**7. LEADING SOCIAL ACTION**

**This Best Practice Guide is designed to help you plan a social action project in or out of school.**

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| **PLAN** |
| **Before You Start**Here is some practical advice and step-by-step guidance, ensuring that you are well-prepared to make a meaningful impact in your community. From securing stakeholder investment and choosing the right project, to effective communication and administration, this guide covers all the essential aspects of planning and delivering a social action initiative. Use these tips to inspire and engage your students, fostering a positive and lasting change.**Choosing a Project**Think about what your context needs – social action is all about making a positive difference in communities, so find out what needs to be done where you are. Focus on local needs and issues where you can make a quick difference. Consider where you can make the most immediate impact with the resources available. * Decide on the practical action you will undertake.
* Consider how much time you have available (e.g., a litter pick can be done during a lunch break, while a care home visit will take at least one lesson).
* Determine if transport is needed and book a minibus or other transportation at least two weeks in advance or in line with School policies.
* Find what stirs your soul – plan a project that you will be passionate about!
* Get school buy-in – make sure that key SLT members are in support of your project. This will make everything that follows much easier.
* Check with your school’s EVC if any of the planned events requires special permission and what risk assessments are needed.

**Stakeholder Investment*** Ensure you have clearance from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and permission to take students out of lessons or offsite. Be clear about how long they can be out.
* Communicate the vision to all school staff—can you get any staff involved? Share the positives of social action so that they will be supportive throughout the process.
* Identify how students will be selected—sign-up, targeted group, open meeting, etc.—and select names the term before.
* Meet with key students and staff in person to share ideas and vision. Involve students in planning.

**Communication*** At the start of term, send out an overview to all staff, detailing dates, times, and student names.
* At the start of the week, send the above information as a reminder, including details of where students should meet.
* Decide how you will communicate with students (e.g., via assembly, tutor time, Intranet, etc.).
* Clearly communicate with students in the lead-up, ensuring they know when and where to meet, and whether they need to bring anything (e.g., old shoes, water bottle, raincoat).
* Ensure student reception has a list of students who will be leaving the site or out of lessons.

**Admin Work*** Complete any necessary risk assessments and submit them to the school’s Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) as per school policy.
* Contact any external agencies (e.g., care homes) the term before to book a time and date with them.
* Send out consent forms well in advance and ensure these are all received back before the event. A generic year-long, cover-all consent form for social action projects is helpful to avoid having to gain consent each time a student takes part.
* Record who has photo permission and note any medical needs.
* Decide how you will record impact and prepare any feedback forms.
* If parent letters are required, ensure these are sent well in advance, detailing the date, time, purpose of the activity, who it is for, how to contact you, and any necessary permissions needed.
* Find out if external agencies have any requirements (e.g., they may ask for DBS numbers of visiting staff) and fulfil these well in advance.
* Make a list of any resources needed (e.g., gardening gloves and tools). Identify who will pay for these, and order or buy anything well in advance.
* Locate secure storage for any resources. For example, tools will need to be kept locked away.
* Check your Staff ratios! Take an extra adult for support and emergencies.
* Brief staff in advance.
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| **DO** |
| * When leaving site, follow all usual school procedures, including taking emergency contacts with you, and informing student reception of who is leaving with you. Check your school’s policies carefully so you know what is required of you.
* Follow GDPR Rules for paperwork.
* Allow extra time for journeys.
* Take lots of photos, permission allowing.
* Brief students before beginning on:
	+ What activities they will be doing and what their job roles are.
	+ Expected conduct.
	+ How to interact with members of the community, in particular vulnerable people.
* Have fun!

**Managing Students well*** **Set Clear Expectations**: Before the project begins, clearly communicate the goals, roles, and behaviour expectations to the students. Make sure everyone understands their responsibilities and the importance of representing their school positively in the community.
* **Foster Teamwork and Collaboration**: Encourage students to work together and support each other during the project. Assign group tasks that require collaboration and emphasize the value of teamwork in achieving a common goal.
* **Keep Students Engaged**: Maintain students' interest and motivation by breaking tasks into smaller, manageable parts. Offer encouragement and recognition for their efforts and vary activities to keep the project dynamic and engaging.
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| **REVIEW** |
| **Reflect and Debrief*** After each session or at the end of the project, take time to reflect with the students on what they accomplished, what they learned, and how they can apply these lessons in the future. This reinforces the value of their contributions and helps solidify their learning experiences.

**Record Impact:** * Compile impact data into your Impact Report. This should include stories of impacts on students and also those who benefited from the project. Gather student voice.
* Include photos (where permission has been gained).
* Share positive impact stats, stories, or student voice with SLT, Staff, & on social media, as soon as possible after the event.

**After the event:*** Follow up with any external agencies.
* Allocate reward points as per your school’s system to students involved.
* Address and follow up on any feedback from staff or students.
* Celebrate!
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