



Specialist Schools  
and Academies Trust  
THE SCHOOLS NETWORK™

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# DCSF Teachers' International Professional Development Programme



Briefing pack for participants  
School Determined study visit programme



## Welcome

Dear Participant,

We are delighted to welcome you to the DCSF funded School Determined study visit programme. We hope you will find your visit an outstanding professional and personal experience.

To help you get the most out of your visit, this information pack gives you background information about the study visit programme. Please read it carefully.

In the event that you have any questions, please contact a member of the TIPD team – contact details of the team can be found on the back page.

We look forward to working with you, on what we hope will be a professionally rewarding visit for you and your school.

Warmest Regards

[Emma Coward](#)  
TIPD Project Manager

## TIPD – an overview

The DCSF Teachers' International Professional Development (TIPD) programme was initially developed in response to the Government's proposals in the *Green Paper* 'Teachers – Meeting the challenge of change', with the aim of contributing to the development of a world-class education service in this country.

The programme has been operating for over eight years and aims to continue providing teachers with opportunities for international study visits, which will enable those involved to experience good practice, carry out research and share information with a network of other participants. The programme will also enhance international understanding and give teachers first hand experience of other educational

systems, allowing them to acquire an understanding of world-class standards and the methods by which they are achieved.

The programme is entirely funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and covers each participant's overseas travel and accommodation costs, details of which can be found further on in this booklet.

'This TIPD School Determined programme has had a dynamic impact on our whole school, children, staff and ethos. It isn't finished yet – it's going to help us become an even better learning community. Staff are now queuing up for the next TIPD visit!'

## Context

The School Determined element of the TIPD programme is aimed at schools in England that already have an existing active link with a school overseas (for at least six months at the time of application), and wish to develop the partnership further through a short study visit.

The study visit must be based around a chosen theme that will enhance the professional development of each teacher involved, and that will ultimately contribute to raising pupil achievement in the UK classroom.

## How is it run?

**This part of the TIPD programme is administered exclusively by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, on behalf of the DCSF.**

It differs from the LA-led study visit programme in that it is run independently of LAs. While we would envisage working closely with LAs in

the promotion of the programme, there is no set entitlement of places according to authority, however schools can apply independently if they wish to.

Where possible, we would encourage all interested schools to share their proposals with their nominated LA TIPD coordinator.

## Criteria for involvement

The purpose of the TIPD School Determined programme is to allow classroom teachers to visit a partner school abroad for one week. Please be aware that funding is offered on the basis that you will be spending five days of the visit within your partner school, working in-depth with staff and pupils. It is not permitted to spend time in other institutions.

It is essential that schools applying for this strand of the programme have been working with a strong established link for at least six months, and that activities involving students and/or teachers have already taken place. Information relating to this must be evident in the project proposal form.

The partner school abroad must also be willing to arrange a worthwhile professional programme for the duration of the visit, building in time for classroom observation, work shadowing and team-teaching. This must be related to the chosen theme for the visit, as detailed in the application forms.

Group leaders will be asked to send a draft copy of the finalised itinerary at least four weeks prior to the intended departure date, with details of all planned activities. This should be designed in conjunction with your partner school.

**It is important to ensure that your partner school is aware that you are planning to visit, prior to submitting your application.**



The programme is principally aimed at classroom teachers in nursery, primary and secondary schools (who teach more than 50% of the time), with at least two years' post-QTS experience. Supply teachers who fulfil the above criteria, and who have been in post for at least one term and Teaching Assistants may also be considered, subject to relevant justification from their headteacher. All participants should note the expectation of a commitment of their own time to the preparation and follow-up to their TIPD study visit. The visits themselves are intense and tiring experiences, in most cases occupying the whole of a half-term break.

**Participants will also be required to write a group report four weeks after the visit, which will be uploaded to the SSAT and Teachernet websites for public viewing. Participants must also be able to show that their study visit findings will be widely disseminated beyond their own school.**

## Eligibility

**A minimum of two teachers can take part in a study visit, with a maximum allocation of four teachers per school.**

Teachers wishing to access the SD component of the TIPD Programme will not be eligible for other strands e.g. LA-led study visits, during the same financial year and are not able to access the same element of the programme in two consecutive years. Due to the popularity of the programme we are only able to allocate a maximum of four places per school, per financial year.

## When do visits take place?

It is envisaged that the majority of School Determined visits will take place during half-term periods, to minimise disruption to pupils' learning. However, where a school can properly justify the need for the proposed visit to take place within term time, and can assure us that they will meet their own supply cover costs, we would be willing to accept alternative dates.

## Can visits be extended for holidays?

Travel arrangements for all participants to the programme are made on the professional requirements of the visit. It is therefore not possible to tailor travel arrangements for individual requirements under any circumstances.

## Can we take our partners/families?

Participation in the TIPD programme should be viewed as a serious professional undertaking, intended to enhance teachers' personal development. Maximum time needs to be dedicated to the project activity. Under no circumstances should partners, family members, students or friends accompany groups on visits.

## Are students able to accompany us?

The TIPD School Determined programme is a professional development opportunity. In order for teachers to achieve maximum benefit, they should not have to concentrate on anything other than their professional

development activities. If students were to accompany teachers there would be a duty of care that would detract from the aims of the programme, therefore it is not possible under any circumstances.

## What costs does the programme cover?

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust endeavours to organise and pay for the following arrangements for all participants to the TIPD School Determined study visit programme:

- **Travel from a UK departure airport to the destination** – Please note that direct flights to your destination are not always possible, and it is likely you will have to catch a connecting flight
- **Travel insurance for the duration of the visit**
- **Accommodation on the basis of local recommendations** – This will be in comfortable mid-range hotels or guest houses
- **Provision of airport transfers at visit destination** – Airport transfer costs will be covered by the SSAT if the budget allows. However, it is envisaged that the host school, or visiting UK school, will make their own arrangements for daily transportation to and from the school. **Important note:** if the unit cost is exceeded the SSAT may not be able to fund full accommodation costs and airport transfers. We would discuss this with you at the time.



## What costs are not covered?

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust is not able to fund the following:

- **Individual travel costs to the UK departure airport** – Please note that it is not always possible to book flights from the nearest airport to the participant's home town
- **Subsistence during the visit**
- **Gifts for host institutions/schools**
- **Cancellation charges for reasons not covered by insurance**
- **Costs for changing names on flight tickets**
- **Passport renewals/visas** – Please note that in most destinations participants will be required to have at least six months remaining validity on their passports.
- **Vaccinations/pre-travel medical costs** – All participants are responsible for ensuring they are in good health to undertake the visit. They will also be required to ensure they have the necessary vaccinations, costs for which cannot be reimbursed.
- **Car parking costs at UK airports**
- **Accommodation, transport and other related costs in the event of unexpected travel delays or cancellations** – Participants are strongly advised to hold a valid and current credit card in case of emergencies or unexpected delays. These costs should then be claimed directly from the airline and/or travel insurance company.

## Who organises our visit itinerary?

It is important that ownership of the partnership project lies with both schools and all teachers involved. Therefore, itinerary arrangements in the host country will be solely the responsibility of the nominated group leader for the visit and should be created in conjunction with your partner school.

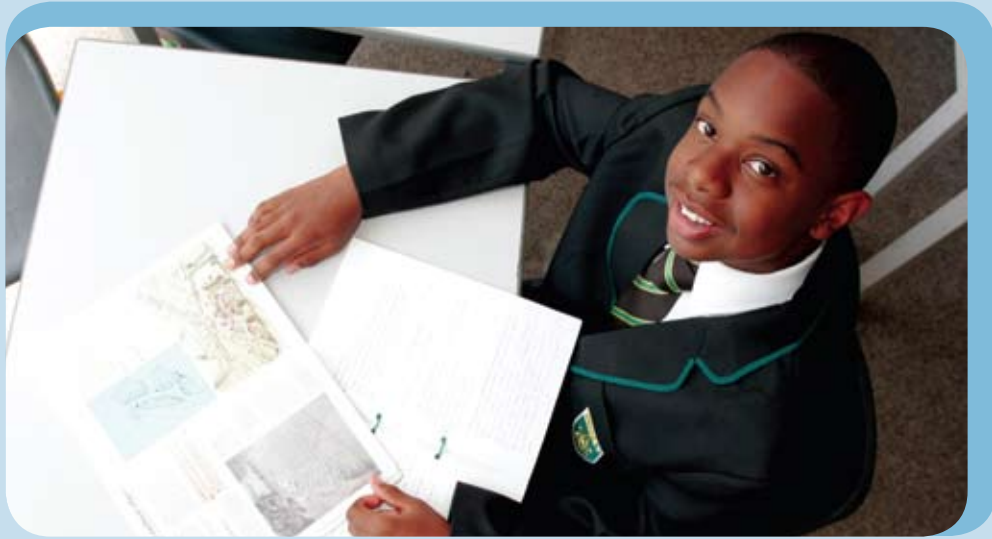
The SSAT will ensure that all criteria for involvement in the project are fulfilled, and will ask all group leaders to provide details of their planned daily activities at least four weeks prior to departure.

## What about group leaders?

The headteacher of every participating school will be required to nominate a group leader for their proposed visit. The group leader will be responsible for assisting the SSAT with the preparation and implementation of the necessary arrangements, in consultation with other members of their group. The group leader will also be responsible for providing SSAT with a copy of the proposed itinerary for the visit, at least four weeks prior to departure, ensuring that the four phases of preparation, participation, implementation and evaluation are carried out within the agreed timescales.

Key responsibilities include:

- **Support of group:**
  - care of individuals
  - developing thinking about themes and issues
  - developing the group's classroom observation skills
- **Monitoring / pacing / adapting the programme, if necessary, in consultation with the host school**
- **Working with the group on the last day to review the experience and begin to plan for return**
- **Dealing with emergencies**



## What emergency procedures will there be?

All participants are required to give contact details of their next of kin as part of their application. This information will be accessible by the SSAT should an emergency arise.

All participants will also be given a 24-hour emergency contact number while they are on their visit. This should only be used in an emergency situation where someone in the UK could take action to assist you.

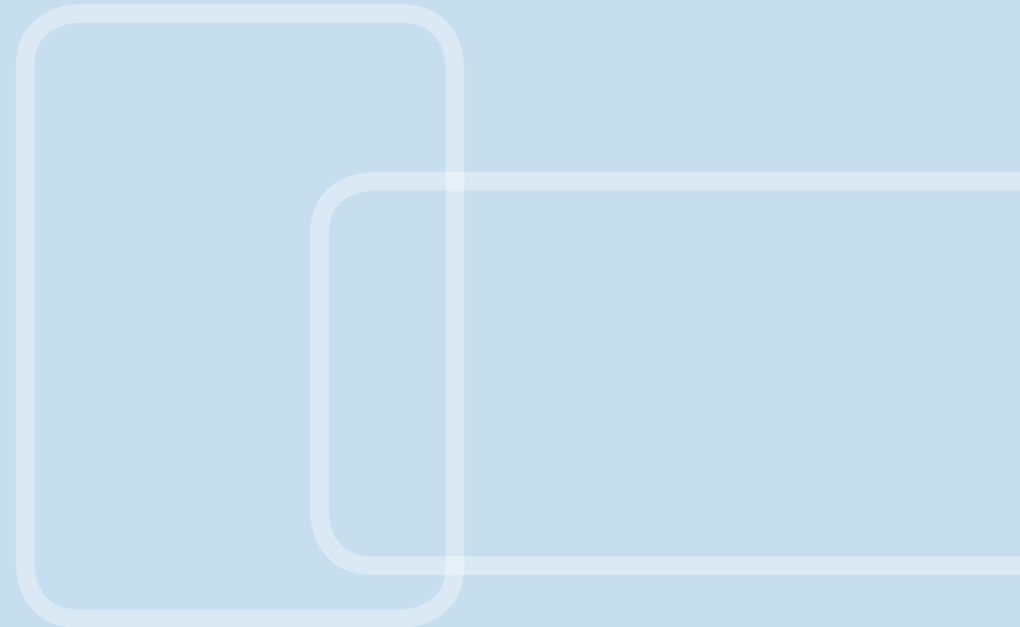
## What about the international situation?

It is assumed that all applicants to the TIPD programme are fully aware of the current international political climate.

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust strictly follows Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and World Health Organisation advice, regarding travel to TIPD destinations, and no visit will take place to anywhere deemed unstable by these bodies.

Participants are strongly advised to monitor the international situation of the destination country in the weeks running up to the planned visit and to call the TIPD team if they have any questions or concerns.

Those who are concerned about travelling in these uncertain times are strongly advised against applying to the programme, to avoid having to reimburse travel-related costs should they feel uncomfortable about travelling to a particular destination.



## What about health issues?

**All participants are urged to contact their GP as soon as a destination for their study visit is confirmed. They should ensure that all vaccinations are up-to-date, and that they have sufficient personal medication supplies for their visit. It is also a good idea for them to take details of any on-going medication they are taking, should they need to obtain supplies in their destination.**

Participants are also advised to inform the SSAT of any ongoing medical conditions, dietary requirements or allergies. Not only will this allow us to ensure the insurance policy fully covers them, but it will also allow us to make the necessary arrangements to make their visit as comfortable as possible. Please note that most pre-existing medical conditions will be covered by the policy, as long as the condition is under control, and you are not

travelling against the advice of your doctor. However, if you are on a waiting list for an outpatients appointment with your doctor or hospital, and this appointment comes up during the week you are meant to be away on your study visit, the insurance policy will not cover you.

Insulin-dependent diabetics, who need to carry syringes on to the aircraft, will also need to carry an explanatory letter from their doctor explaining the purpose of their use. A copy of this should also be forwarded to the SSAT prior to departure so we are able to forewarn the airline. This also applies to allergy sufferers (particularly nut-allergy sufferers) who need to carry syringes or EpiPens on to the aircraft.

It is advisable that **all personal medication** is carried in the participant's hand luggage.

## Preparation for the visit

All participants should be aware of the expectation of a commitment of their own time to the preparation and follow-up to their TIPD study visit.

It is especially important to ensure that participants know exactly why they are undertaking the development activity, and what to expect to learn from the experience. Good planning is therefore crucial and participants will be expected to demonstrate this prior to the visit.

Points to consider include:

- **Preparation** – including the setting of clear aims and objectives and proposed outcomes, and how this will be achieved within the selected format of the activity
- **Plans to implement** what they have learnt in the classroom after the activity
- **The evaluation process** they plan to use to measure the impact of what they have implemented in the classroom
- **The mechanisms** they intend to use to ensure that best practice is disseminated more widely.

## Liability for costs

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, would like to inform all participants of their liability to pay for the following:

- Name changes on travel documents where a participant has failed to give the provider their correct name, as written on their passport.
- Where a participant has withdrawn and there is a charge from the airline to change a ticket to a replacement name
- Costs incurred by the withdrawal of any participant, for reasons that cannot be covered by insurance. This will include travel costs, unrecoverable accommodation costs, and monies paid out for insurance cover
- Replacement travel documents where a participant has lost the originals

## Evaluation guidelines

**A dissemination group report for each visit must be submitted within four weeks of the visit taking place, setting out how the learning outcomes from the visit will be implemented. Some general guidelines have been drawn up to help you write your report and will be sent to you prior to departure.**

Your dissemination report must not be a description of the education services of the country visited, or a diary of events, but should cover the specific learning outcomes of the system studied on your visit.

The reports will be placed on the TIPD website, therefore it is essential that a concise, interesting and useful report, with appropriate back up material, is produced. The report should be a useful source of information for teachers of the

same subject / age group. It should also demonstrate how participating in the visit has added to the professional development, acquisition of new skills and teaching knowledge of those taking part and will help raise pupil achievement.

Please ensure that the names of the schools and individuals visited are not mentioned in this report as it would not be appropriate when placed on the Internet.

The initial four-week evaluation report should be submitted electronically to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust at [tipd@ssatrust.org.uk](mailto:tipd@ssatrust.org.uk)

The DCSF are currently revising the full evaluation procedure for the TIPD programme and it is anticipated that groups will be expected to produce a progress report at 6, 12 and 24 month intervals. Full guidance will be provided in the near future.

