



# Planning a School Visit to a Hindu Mandir: A Guide for UK Teachers

Organising a school visit to a Hindu Mandir can be an enriching and educational experience for pupils, offering them the opportunity to learn about Hinduism and its practices first-hand. This guide provides practical steps to help you plan a meaningful and respectful visit.

## **Step 1: Research and select a Mandir**

1. **Identify a Local Mandir:** You can find a list of Hindu Mandirs online. Alternatively, you can use online searches to find a Hindu Mandir near your school. Consider its size, facilities and willingness to host school groups.
  - For larger Mandirs, such as the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in London, check their website for school visit programmes.
2. **Understand the Mandir's Practices:** Research the specific traditions followed at the Mandir to tailor the visit to your curriculum goals.

## **Step 2: Contact the Mandir**

1. **Make Initial Contact:** Reach out via phone or email to introduce yourself and explain your intention to organise a school visit. Confirm they can accommodate your group size and age range.
2. **Discuss the Visit:** During your communication:
  - Explain the purpose of the visit and its connection to the curriculum.
  - Confirm availability, suitable dates and timings.
  - Ask if a guide or speaker can provide a talk or tour.
  - Check if any materials or worksheets are provided.

3. **Clarify Costs:** Inquire about any suggested donations or fees. Most Mandirs welcome donations to support their activities.

### **Step 3: Prepare the Students**

1. **Teach Key Concepts:** Provide an overview of Hinduism, including beliefs, practices, and the significance of Mandirs.
  - Focus on concepts like dharma, puja (worship) and the importance of deities.
2. **Discuss Respectful Behaviour:** Educate students on cultural etiquette:
  - Dress modestly (e.g., no sleeveless tops or shorts).
  - Remove shoes before entering the prayer area.
  - Speak quietly and behave respectfully.
3. **Plan Questions:** Encourage students to prepare thoughtful questions to ask during the visit.

### **Step 4: Logistics and Planning**

1. **Organise Transport:** Arrange transport to and from the Mandir, ensuring the journey fits within the school day.
2. **Obtain Permissions:** Send permission slips to parents, detailing the purpose, location, and timings of the visit.
3. **Confirm Numbers:** Inform the Mandir of the final number of attendees, including teachers and any parent volunteers.
4. **Prepare Resources:** Bring notebooks, pens, or pre-prepared worksheets for students to complete during or after the visit.

### **Step 5: On the Day of the Visit**

1. **Arrival:** Aim to arrive on time and assemble the group before entering the Mandir.  
**Shoes must be removed before entering a mandir.** Please place shoes neatly on rack provided.
2. **Introduction:** Follow the instructions provided by the Mandir staff or guide. They may start with a brief introduction about the Mandir's history and significance.
3. **Observe and Participate:** Encourage students to observe rituals, listen attentively, and participate respectfully if invited (e.g., receiving prasad, a sanctified offering).
4. **Ask Questions:** Allow students to ask their prepared questions during appropriate moments.

### **Step 6: Follow-Up Activities**

1. **Classroom Discussion:** Reflect on the visit by discussing students' observations and what they learned.
2. **Student worksheets:** Please see Hindu Education Board UK website for downloadable student worksheets to complete, which helps to consolidate learning.
3. **Creative Projects:** Encourage students to create posters, author essays, or give presentations about their experience.
4. **Send Thanks:** Write a thank-you letter to the Mandir, expressing gratitude for their hospitality.

### **Additional Tips**

- **Involve Parents:** Invite parent volunteers to join the visit for additional support.
- **Adapt for SEN Pupils:** Ensure the visit is accessible for students with special educational needs by discussing requirements with the Mandir in advance.
- **Photography:** Ask in advance if photography is allowed and explain restrictions to the students.

By following these steps, you can ensure a well-organised and meaningful visit that fosters respect and understanding of Hindu Dharma and culture.