Fall 2025

FIELD PLACEMENT GUIDE FOR EDUC 14

Department of Educational Studies, Swarthmore College

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It is important to review this guide prior to your first 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. Placements often differ in the types of activities available and the opportunities for interaction with students. Plan on completing 20 hours of work in the field, though some placements might be slightly over or under this goal, given the constraints of scheduling, holidays and how the site works.

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.

Health and Safety

If a College student is a close contact or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 , [a fever of 100.4ºF or higher or signs of a fever (aches and chills)], they should inform Swarthmore's Student Health and Wellness and follow all direction and guidance. When consulting with the health center, please make sure to alert them to your field placement and ask specifically about visiting given your health concern; they are the most appropriate resource for advising you in these matters. **If you are sick, you should not go to your field site and you should contact your field teacher and copy your professor.** Don’t forget to notify your carpool driver, if you have one.

SECTION 1. BASIC PLACEMENT DETAILS

Carefully review the email confirmation letter sent to you and your Cooperating Teacher, which provides a fieldwork overview and expected attendance dates. Please make sure to respond to the email with a brief introduction of yourself to your Cooperating Teacher. Be sure to summarize your role, goals, and objectives for the teacher who will host you.

SECTION 2. PLACEMENT, DIRECTIONS AND TRAVEL

Swarthmore students are expected to get a College sponsored SEPTA pass (public transportation) activated immediately, in case you will use public transportation.

When your placement is finalized, you will receive an email with all the specific details of your placement from the field placement coordinator. The email will indicate your visit dates and whether you should walk, use public transportation or ride in one of Swarthmore's cars/vans (with a driver) to get to your assigned school.

If possible, plan to arrive at your school 15 minutes before your first field placement is scheduled to begin (sometimes not an option if you are dependent on public transportation or van pools).

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 if you have questions about directions or if the route seems too long or difficult; she may have a better plan for you or there may be a mistake in the directions.

If you are a Swarthmore student and will seek reimbursement for car mileage, please visit the Department's Travel Reimbursement Policy page for the reimbursement form. Our department administrative assistant, Mary Kassab, handles reimbursement and van certification/van driver payment questions. Tri-College students should contact Margo Shall for their school's form for travel reimbursement or for questions about how BMC/Haverford students get the required clearances to work with minors.

We do hire/pay students to be official college drivers to their field placements if public transportation isn't available or practical. If you are interested in being certified to drive for the College, let our field coordinator, Allison Modica, know so that she can notify fleet management to expedite the processing of your application and so that she can book the appropriate vehicles for you. College insurance will cover accidents in a college vehicle but you are responsible for any tickets, which can be expensive.

If you drive your personal vehicle, you can be reimbursed for mileage but you cannot be paid as a College driver.

Please be aware that College liability insurance only covers your transportation in a College vehicle and you travel at your own risk if you use other means to get to your placement. If you have special needs/concerns as far as travel, please contact our field coordinator.

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
- Student or faculty handbooks
- A webpage for your teacher
- News stories about the school

SECTION 4. SCHEDULING YOUR VISITS/CONTACT INFO

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.

Copy down the dates of any holiday/in-service breaks that will conflict with your visiting day, cross checking your planned visiting day/time with the school's calendar. Also note your own fall or spring break dates. Make sure you have enough visits to meet your professor's expectations and if there is an issue or question, contact the field coordinator. If you are around and for some reason want to visit your site during fall or spring break, you can explore this possibility with the field coordinator.

SECTION 5. SCHOOL CLEARANCES

The field coordinator will reach out to you regarding required clearances and how they will be delivered to the site. Some schools ask for clearances on your first visit (hand them in to the front office) while others collect them in advance from the field coordinator**.**

Almost all schools require photo identification when you visit but you usually can use your Swarthmore Identification card.

If you have concerns about submitting the personal information required by the state for these clearances, please contact the field coordinator directly to discuss the options we've developed for such situations. We value your privacy and you need not share the specifics of your situation, unless you wish to do so. Our department is committed to finding alternative field placements for students that need them, which could involve working with older learners or in the area of policy.

SECTION 6. WHAT TO BRING TO A PLACEMENT

- Photo Identification (lanyard with your Swarthmore identification card is helpful).
- Clearances, if not already sent to the site. The field coordinator will let you know.
- SEPTA Card if using public transportation.
- Contact information/numbers for van driver/carpool if using this form of transportation.
- Appropriate attire *(See next section below for details)*

SECTION 7. APPROPRIATE ATTIRE AND CONTACT WITH CHILDREN/STUDENTS

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 review the school's dress code, which is often posted on their website. Also take cues from your Cooperating Teacher and other professionals in the school. If you feel that you do not have appropriate attire, please speak to your professor or field coordinator, who will work with you to find a solution.

Students should be mindful of appropriate and professional interactions with children. If you have worked with kids in camp settings or after-school programs, remember that schools tend to be much more formal as far as how adults are expected to interact with children.

A couple of tips:

- Be careful with humor, especially since you are in a new context and what you find funny might be misinterpreted or misunderstood. Be your wonderful, warm self but also allow some time to get a sense of the place.
- Under no circumstances should you be in electronic communication with minors or have contact outside of the classroom setting.
- DO NOT take pictures or videos of children/students.
- Please use staff or single stall bathrooms in school buildings.
- Be mindful of confidentiality when speaking about your school experience with others. Child safety and the importance of reporting of concerns will be covered in class, prior to your first fieldwork visit.

We expect that students will not have their phones out while in the school. Food and drink should not be brought into the building or consumed while you are in the classroom. Please do not leave bags or coats in visible locations in parked vans or cars and be mindful of towing signs; many of our schools are in locations where parking regulations are strongly enforced.

SECTION 8. 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 specific field teacher prior to your arrival at the school, please ask your teacher(s) for their first and last names and email address (we need to send an evaluation form at the end of the semester). Send that information to our field coordinator.
- Would your teacher like to set-up a time to briefly chat about the classroom or your role in it, if there isn't an opportunity to talk during the time you are scheduled to meet? You could offer to come back at another time or arrange a time to talk on the phone or virtually, if the teacher has time. *Please note that many teachers are too busy to do this, but you should offer, in case your teacher would like to talk to you further.*
- 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?
- Confirm all of your planned visit dates, by pointing out that you have listed a proposed schedule on the fieldwork overview page, on the back of the letter for the cooperating teacher. Make sure to revise your visit schedule if some of the dates don't work for the teacher.
- Are there any special school expectations of which you should be aware? This might be a good opportunity to open the door and ask the teacher to let you know if you are doing anything that isn't meeting the teacher's expectations or is at odds with the school's culture.

SECTION 9. MISSING A SCHEDULED VISIT

If you are ill, it is important to contact your Cooperating Teacher as soon as possible and to copy your professor on the email. If you are in a car pool, also contact your driver.

If you wake-up ill, both email and call your teacher, since the teacher may not easily see your message once their busy teacher day starts. Many teachers can't read their email or see phone messages when they are busy working with students.

Having too much academic work is not a valid reason for missing a placement. Emails should be short, concise and professional (check your spelling). 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 should be sent.

SECTION 10. 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 usually be found on a school's website, often on sub-page devoted to this information.

If in a van pool, please notify your driver if your school is closed due to weather or for other reasons.

Additionally, if you are taking public transportation to your placement, be sure to check the SEPTA website for information about route changes or closings. If a school is open but you cannot get there due to weather, be sure to notify your Cooperating Teacher(s) as soon as possible and copy your professor.

SECTION 11. 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:

- Course professor with questions/concerns about field assignments and your experiences at the school.
- Field Coordinator, Allison Modica, (610-957-6092) with questions/concerns regarding placement logistics, start dates, clearances, issues, etc.
- Ed Studies department's Administrative Assistant, Mary Kassab, (610-328-8344) with questions/concerns about transportation reimbursement and payment if you are working for us as a van driver.
- Cooperating Teacher regarding absences and delays, and copy your course professor.