

Field Trip Best Practices

An IGNITE Worldwide Field Trip is an opportunity to share your professional life with students and inspire them to pursue STEM. Students travel to your place of business to see what "a day in the life" is like for professionals at your company. Use this guide to help you create a welcoming, engaging space and make the most of your limited time! If you have questions, please reach out to contactus@ignite-worldwide.org.

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Overview

- Students learn and grow by engaging with you—as meaningful as it is for them to learn a new skill and think critically, your engagement helps them see themselves in your role one day!
- Ask students questions during all parts of the event to maintain engagement. Examples:
 - Large group (10+ students):
 - “Who here likes playing video games? I do too, and now I get to create them!”
 - Help them zero in on what they might be curious about:
 - “Who knows what STEM stands for?” Call on a person with their hand raised and allow them to answer. Expand on how you use STEM in your role.
 - “Raise your hand if you have used ChatGPT.” Call on a person with their hand raised and ask them “What did you use it for?”; “Raise your hand if you ever wondered how AI works!” Call on a person with their hand raised and ask them “What are you most curious about when it comes to AI?”
 - “Raise your hand if you have ever collaborated with a group at school to design, invent, or create something.”—“Tell us about that; what things did you like about that experience?” Every job you have will involve working with others to achieve a goal, so these are important experiences to have!
 - Small group:
 - “What do you like to do?” “What are your favorite subjects?”
 - Connect their answer with a reason they might enjoy STEM. Example: if they say Math, give an example of how they can use math in STEM careers, like modeling the real world and coming up with solutions that help people. Or if they say Art, they might enjoy designing how a user interfaces with a new technology.
- The event should be interactive, engaging, and personable. Please do not show pre-recorded presentations or long-form video. Encourage collaboration amongst the students—this is an opportunity for them to practice how to work together and build soft skills like communication, confidence, and compromise in a group setting.

Event Roles

**Overlap among volunteers is encouraged where applicable; [learn more about volunteer role specifics here](#).*

All volunteers are expected to:

- Be an active listener.
- Maintain a professional and **age-appropriate** attitude.
- Engage with the students throughout the event.
- Ask questions to deepen engagement—don't just talk at them or provide answers.
- We highly encourage all company volunteers to meet for a pre-event run through.

Greeters

- Beginning of event:
 - Wait outside the meeting place to greet students as they arrive. Welcome them with smiles and waves! You are the first company representatives they meet—help them feel welcome and comfortable by letting them know you're glad they're here!
- End of event:
 - Announce to the students "Please give your completed student survey to {company event lead} and you'll receive a prize!" Distribute swag to students who show you their digital or hard copy IGNITE student survey.
 - Tell students individually: "It means so much to me that you were here today. It was great to spend time with you." Wave at them as they leave on the bus.

Tour Guides

- Break students up into the smallest groups the number of Tour Guides allow. Fewer than 10 students per guide is ideal.
- Lead a 5-10 minute tour using the [Tour the Office](#) guidelines below.

Activity Leader

- Introduce the activity in under 5 minutes.
- Assign each group a number to facilitate smooth presentations (ex. group 1 goes first). Call groups to present when time.

Small Group Leaders

- Work with a small group of 3-5 students for the activity using the [Small Group Leader Guide](#) for best practices for working with students.

Facilitator

- Introduce the Panel and moderate the student Q&A discussion.
- Read and practice the script provided by IGNITE.
- Don't ask Panelists questions yourself; give ample time for students to ask their own questions.
 - If students are shy, ask them questions about themselves to help create a welcoming space for them to speak up.
 - Ex. "What was your favorite part of our day so far? Is there anything you were curious about?" "Does anyone have a question they jotted down while the Panelists were sharing?"

Panel Speakers

- Review IGNITE's [Panelist Training](#) once per school year.
- Attend a live, virtual [Panelist Coaching Session](#) before your first IGNITE Event.
- Practice sharing your story in less than 3 minutes, following the [Panelist Guide](#).
 - Prepare 1-2 [visual aid\(s\)](#).
- Lead Panelist: Moderate the panel introductions using the prompts provided by IGNITE.

Welcome & Tour

- Greet students at the bus—your enthusiasm will set the tone for the day!
- Gather in the lobby to welcome the students.
 - Give directions and provide an opportunity to use the restrooms.
 - Have morning snacks available (breakfast bars, fruit, water, etc.).
 - Introduce the volunteers by sharing their name, title, and/or something special about their role at the company.
 - Have the students complete a name tag/provide them with their badges for the day.
 - Review the day's agenda.
 - Show students to a staging area where they can leave bags and coats before the tour.
 - Option to encourage students to leave anything distracting behind (cell phones, earbuds, etc.)
- Restrooms:
 - Always know how to best direct the students to the restroom throughout the day and give reminders.
 - Never accompany students into the restroom.
- Tour the Office
 - Think about ways to directly engage with the students. Be friendly and personable.
 - Ask Tour Guides to check to be sure everyone can hear them clearly.
 - Pause throughout and ask the students questions about themselves and to see if students have questions. Try to find a connection between the space and the students; for many students this could be their first exposure to an office environment!
 - Narrate what happens in the rooms that you pass through.
 - Include hands-on elements! Provide tangible activities for the students to interact with during the tour. Think about things that you can use as a "show-and-tell" opportunity.
 - For example, encourage students to pass around objects found in the space, take selfies at a photo op, or interact with something in the space (ex. Students write a short thank you note and their name on the whiteboard for employees to see).
 - Use a wireless microphone when available so all students can engage, especially for groups larger than 10 students.

Activity & Presentations

- View the [Company Activity Guide](#) for additional guidance and examples.
- Visuals are highly encouraged (whiteboard, flipchart, projected slides, handouts etc.)
- Focus on quality over quantity:
 - Your activity doesn't need to be elaborate or cover a full skill-building curriculum.
 - The most important element is an *interactive* activity, ideally something that highlights what you do at your company, to provide a memorable, hands-on experience.
 - The more fun you have, the more fun the students will have!
 - Talk with the students! Ask them questions, encourage them to brainstorm with you, etc.
- Halfway through the small group time, take a 2-minute standing break (or, a “wiggle break” for younger students)—encourage students to stand up and move to help them stay focused for the duration of the activity.

Transition Time

- Be sure to have multiple restrooms available for students to use to avoid lines.
- Encourage volunteers to help students get lunch and show them where they can sit. This can include inviting students to sit with them!
- Instead of waiting in their own seats for the Panel to start, encourage Panelists to mingle or, if time allows, to eat with students.

Lunch & Panel

- Host the panel and lunch at the same time.
- When moving into the room where lunch/panel are happening review any “ground rules”:
 - How to get lunch—please invite those with dietary restrictions to get food first
 - How long they'll have to eat/listen to the panel
 - What to do with garbage/recycling/compost when finished
 - Directions to restroom
- We recommend the Panel be composed of volunteers who have participated in the event (greeters, small group leaders, tour guides, etc.).
- Ensure Panelists are visible and clearly audible to all students (taller chairs, stage/platform, have Panelists stand while presenting, use a microphone etc.).
- Panelists are welcome to eat while participating on the panel; other volunteers are encouraged to join the students.
 - All volunteers should model good behavior (active listening, non-verbal expressions, etc.) and be available to answer questions.
- The Facilitator should be prepared to have Panelists clarify any jargon, acronyms, etc.

- IGNITE will provide a list of sample panel questions for students to reference and take notes; please print and provide 1 copy per student during the panel discussion. Have pens available for note taking.
- If students don't ask questions right away, pause 8-10 seconds before calling on a student to ask them to read a question from the sample panel questions handout.
 - Adults should refrain from asking the panelists questions—this is the students' moment, and it sometimes takes a little while for them to warm up!
 - Offer small swag or favor (stickers, pens, etc) to inspire student participation
 - If you don't have company swag on hand, cool/cute stickers are a good alternative
 - Candy is not as inclusive as non-food incentives (dietary restrictions, etc.) and if you do include, be mindful of what and how much

Surveys & Swag

- Always ask students to complete surveys at the end of the day.
 - IGNITE will provide a digital link for you to share with the students.
 - Be sure to have printed copies available in case students prefer to complete hard copies.
 - Please scan and send any hard copy surveys to IGNITE within 24 hours of your event.
- Provide opportunity to use the restroom throughout this portion of the event.
- If necessary, relocate to a space where there are surfaces to write on but also room to mingle with the volunteers.
- Have writing utensils available for the students to use.
- Encourage volunteers to share their business cards with the students.
- Volunteers should be ready and excited to answer questions and have the opportunity to interact once more with the students before they leave for the day.
- If swag is available, use it to incentivize completion of student surveys. Encourage students to show their completed survey before they receive swag:
 - Show completed electronic survey on device
 - Turn in paper survey

Send-Off

- Provide an opportunity for students to use the restroom before they board the bus.
- Thank the students for coming—be as specific with students as possible and acknowledge individual experiences (eg. "I appreciated your question about...").
- Wave and send off students as their transportation leaves!

Congratulations—and Thank You!

- Please thank your colleagues for volunteering their time and skills today for the event!
- Take this opportunity to discuss what went well and what there is to improve on for the next event. Share your feedback in IGNITE's post-event volunteer survey.

- If your company matches volunteer hours, encourage all participants to log their time!
- Plan your next IGNITE event! Contact your IGNITE representative today.