

IOP Institute of Physics

School Experience Programme (SEP)

Information for participating schools

The Institute of Physics' School Experience Programme assists people who are thinking of becoming a physics teacher to visit a school to observe classes. The majority of initial teacher training providers require an individual to have sufficient school experience before embarking on a training course. Anyone can receive our support, including non-members of the Institute and those internationally educated.

How does the SEP work?

All schools who agree to participate in the programme are added to the SEP schools database. An individual makes a SEP request by submitting a form on our website at www.iop.org/sep. We will match them by postcode to their closest school and will pass on the school's contact details for them to arrange a visit. At the same time we will send the school the name of the individual who will be making contact to validate the enquiry. The onus is on the individual to negotiate the terms of the visit. Following the visit, we ask for each party to give us feedback on how it went and ways the programme can be improved.

What if we are too busy to accept an SEP participant?

Naturally there will be times when you are too busy to help. On these occasions please just reply to the participant to let them know that you cannot help them at that time. If you could offer a later date when you are expected to be less busy it would be appreciated. If you do not anticipate any foreseeable visits being possible please let them know. Hopefully we can match them to another school in their area.

What type of things will a SEP participant want to do?

The needs of each participant will be different. They will vary in terms of their experiences in school; some may not have been into a school since leaving school themselves. Others may have acquired considerable experience but may not have spent any time observing physics lessons. For this reason, we ask the participants who have specific requests to ask the school directly if these could be accommodated when they make initial contact.

Will I need to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for each SEP participant?

The Institute understands the importance of safeguarding children. Ultimately, the final decision on DBS checking must be taken by the school, and your professional judgement and experience is required in this regard. To help you make an informed decision please refer to the Department for Education '[Keeping children safe in education](#)' March 2015 guidelines. According to these guidelines, a volunteer in this capacity is not in 'regulated' activity but an enhanced DBS check may be obtained at the discretion of the school. Usual good practice should be followed when volunteers are on the premises, including sign in and out procedures and being escorted and supervised at all times by a member of staff or an appropriately vetted volunteer.

Feedback and Thanks

We are very appreciative of your support and would like to thank you for helping the future of physics teaching and ultimately the future of physics. Please give us any feedback on individual visits and any comments about SEP by emailing teach@iop.org.