

MP TOOLKIT



Meet your local MP!

After all your effort creating and decorating your paper keys, it is time to make sure they get to your MP. A great way to do this is to invite your MP into school. Organising an MP visit is also a great chance for your students to learn about active citizenship, democracy and representation. MPs are used to receiving invitations to meet people in their constituencies and usually do their best to meet as many local people as they can. It's their job! They won't be surprised to be invited to your school, and may have visited already.

Before your meeting

Step 1 – Invite your MP into school

Use this online form to contact your school's MP and send them an invite:

act.sendmyfriend.org/invite-your-mp-school

Make sure to edit the text of the invite to reflect your school's activity, ensuring to keep it precise and brief. Explain that your students are involved in the Send My Friend to School campaign calling for the UK government to Unlock Education for Everyone and have created paper keys depicting inequality in education around the world and they would like to present them to the MP.

Suggest the time(s) and date(s) you'd like to meet. MPs are busy, so be prepared to be flexible about your plans. Most MPs are unlikely to have enough time to spend more than one hour at your school, but this is more than enough time to get your message across.

The **Send My Friend Week of Action will be 17th – 21st June** so it would be great to meet your MP during this week if possible, but if that doesn't suit then don't worry, you can arrange to meet on another convenient day. MPs are most likely to be in their constituencies on Thursday afternoons and Fridays so these are usually the best days to try for.

Step 2 – Follow up your invite

MPs are busy people so you may not hear back from them the first time you get in contact – it's okay to be politely persistent. If you don't hear back from your MP's office, then give them a phone call - ask to speak with your MP's 'diary secretary' and try to make sure they've seen your invitation and are acting on it.

If your MP isn't available to visit your school - don't worry, this doesn't mean you can't make your voices heard. You could ask to visit them at their constituency office instead. If it is not possible to meet, then instead send your school's paper keys and messages through the post with a letter.



You can find the phone number and contact details of your MP's constituency office on their website or here: findyourmp.parliament.uk by entering your school's postcode. However, a few MPs don't have a constituency address, in which case you could write to their parliamentary address: (Name of MP), House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Step 3 - Preparing for your meeting

There's no need to be nervous! Your MP won't expect you to be an expert and many MPs are not experts themselves. You simply need to let her or him know how passionate you and your students are about unlocking education for every child, and ask her or him to do something about it.

- Use your MP's website, or www.theyworkforyou.com to find out a little bit about them and what, if anything, they've said about global education.
- Plan what you are going to say and who is going to say it. You could divide your presentation into separate sections with pupils sharing out the roles.
- Rehearse - you could ask another teacher to play the role of your MP. Think about any props and visual aids you're going to need.

During the meeting

Step 4 – Present the campaign

Explain that you and your students are part of the Send My Friend to School campaign, present your paper keys, and try to get across the main messages of the campaign:

- Education is a universal human right. It is the key to a positive future for individual children, but also for whole communities and the wider world. However – due to inequality – millions of children are being locked out of education simply because of who they are and where they live.
- Access to education and learning is not a level playing field and 262 million children remain out of school.
- Children are experiencing unfair treatment for many reasons - including having a disability, being female in a place where gender discrimination is rife, living in a rural area, experiencing poverty or being caught up in an emergency. Or often a combination of these factors.
- 2019 is crucial in the journey to unlocking education for *all* children because this year the international community, including the UK for the very first time, will be reviewing its progress against its own goal to ensure education for all.

Step 5 - Ask for something

Make sure you ask your MP to do something! The main thing we need MPs to do is pass on your paper keys with a message of support to both the Secretary of State for International Development and the Foreign Secretary (the ministers responsible for this issue) calling for the UK to unlock education for everyone.

Here are some additional ideas of what you could ask your MP to do:



- Tweet about the meeting and publicise their support for the campaign – ask them to include the @sendmyfriend handle and our #UnlockEducation hashtag.
- Join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Global Education (a group for MPs keen to support this cause).
- Write a blog/article on their website about the campaign and what action they will take.
- Ask a parliamentary question about unlocking education for all children across the world.

Step 6 - Make an impression

Send My Friend to School provides lots of opportunities to get creative, so think about how to make a colourful impact to go alongside your paper keys action. You could really go to town with drama, music, film and photography. Use the most powerful and persuasive facts and arguments! However, remember anything you do should support a strong message and not overwhelm it, and keep in mind how much time you have available.

Step 7 - Record what happens

Choose someone to take notes of any comments or promises your MP makes, and someone to take photos of your meeting, particularly if you've organised something visual such as a display, handover or stunt. Photos will really help to spread the word about your event. Then you can share your image on Twitter remembering to include the @sendmyfriend handle, on your school website, and through local media too! See our Press pack for more tips at <http://www.sendmyfriend.org/resource/press-guide>.

After the meeting

Step 9 - Stay in touch

Write to your MP to say thank you for the meeting, and to remind her or him of any promises made during the meeting. Your MP may well post something on their own website or blog if they have one, so include copies of photos.

Track your MPs actions by setting up an email alert from www.theyworkforyou.com/. Find out if she or he has spoken out in support of unlocking education for everyone. Aim to build a relationship with your MP by keeping in touch.

Step 10 - Spread the word

Use one of the press release templates provided in [our Press Pack](#) and send it to your local newspaper, or any popular local news blogs, along with a photo of your meeting. This should be done within a few days of the meeting. Don't forget to publicise the meeting in your school's newsletters, website etc., and make sure to use our online totaliser at act.sendmyfriend.org/how-did-it-go to let us know how it went and share your photos and stories.

Good luck!

