

# MP TOOLKIT



## Meet your local MP!

After all your effort creating your paper safety signs, 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 – Find MP's contact details

It is best to contact your MP at their local constituency office. To find the address visit [findyourmp.parliament.uk](https://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

#### 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 play a key role in making schools across the world safer by creating paper safety signs to share with them.

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 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June so it would be great to meet your MP in 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 this is usually the best days to try for.

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 safety sign messages through the post with a letter.



### 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 achieving a safe, quality education for every child, and ask her or him to do something about it.

- 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 paper safety signs, and try to get the main messages of the campaign:

- Quality education is empowering and transformative: it prepares young people for life and helps them reach their full potential. It has a central role in making the world more peaceful and prosperous.
- World leaders have promised every child in the world a quality education by 2030 but for this to happen schools need to be safe and peaceful.
- Each year 246 million children experience violence at school – this is a generation of young people missing out on education due to fear, violence and danger.
- In 2018, this has to stop. Schools must be defended as safe havens. The UK needs to sign the Safe Schools Declaration and work to make schools safe.

### 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 safety signs with a message of support to the Prime Minister calling for the UK to sign the Safe Schools Declaration.

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 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 making schools safe 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 safety sign 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 [www.sendmyfriend.org/resource/press-pack](http://www.sendmyfriend.org/resource/press-pack).

### 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/](http://www.theyworkforyou.com/) Find out if she or he speaks in support of making schools safe. Aim to build a relationship with your MP and keep 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 [www.sendmyfriend.org/totaliser](http://www.sendmyfriend.org/totaliser) to let us know how it went and share your photos and stories.

Good luck!