DOWN'S SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
your expert education partner
you can count on us

TOP TIPS FOR PLANNING INCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

Every pupil in your school is entitled to full inclusion in school trips.

The Equality Act 2010 stipulates that schools must not discriminate in the way they afford pupils access to a benefit, facility or service – this includes residential trips.

Schools have an 'anticipatory' duty under the Equality Act, which means that they must think in advance about how to make their activities inclusive of all pupils in their school. Excluding pupils who have Down's syndrome from trips or treating them worse than other pupils, can be seen as direct or indirect discrimination.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled pupils can access school trips, and they cannot ask parents to fund these adjustments

We know that it can be a busy and stressful time for teachers who are planning residential trips, so we have set out our top tips for making sure your trip is inclusive of pupils who have Down's syndrome:

Start with an assumption that pupils who have Down's syndrome will be able to attend school residential trips – many have done so successfully. Put all children who are disabled/have Special Educational Needs at the heart of your planning to ensure that everyone's access needs are considered and that everyone will be able to take part.

Ensure that your budget for the trip includes any costs for accessible transport or required adaptations for activities.

Start planning early. It is important that you allow sufficient time to plan for an inclusive residential trip. This will allow time for planning adaptations or for staff training (eg in meeting medical needs).

Work with the family of the pupil who has Down's syndrome as early as possible.

Invite them to a meeting to discuss their aspirations and any concerns that they might have.

Discuss their child's specific medical or access needs, and work together to think creatively about how these can be met.

Consider whether it would be helpful for the parents to visit the venue so that they can identify any adaptations that might be needed.

Produce a one-page profile about the pupil who has Down's syndrome together to provide to the activity provider and all staff attending the trip.

Ensure you have open communication with parents before and during the trip, as they might find residential trips a worrying prospect!

Do not ask the parents to attend the residential trip or to stay nearby unless you are asking all parents in your school to do this. You can invite them to visit or take their child home/to nearby accommodation overnight if they wish to, but ensure this is seen as optional and it is definitely not an expectation.

Choose an activity and a venue that fits both the learning objectives and the specific support needs of the pupils who will be attending, rather than asking your pupils to fit the needs of the activity provider or venue. Work closely with the venue to ensure that all activities planned will include all pupils and find out if their team will need any further training to support pupils who have Down's syndrome. Contact the Down's Syndrome Association for more information about the DS Active training we offer.

Build up a register of accessible venues and transport providers, so that you can refer to it in the future when planning trips.

Ensure that access requirements are included in all documentation relating to the trip – for instance policies, risk assessments, letters home to parents.

Consider friendship groups and who the pupil who has Down's syndrome will spend time with or share accommodation with. Ask them who they would like to be with if possible.

Also consider what activities you will run in the evenings and how the pupil who has Down's syndrome will be included. For instance discos might be overwhelming for pupils who have sensory needs or 'free time' might be challenging for pupils who struggle with friendships.

In the run up to the trip, help the pupil who has Down's syndrome prepare by:

Using social stories to explain the routines/what will happen.

Make a book with photos of the venue to help them visualise the venue.

Provide them with information about:

The venue and activities.
Routines, eg what time to get up, what time they will go to bed.
Which staff will be helping them.
Their bedroom and who they will share a room with.
Where they will eat and what food will be available.
Clothing needed.
What to do if they are worried on the trip.

If possible, take them to visit in advance or show them videos of the activities from previous trips

Work with the family to help the pupil prepare and be organised, see Tanzie's case study to see how they approached it.

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For further information and guidance, please see the International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down's syndrome.

If you or the venue/activity provider would like further information about how to include pupils who have Down's syndrome in residential trips, please do contact us.

info@downs-syndrome.org.uk or our Helpline 0333 1212300 (10am-4pm). We offer training for providers and are happy to answer any questions you might have.