



Delivering a workshop or careers talk in a school or college

What are the options available to you?

Members may be invited to talk about what it is like working as a GP at a school assembly, during a careers lesson (often specifically to pupils interested in medicine), as part of a Personal Social and Healthcare (PSHE/PSE) session or when pupils are off timetable.

Things to consider when planning your session...

It is important to note that many schools and colleges around the UK will have their assemblies, careers lessons and days 'off timetable' scheduled well in advance, so it is important to plan ahead and build relationships with schools and colleges at your earliest opportunity.

Your audience:

- How many pupils will you be presenting to?
- What age or year group will your audience be?
- Can your session link to the curriculum?
- What have the pupils already learnt?
- Have they already had another doctor or healthcare professional speak to them?
- Are you speaking to pupils interested in science or medicine?
- Are there opportunities to repeat the session to several classes?
- What is the academic ability of the group?

What resources are available to assist you?

Visit rcgp.org.uk/discovergcp where you'll find a variety of dedicated materials to use when promoting general practice to school and college pupils.

Resources include:

- 'Life as a GP' presentation – content already aligned to school curriculum
- '5 Fantastic Reasons to become a GP' flyer and PowerPoint slides
- 'Who wants to be a general practitioner' quiz.

Please also refer to our 'School pupil FAQs' handout for further guidance.

Location and logistics:

- If you are delivering a classroom-based workshop, how is the room setup? Rows of seating are not always conducive with group activity, working in pairs is ideal. If possible, ask for a cabaret seating arrangement.
- Will you have access to a laptop, screen or projector? If you're showing a video, does the room have speakers?
- Are you required to send over your slides in advance of the session? Remember, you may not have access to Wi-Fi and some schools do not allow memory sticks due to information security.
- What time of day is your session? If first thing in the morning, particularly in a socially deprived area, the pupils may not have had breakfast and may be less engaged sitting through a presentation. If straight after lunch, pupils are likely to be less engaged and therefore hands-on activity is preferable.
- Who is your main point of contact and what is their direct telephone number? Where should you go when you arrive? Note, that most schools have security checks and processes therefore you are likely to be asked to wear a visitor badge and may be accompanied **at all times on site** – this is standard.





Share your activity:

- If you're an avid user of social media, tweet about your experiences using @TeamGP and #DiscoverGP.
- However, please bear in mind that schools will require photo consent from parents if they are under 16. Also note, even with such consent, this may not allow visitors to post images of pupils on social media.
- If you have produced a lesson plan that has been delivered in schools and would like to share your work with other members get in touch at schools@rcgp.org.uk

Ensuring positive impact:

- If a pupil asks a question in front of the group – this has shown great confidence – it is always nice to thank the pupil for asking or congratulating them for answering a question correctly.
- Allowing pupils to express their ideas or make decisions, allows them to feel empowered and valued.
- It is always better to avoid questions to the whole group in the first instance. If pupils are embarrassed or shy – and you receive no response – this can knock your rhythm.
- The aim of your session should be to allow pupils to make an informed careers choice, it is beneficial for them to hear the benefits and challenges of being a GP.
- Sessions have greater impact when pupils can relate to the content and see how it is relevant to them and the wider world.

Aiding your delivery:

- Avoid acronyms, medical terminology or jargon.
- A teacher should stay present throughout the talk or workshop – they are responsible for pupil behaviour, child protection and health and safety – it is not your role to discipline the class.
- Ask a teacher about the school's policy regarding mobile phones in advance of your session. Some pupils may take notes in their phone or use an app for a disability, it avoids embarrassment knowing this in advance. If you know pupils shouldn't have their phones out you can confidently ask for them to be put away and you can do the same with yours.
- Often in the excitement of an event, presenters can forget to stand at the front and face forwards when talking to the group, thus pupils can be non-responsive to a question merely because they haven't heard what was said.
- Pupils, even aged 16-17, generally do not have experience of 'note taking' and therefore you may wish to create handouts. Don't circulate these until they are required, or they will prove a distraction.
- Limit presentations for older age groups to 20 minutes and less for younger audiences. Do not try to fit everything in, consider the three most important things you want your pupils to remember.
- Don't try to shock pupils i.e. stories of ill health, this can have the opposite of the desired effect and evidence has found that pupils often do not take this information seriously. Also, pupils may have been affected by some of the conditions you may discuss in your session, so be mindful of this e.g. cancer or dementia.
- An approach that can work well to get pupils attention in a classroom setting, is to politely walk around the room – asking them to finish up their activity and allowing them to end their conversations before bringing the group back to you at the front – this avoids shouting.

What to expect:

- You are on their territory – they are comfortable and may try to push boundaries or ask confident questions that they would not typically ask their teacher. They may be expecting you to act shocked.
- Many pupils have not yet learnt the skills of active listening. If you enter the room expecting attentive bright-eyed pupils nodding and smiling at you, you may be surprised. Reassuringly when they are looking at their feet, they are very often still listening, this is largely due to a lack of confidence.
- Pupils are generally nosy and curious. Tell them about yourself, they will want to know more! If the group get noisy during an activity, this isn't necessarily a bad thing.
- It is recommended that you use activities to make the session interactive, but make sure you are clear about what you are asking the group to do – keep instructions simple.
- Please note that the exact same session, with a different class or even in a different school, can go very differently.

