**MP TOOLKIT**

Send My Friend to School encourages young people to invite their MPs to meet them in school and advocate on behalf of the campaign. However, we do not yet know whether this will

be possible during 2021 because of COVID-19 restrictions. When it does become safe and possible to meet MPs face-to-face we strongly encourage schools to arrange meetings. In the meantime many MPs are holding meetings with their constituents on platforms such as Zoom. As an alternative we encourage you to organise a virtual meeting.

**Meet your local MP!**

After all your effort creating your action, it is time to make sure the message gets 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 – Find MP’s contact details**

It is best to contact your MP at their local consistency office. To find the address visit [findyourmp.parliament.uk](http://findyourmp.parliament.uk) and enter your school’s postcode. This will provide you with information including your MP's name, contact details and website. Most MPs have their own websites that include their contact details and news about recent constituency activities.

However, a few MPs don't have a constituency address, in which case you should write to their parliamentary address: (Name of MP), House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

While MPs are working virtually because of Covid-19 restrictions it’s best make first contact by email. All MPs have a work email address at the House of Commons. You can find it and other contact information for MPs at <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>

**Step 2 – Send your invitation**

Now you have your MP’s contact details you can invite them to your school. Make your email or letter precise and brief. Explain that your students are involved in the Send My Friend to School campaign calling for the UK government to to ensure eduction is no longer interrupted.

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

During the Covid-19 pandemic MPs are spending much less time travelling. There’s therefore some evidence they have more time for constituency meetings than before. So don’t feel it’s in any way wrong to contact them, even at this difficult time.

If you don’t hear back from your MP, then send a follow up email. Once the Covid-19 restrictions ease you could also 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 neither a face-to-face nor a virtual meeting are possible, please write to your MP calling for them to take action to support Education Interrupted. See Steps 4 and 5 below

**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 quality education for every child.

* Use your MP's website, or [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://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 use.

**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 campaign messages/schools of the future , and try to get across the main messages of the campaign:

Three main solutions have been suggested. Decide what you think. You may have better ideas which you should mention

1. Support the replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). GPE will seek to raise at least $5bn to turn the tide on the global education emergency. Send My Friend to School is calling on the UK Government to contribute £600m to the replenishment over the five-year replenishment. These funds would directly contribute to ensuring trained teachers serve marginalised communities, that inclusive schools are built where they are most needed and that children are armed with materials for 21st-century learning.
2. Use the G7 presidency to prioritise girls’ education and commit to measures that protect and further expand education budgets, ensuring that financing prioritises the countries and children furthest behind. This should include committing to achieve 15% of ODA going to education.
3. Seize the opportunity it has as host of COP26, in its G7 presidency and as a respected world leader in global education, to take decisive action to stop climate change undermining the right to education and strengthen education’s role in the global climate response.

**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 message/schools of the future to the Prime Minister calling for the UK to ambitious leaders of the G7, GPE and COP26 meetings. .

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.
* Join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Global Education (a group for MPs from different political parties who are 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 what the UK is doing to
* Write to the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary,
* Table parliamentary questions or raise the issues mentioned with colleagues.

**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 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](https://sendmyfriend.org/resource/press-guide/) for more tips. Photos which feature children should have parental consent as outlined in the school policy

If your meeting takes place virtually, do not record it or use the recording without your MP’s consent. Similarly, your MP should not record a meeting with school students without full consent.

**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 MP’s actions by setting up an email alert from [www.theyworkforyou.com/](http://www.theyworkforyou.com/). Find out if she or he speaks in support of ‘Education Interrupted’. Aim to build a relationship with your MP and keep in touch with them.

**Step 10 - Spread the word**

Use one of the press release templates provided in [our Press Pack](https://sendmyfriend.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Press-Pack-2021-Education-Interrupted.docx) 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 let us know how it went by [sharing it here](https://act.sendmyfriend.org/how-did-it-go-1)!

 **Good luck!**