them are interested you can still schedule at least some sessions. Likewise, if ever there is more demand for sessions than you can meet, you can always ask some schools to reschedule for later.
- ✓ If contacting multiple schools at once, it may be useful to track their response status on a spreadsheet (e.g. "not contacted," "awaiting response," "session scheduled," etc.)
- ✓ Don't be discouraged by lukewarm replies: remember that you are offering schools a tested, nationally-run program for free. If they do not wish to benefit from this, it is ultimately their loss.
- ✓ Use your professional or academic credentials to your advantage at every step. A major benefit of outreach programs is that students get a chance to actually meet with someone studying or working at an advanced level (e.g. see what a real engineer does). This shows them the practical side of what they study and makes you a role model for the students. Point this out to teachers.
- ✓ Try to form collaborations with other organisations such as your local Science and Engineering Ambassadors (SEA) branch (also known as STEMNET or SETPOINT). These organisations may be able to help with contacting schools. See <http://www.stemnet.org.uk/> for more details.
- ✓ If you encounter any trouble or obstacles, the EWB national Outreach team may be able to help out. Contact them at [outreach@ewb-uk.org](mailto:outreach@ewb-uk.org).