FIELD PLACEMENT GUIDE

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It is important to complete and then review this guide prior to your first visit. Please bring this guide to every field visit.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PLACEMENTS AND STUDENT VISITORS

Field placements provide students with the opportunity to connect theory to practice while also developing a deeper understanding of the many factors and issues present in school settings. While in the classroom, field teachers may ask students to work one-on-one or in small groups with students, or to assist with large group instruction. In addition, courses do differ in the number of required field work hours and the types of activities which must be completed while in the field. Students should carefully review the expectations for their particular course.

In all field placements, students are expected to:

- Know the requirements and objectives of their fieldwork.
- Be punctual, reliable, and professional.
- Interact with teachers and students in respectful ways.
- Inquire how best to help, assist, and support the field teacher.
- Become involved in classroom activities, when appropriate.

PRE-PLACEMENT INFORMATION GATHERING AND PLANNING

Below is a list of activities that must be completed prior to the first visit. Completion of this section is essential to a smooth and professional experience.

SECTION 1. BASIC PLACEMENT DETAILS

Determine the course requirements and objectives for this specific field placement. What does your professor expect you to accomplish while in the field?
When your placement is finalized, you will receive an email with specific details from the Field Placement Coordinator, Cathy Dunn. Please copy the following information into this document for your reference:

School Name _______________________________________________________________________

Field Teacher’s Name, if known in advance (First & Last):
________________________________________

Start Date: _______________________________

Time of Classroom Visit (Start & End): ________________________________

Number of Required Visits: ______________________

Next, go online to the Department’s website. Click “Field Placements and Clearances > School Profiles”. Find your school on this list and open and review the document. Copy the following information here:

School Address: _______________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

School Phone Number: _______________________________

SECTION 2. DIRECTIONS AND TRAVEL

Next, find directions to the school. Plan to arrive at your school 15 minutes before your field placement is scheduled to begin. We recommend visiting Google Maps as a resource. Use the school’s address that is on the School Profile in your Google Maps search. Print a copy of the directions to bring with you on your first visit, as well as a map of the area in case you get lost. Attach these printed files to this packet.

Please note that if Google Maps suggests a route that seems overly complicated or time-consuming, you should explore slightly altering your departure or arrival times. Contact the Field Coordinator, Cathy Dunn, if you have questions about directions.

If you are traveling by train, it is much cheaper to purchase tickets in advance at the train station or online rather than on the train. The Swarthmore ticket office is open weekdays from 5:30-11:30am. Cash fare for bus, subway, and trolley service is $2.25. Cash is accepted for travel on all services. Exact fare must be used. Save all receipts (exception: bus), as the Business Office will not reimburse without them. At the end of the semester, submit the Travel Advance/Reimbursement Form to the Educational Studies Department Administrative Assistant, Pearson 221. For more information on travel reimbursement, see Section 12.

SECTION 3. INTRODUCTORY SCHOOL RESEARCH

Visit the school’s website and become familiar with the school and community you will visit. See if you can find information about the school, including:

- The school’s philosophy and mission
- The population it serves
- Special programs and activities
SECTION 4. SCHEDULING YOUR VISITS

While you are on the school’s website, look for a calendar that might indicate when the school is closed for holidays or in-service. If you cannot find this calendar on the school’s page, check for a link to a district website with this information (Note: school districts are listed on the School Profile page of our website).

Copy down the dates of any holiday/in-service breaks that will conflict with your visiting day:

_______________________________________________________________________

Next, refer to a copy of the Swarthmore College calendar, and check when fall/spring break occurs. List the break date that will conflict with your visiting day:

_______________________________________________________________________

Now, open a general calendar. Create a draft of the proposed dates you plan to visit your placement site, making sure to address the requirements of your course:

SECTION 5. SCHOOL CLEARANCES

Determine the clearances you need, usually listed in your placement email from the Field Coordinator. Attach the clearances to this packet with a paper clip, and be prepared to turn them in to the school on your first visit. If the school does not collect them on your first visit, bring them every visit.

SECTION 6. LETTER TO FIELD TEACHER

Find the letter to your placement teacher that has been given to you by your professor. Read it carefully. Complete the student and schedule information on the back of the letter. If you have more than one placement teacher, please make additional copies for these teachers. A copy machine is available in the Department of Educational Studies. Attach the letter(s) to this packet with a paper clip.

SECTION 7. WHAT TO BRING TO A PLACEMENT

You should bring the following with you to every school visit:

- This packet you have created  
  (Make sure that you have your school directions, map, and clearances* attached)
- Letter to placement teacher**
- Photo ID  
  (Your driver’s license or Swarthmore ID)
- Transportation fares  
  (Save receipts for reimbursement)
- Appropriate attire  
  (See next section below for details)

* Most schools collect your clearances at the main office before allowing you to enter a classroom. If your clearances are not collected on the first visit by the office or the field teacher, make sure to bring them each week just in case.

**The letter(s) should be given to your placement teacher(s) on the first day of your placement.
 SECTION 8. APPROPRIATE ATTIRE AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Please wear clean, professional attire appropriate for your school’s context. If you have questions, ask your professor and other students familiar with the school for guidance about what to wear. It can be helpful to look at the school’s dress code, which is often posted on their website. Also take cues from your field teacher and other professionals in the school.

If you feel that you do not have appropriate attire, please speak to your professor, who will work with you to find a solution.

Cell phones, computers and other devices should be avoided, especially in classrooms, unless the teacher permits or encourages it.

 SECTION 9. INFORMATION TO COLLECT AT YOUR SITE

**On your first visit or when appropriate**, ask your teacher(s) the following:

- If you had not been assigned a field teacher prior to your arrival at the school, please ask your teacher for her/his first and last name (we will send him/her an evaluation at the end of the semester). Write your teacher’s name **and email address** in the field below:

  __________________________________________________________________________

- How can you best help or assist your teacher in the classroom? Before asking this question, make sure you understand your professor’s fieldwork expectations; many teachers will ask you what requirements you need to fulfill while in their classroom.

  __________________________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________________________

- How best to contact your teacher if you cannot make a visit? Write this down below:

  __________________________________________________________________________

- Confirm all of your planned visit dates. These dates should already be listed (by you) on the letter to the field teacher, given to the teacher on the first visit. Ask your teacher about whether standardized testing or other special events will conflict with your visits.

  ____Yes, these dates work for my teacher
  ____No, and I will revise my visit schedule and provide my teacher with an updated list of visit date/times

- Would your teacher like you to send an email reminder before you visit each week? **Yes/No**

- Are there any special school expectations that you should be aware of, such as your attire, etc?
SECTION 10. MISSING A SCHEDULED VISIT

If you are ill, it is important to contact your teacher as soon as possible. Many teachers may have planned around the expectation that you are coming; you need to provide them with advance notice if you will miss a scheduled visit. Students also look forward to your help and it is good if the teacher can adjust their expectations. Most importantly, please remember that field teachers expect you to be professional and on time; if you make a mistake, a short note of apology is a good idea.

SECTION 11. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of inclement weather, it is your responsibility to determine if your school is closed or running on a different schedule. Information about school closings/late openings can be found at http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/schools/.

Additionally, if you are taking public transportation to your placement, be sure to check the SEPTA website for information about route changes or closings. This information may be found at www.septa.org. If a school is open but you cannot get there due to weather, be sure to notify your teacher(s) as soon as possible.

SECTION 12. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

In order to be reimbursed by the Department for travel expenses for course-required school field placements, students must follow the procedures below in order to receive this reimbursement.

If you are taking public transportation, you must submit receipts for all trips. Paper clip receipts to your Travel Reimbursement Form, which will be distributed at the end of the semester in your class. Receipts are not required if you are taking bus transportation. Fill out the form where highlighted, including information requested on the back, and bring or send it to Kae Kalwaic, Educational Studies office, 221 Pearson Hall.

If you are traveling by train, it is much cheaper to purchase tickets in advance at the train station or online rather than on the train. Train fares vary. The Swarthmore ticket office is open weekdays from 5:30-11:30am. Cash fare for bus, subway, and trolley service is $2.25. Cash is accepted for travel on all services. Exact fare must be used.

If you are driving a car, total your miles on the back of the form. You will be reimbursed according to the current reimbursement rate up to a certain limit. If you drive other students in your personal car, you must bring a copy of your driver's license and proof of insurance to the Department of Educational Studies office before your first trip. Your personal insurance must cover your passengers.

Forms and receipts must be submitted by the last day of classes for the semester.

Bryn Mawr and Haverford students should check with their college dean regarding their school's reimbursement policy.

Please direct any questions or concerns about travel reimbursement process or issues of affordability to your professor or the Department's Administrative Assistant.
PLACEMENT QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Several Department members assist in the planning and supervising of field placement experiences. Please direct your questions to the following contacts accordingly:

- Contact your professor with questions/concerns about field work and your experiences at the school.
- Contact Swarthmore’s Fieldwork Coordinator, Cathy Dunn (cdunn1@swarthmore.edu), with questions/concerns about placement logistics, start dates, etc. (215) 868-5954
- Contact the Department’s Administrative Assistant, Kae Kalwaic (kkalwai1@swarthmore.edu) with questions/concerns about transportation reimbursement and van certification. (610) 328-8344.