

Engineers Week 2026

“Getting Started”

Damien Kelly 19th January



Topics

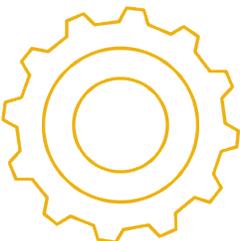
- Looking for a School
- Communications with Staff
- Safeguarding / Vetting
- Activity / Workshop
- Working with Young People



Looking for a School

Can you make a connection to the School?

- Are you a past pupil?
- Do you have Children attending somewhere?
- Do other work colleagues have Children somewhere?
- Anyone you know on Board of Managements, Clubs that use the School, friends with School staff, etc.
- Local to you



Contacting the School

Whether you've an existing connection or not

- Research the school online
 - Many post on their Homepage activities, see have they done Eng Week before.
 - Who is the Principal?
 - Contact Number and Email
- Prepare what you're going to say:
 - Who you are
 - Why you're calling (Eng Week)
 - **What connection you have to the school or**
 - **How you're looking for schools to run an activity in this year (and why you'd like to visit their school)**
 - Who might be taking part (what age of pupils and how many colleagues of yours)
 - What Eng Week activities you might do, how long it might take

Contacting the School

- Aim to make a phone call first, looking to speak to the Principal
 - *Note: Reception may direct you to another member of staff who looks after activities like Eng Week*
- Likely they will only take a message, so advise that you will follow up with an email with more information.
- Offer to call into the School to discuss in-person if preferred.



Safeguarding

What is it?

- *Safeguarding means putting measures in place to uphold our rights, support our health and well-being, reduce risk of harm and empower us to protect ourselves.*
- *Safeguarding involves ourselves, our families, services and professionals all working together to prevent reduce and respond to adult abuse, neglect, or course of control.*
- <https://safeguardingireland.org/safeguarding/>

What is Child Safeguarding?

- *Child Safeguarding means 'ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by workers and volunteers to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, including online concerns, should these arise. Child Safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential'. ([Tusla, 2024, p. 6](#))*
- <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/child-safeguarding/>

Safeguarding

Best Practice

- No photos with Children's faces. Backs of heads only, if at all.
- Do not give out your contact details.
- Avoid inappropriate language and gestures.
- Avoid inappropriate topics of discussion and humour.
- Avoid raising your voice inappropriately.
- Be mindful that there are always Young People listening.
- Avoid being in the Classroom without the Teacher / School Staff present

Garda Vetting

What is it?

 [National Vetting Bureau](#)

Welcome to the National Vetting Bureau.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provide a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons. The Act also creates offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions.

The Act stipulates that a relevant organisation shall not permit any person to undertake relevant work or activities on behalf of the organisation, unless the organisation receives a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person.

Garda vetting is conducted on behalf of registered organisations only and is not conducted for individual persons on a personal basis.

If you are seeking employment or intending to volunteer with an organisation which conducts relevant work, you may be asked to make an application to be vetted.

Garda Vetting

Do I need to be vetted?

- Technically.... No.
- Only those who carry out “Relevant Work”
 - *“Any work or activities, carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to or contact with children or vulnerable persons.”*
 - *<https://vetting.garda.ie/RegisteredOrganisation/RelevantWork>*
- However...
 - Some schools have a Policy requiring it regardless
- On your visits the Teacher should be in the room at all times supervising the class... and you.
- If the School are insisting on Vetting, you don't have much choice.

Garda Vetting

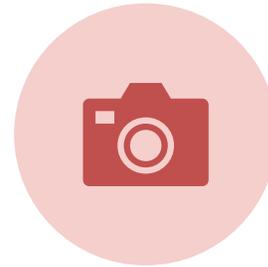
Advice

- Don't tell the School you don't need it.
- Use language such as *“Our understanding is that as Visitors we do not require vetting, with the Teacher supervising the session”* or similar.
- If they are insisting, all visiting staff will need to be vetted.
- It will require you to visit the school in advance to submit your forms to them.
- They have to confirm your documentation.
- It takes time.

School Policies



Communicate with the Teacher(s) on the day if you are taking photos.



Offer to show the Teacher any photos you've taken before leaving their class.



Post visit – send the School any photos you'd like to use for approval.

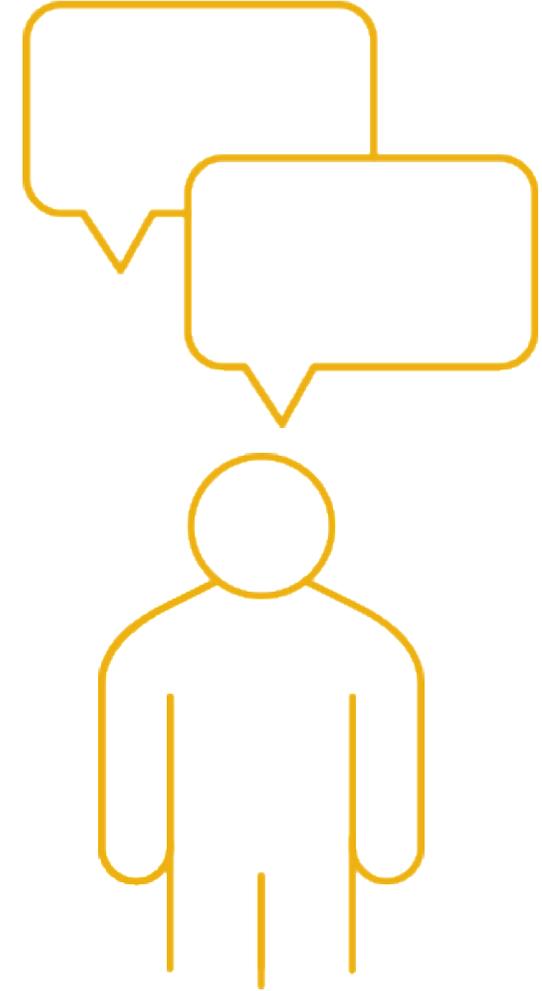


Agree with the School about Social Media Posting Requirements/ Limitations

Activity / Workshop

Know Your Audience

- Primary School Vs Secondary School
- Primary School
 - More flexible schedule
 - More time for a hands-on activity
 - Inspiration and using imagination
 - Want them to go home remembering the day
- Secondary School
 - More Career focused / practical benefits of Engineering
 - Considerations for Further Education
 - Allow for detailed discussion



Activity / Workshop

Preparation

- How many Children / classes?
- How many colleagues visiting? Travel times/traffic/etc.
- How long do you have for each session?
- Equipment/handouts/etc you need (for all Children)
- What type of Activities?
 - Presentation
 - Videos
 - Hands-on Practical
- Rehearsal



Activity / Workshop

What Topics can you cover?

- Yourself.
 - Your story
 - What things you liked when you were their age.
 - What are your hobbies interests today?
- What is Engineering (broadly)?
 - Different types / what services your company does
- Everyday “Engineering is Everywhere” Activity
- Engineering of the Past and Future
- Rare Engineering Failures

I am an Engineer! ENGINEERS IRELAND STEPS

Damien Kelly

- Structural Engineer
- Former Pupil
- Studied in UCD
- Leinster Rugby Fan



Engineering is Everywhere ENGINEERS IRELAND STEPS
How many examples can you see?



Pasts & Failures



© Keystone

Baby Is Given Fresh Air in Window Cage

BABIES of flat and tenement dwellers, whose tiny lungs have been forced to breathe stale and overheated air, are offered relief by the recent English invention pictured above. A large metal crate is attached to the outside of the window by two stout iron poles. A baby basket can easily be lowered inside. If insects are likely to trouble the child, the crate can be screened.



Working with Young People

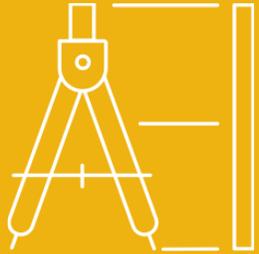
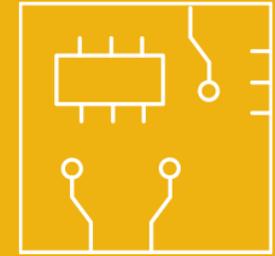
- Make a connection / be relatable
- They will have lots of questions
 - If necessary, you can say you'll take questions at the end.
 - Be patient
- Ask them questions – get them involved
 - Is there Construction work near them?
 - Is there new technology at home/school they use?
 - What do they think Engineering is?
 - What are some challenges facing the world today?
- Remember – they don't know as much about Engineering as you do!
 - Don't be worried about technical accuracy for everything

Activities (Sample)

First Activity

- You're going to be Structural Engineers...
- Your task...
 - *Construct the Tallest Free-standing Marshmallow Tower*
- Materials...
 - *20 Sticks of Spaghetti*
 - *1 meter of Masking Tape*
 - *1 Marshmallow*
- Rules...
 - The structure must stand on its own (CAN NOT hold/touch the tower)
 - The whole marshmallow must be on top
 - You DO NOT need to use all the materials
 - Allowed to break the spaghetti and cut the tape and string
 - Allocated 10 minutes





Thank You

Q&A

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