

Taking part as a speaker

Speakers for Schools (SFS) is a network of the UK's leading figures who are committed to helping level the playing field in state schools, starting with giving some of their time each year to share their experiences and insights. Our talks are uniquely about broadening horizons and raising aspirations of young people through hearing from the leaders of today, and we keep this entirely free of charge for our schools.

Commitment in brief

- Our events are a **1-hour** school talk in a state secondary school, academy or college in the S4S network. We work UK-wide and can tell you where we need the most support.
- Speakers donate their time and travel, with our team working with your office to make this fit for your diary, often pairing travel with existing commitments.
- We focus on reaching state schools with the **highest need**. However, as schools and their students vary in need and their aims/objectives, talks are tailored between the speaker/office and the school in the lead-up to the event.

Working with you

- Our charity specialises in working with leading figures who have the most challenging diaries, so our team works creatively with your office to fit in a talk and to reach under-served locations.
- We contact speakers a few times during the academic year to schedule a talk around your diary. This often depends on your last event with us and the school calendar.

Our charity team has developed expertise and insights to help ensure our speakers are giving their time in the most high-impact way possible for them.

We can always be contacted for extra information, event guidance and advice on how this could link into the wider educational/youth engagement work, like work experience or apprenticeships etc.

Please contact us on inspiration@speakersforschools.org with any changes or updates to titles, biographies etc. Given sensitivities of working with schools & children, if there are any professional/personal circumstances that arise that may raise unexpected safeguarding or reputational questions with participation we ask you notify us immediately so we can advise.

Planning your talk

1. When starting to coordinate your talk, we will contact schools in agreed locations and then come back to you with our recommended school. This is based on:

- Your geographic availability
- Schools' need level compared to others in the area or network and fit for your talk
- The school's availability to host a talk during your preferred time frame (where applicable) Your preference for age group, size of audience and other expectations

2. Once a school is agreed, you will be introduced to them to choose a date and discuss the event details directly.

Please be sure you make contact promptly or let us know if you are having trouble contacting the school.

3. Once a date is agreed please let S4S know so that further guides can be sent to you and the school for next steps.

- If you have trouble confirming a date, please contact the team for help.
- Schools will often reply to emails at a slower pace than business offices but should there be a major lack of communication let us know.

4. As a part of the programme, schools and speakers are required to have at least one phone call in advance to avoid any miscommunication on expectations. Please be sure to discuss the below with schools, highlighting any preferences you may have, such as:

The preferred time within the school day; our events should be roughly 1 hour long, with plenty of student engagement.

The exact audience make-up (size, age); schools should not be suggesting audiences less than 50 pupils unless you have requested this. Schools can give you advice for relating your talk and experiences for younger students so be sure to ask what they recommend.

Agree event format, broad theme(s) and key aims of the talk to help you in crafting your talk (please see our 'Planning Your Talk' guide for our themes and formats)

If the school requests something that does not seem to meet the above or might be an issue for you, please do let us know.

Leaving an impact

Beyond the talk, there are practical ways speakers can ensure students leave better informed about their future:

Create a link between big-picture insights and practical next steps for these students:
Many speakers bring an apprentice, graduate or junior executive along to help provide a practical perspective on the opportunities the industry has given them. At the end they can chat to students about steps they have taken, as well as shed light on the realities of different pathways like apprenticeships, university or other routes into your industry.

1/3 of students do not have access to any work experience through their networks:
Our Experience programme is run through a simple, safe-guarded portal, giving students access to opportunities, schools an easy way to manage their work experience and employers the chance to diversify their early talent pipelines and meet their social mobility goals. Contact us on: experience@speakersforschools.org to find out more.

Tell schools about free programmes, local events, resources or materials from your organisation:
Many schools now have less time and money than ever so welcome knowing about any wider opportunities their students can take advantage of. Please remember that teachers have many competing demands on their time, so their ability to act on these can be limited. If you would like help with this, please contact the S4S team.

After the talk

We will assume all has gone forward with no issues if we do not hear from the speaker or school before the talk, but we always send a follow-up email promptly after.

Following the talk, you will also receive a feedback form to help us keep track of our work. At this point, you can then let us know when we should be back in touch to plan your next talk. Once available, we will also share feedback from the school with you.



Top tips

You can find more tips from past speakers, talk ideas and FAQs in our Planning Your Talk guide but here are our absolute essentials for a great event:

1. Be sure to have a phone call with the school in advance to agree the format, audience and content of the talk. We ask that all of our speakers have at least one phone call with the school to ensure nothing is missed over email.
2. Make sure to clearly tell the school about any expectations you might have, e.g. how you should be introduced to the audience, reserved parking space, if you require advice on how to make your talk appropriate for their suggested student group, meeting with the headteacher etc.
3. Take the time to adjust your talk for an S4S audience as every cohort is different! For advice and recommendations on what works well for our events please see our Planning Your Talk guide.
4. Every talk regardless of the topic should set the stage by telling students who you are, what you want them to take away from your talk and why the topic should matter to them.
5. Ensure you're comfortable and aware of the talk format. Many speakers opt for a conversational approach or an interview format to avoid talking 'at' the students. See more about formats in our Planning Your Talk guide.

Helpful to know...

- ➔ Schools are sometimes slower to reply to emails than business offices because teachers are usually in the classroom all day, marking during the evenings and preparing the next day's lessons. This means it can take longer than you expect to firm up details.
- ➔ SFS will send reminders to check in with you about how the preparations are going; we have hundreds of talks in the making, so these emails are just to ensure all is on track and remind you of important planning steps.
- ➔ We are often asked how to best engage students and what types of talks leave an impact – even seasoned speakers find our Planning Your Talk useful. The tips and advice are updated annually so be sure to check back before each talk.

Need extra help or advice? Contact our Engagement Team at inspiration@speakersforschools.org or call 02075 493 693