

**DCSF Teachers' International
Professional Development
Programme:**

Guidance for Teachers

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Introduction

What is a TIPD visit?

The Teachers International Professional Development (TIPD) programme is a Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) funded programme offering exciting opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to visit other countries, to learn first-hand about education in a different culture. HTI Merganser, as a provider of this programme, enables teachers to see for themselves how classrooms operate elsewhere in the world. Each visit lasts one week and is based on a selected theme.

This booklet aims to answer general questions and provide some basic information to delegates taking part in DCSF TIPD funded visits with HTI Merganser. The booklet should be treated as general guidance, and where possible will refer to other resources that may be useful.

An information pack with more detailed information specific to the individual visit will be sent to the Local Authority (LA) Coordinator approximately 2-3 weeks before the visit for distribution. This will include:

- Confirmation of flight details
- Confirmation of accommodation bookings
- Details of transport overseas
- Contact information for the host
- Basic information about the destination
- Insurance policy summary

Our flexible approach

HTI Merganser takes an approach to the TIPD programme that is as flexible as possible within the DCSF framework. We work with the host to tailor each visit to the group's needs in order to provide a professionally beneficial programme.

In order to tailor the programme as much as possible, we ask that any specific aims and objectives are passed on to us as early as possible so that we can ask the host to take them into account during planning. Please note that it may not be possible to cover every individual aim and objective during a week-long study visit.

Applying

Applications from individual teachers cannot be made directly to any DCSF TIPD providers. The application must be made through the relevant Local Authority, who will then make the selection of who is to be included in the visit group. If you need to know who your Local Authority coordinator is, contact the HTI Merganser team on tipd@merganser.co.uk and they will send you the relevant contact details.

Individual Teacher Application forms (TIPD 4s)

In order to book flights and accommodation, HTI Merganser require a completed individual application form for each participant (in the case of the Group Leader the application form is the second half of the TIPD 3 Specific Programme Proposal). The forms will be made available by your TIPD coordinator, and the completed and signed form will need to be submitted to your TIPD coordinator for sending to us, normally within 3-4 weeks of confirmation of the visit.

It is especially important within these forms that you complete your name exactly as it is shown on your passport, as this information will be used to book your flight and once confirmed changes can be costly and may be charged to the individual if they are not for an insurable reason.

It is also important to highlight any dietary requirements and medical issues so that we can inform necessary parties (airline, insurer); a doctor's note will be requested in the case of a medical issue, stating that you are not travelling against medical advice.

Finally we need to ensure your passport is valid for a long enough period after the visit takes place, so you must make sure to include your passport's expiry date.

Forms must be signed by both the participant and their headteacher, or they will not be accepted.

The International Visit

Destination

The destination is selected by the provider, HTI Merganser, and the selection is made based mainly on the visit theme.

Some basic information about the destination is provided in the visit information pack sent out before the visit, but an alternative useful source of information is reports from previous TIPD visits, where helpful tips on currency, banks, ideas for gifts to take etc may have been included. Reports are available on the Teachernet website at www.teachernet.gov.uk/tipd and on the various provider websites; some are also available from local authority websites.

If you are looking for travel advice for your destination (safety, health advice), then we suggest you look on the UK Government's website: www.fco.gov.uk (Travel Advice by Country).

Flights

Flights are generally booked departing the UK on a Saturday, and returning on the Sunday (flights are often over Saturday night), for long haul visits, and departing the UK on a Sunday, returning on Saturday for short haul visits.

If the group size is 10 or more, then we will hold and confirm flights as soon as we have agreement with a host, and inform the TIPD coordinator of the booked flights. Names are sent to the airline at a slightly later stage. Once flights are confirmed to an airline a cancellation charge will be incurred in case of changes or withdrawals; if this charge is not insurable, the cost will be passed on to the local authority or individual as appropriate.

If the group is less than 10, then flights are booked as individual tickets, and for this full names as on passports are required, so we are unable to book flights without confirmation of full names.

Once tickets have been booked with confirmed names, cancellation costs are usually the full ticket fare, and unless the reason for withdrawal or change is insurable (which usually means a medical reason), the individual or local authority will be charged this cost.

Tickets will be despatched to the LEA Co-ordinator as soon as they are received from the travel agent. Some airlines now issue electronic tickets rather than printed flight tickets. These should be presented at the check-in desk in the normal way. When you have received your ticket and itinerary, please make sure you note the check-in times and baggage allowances.

If your baggage is damaged or lost in transit, you must make sure you get written confirmation of this from the airline or handling agent at the airport: you will need this to make a claim on the insurer. Should you lose your ticket, you must contact the local office of the airline or agent immediately.

Please note that the group leader must re-confirm return flights for the group at least 72 hours prior to the flight time for some long haul flights. This must be done with the airline concerned.

Travel to the UK departure point

Under the rules set by the DCSF, travel arrangements for getting to and from the UK departure airport are entirely at the expense of the individuals – or the LA - taking part. Flights are often out of the London airports although wherever possible in budget and logistic terms we consider regional airports whilst booking and in some cases will be able to book flights from these.

Passports and visas: General

If you are a British national, you must have a full ten year passport which is valid for at least three months (Europe) or six months (rest of world) beyond the end of your visit, and which has at least three blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

If you are not travelling with a UK passport, please advise us as early as possible so that we can check the rules for visas with our agent; you may need some time to apply for a visa.

We are able, under the DCSF funding rules, to reimburse you the cost of a visa if required; we are not, however, able to cover the costs incurred in obtaining the visa (postage costs, travel to an embassy). Please let us know before you apply for the visa if you will be requesting reimbursement.

If the entire group will require visas (for example, if visiting China), then the TIPD funding will cover the cost of the visas, and HTI Merganser will arrange for you to complete application forms and send us the necessary documentation so that we can make the group visa application. We will require your passport for up to two weeks, usually around 4-6 weeks before the visit.

We recommend that whilst travelling you also take a note of your passport details (passport number, expiry date, place of issue) and keep them separately from your passport. It is also a good idea to take an alternative form of photo ID on the visit. If your passport is lost or stolen during your visit, it is important to contact both the local police and the local UK embassy or consulate immediately.

Emergency numbers for the police will be provided in the visit information pack, as will all the contact details for the local embassy. You can also contact the insurance company, who will be able to advise you on the correct action to take.

Passports and visas: USA

If your visit is to the USA, please read this section carefully. All information in this section is taken from the US embassy website.

Citizens of the United Kingdom (and a number of other countries) may travel visa free under the Visa Waiver Program if they meet **all** of the following requirements:

- The traveller is a citizen of one of the countries named above, travelling on a valid, machine readable or e-passport with an electronic chip.
- Travelling for business, pleasure or transit only;
- Staying in the United States for 90 days or less;
- Holding a return or onward ticket. If travelling on an electronic ticket, a copy of the itinerary must be carried for presentation to U.S. immigration at the port of entry.
- In possession of a completed form I-94W, obtainable from airline and shipping companies.
- Must not have a criminal record, must not have been arrested even if the arrest did not carry a conviction, and must not have been refused entry to the USA.
- If the passport was issued, renewed/extended between October 26, 2005 and October 25, 2006 it must contain a digital photograph.

- If the passport was issued, renewed/extended on or after October 26, 2006, it must also include an integrated circuit chip capable of storing the biographic information from the data page, a digitized photograph and other biometric information.

For examples of the features of a valid passport for the Visa Waiver Program, follow this link: http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/programs/content_multi_image_0021.shtm.

HTI Merganser will ask all participants to confirm they are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program; those that are not eligible will need to apply individually for a visa and must ensure they leave enough time before the visit to do so.

Travel Overseas

HTI Merganser will arrange and pay for the transfers from the airport to the hotel. In some cases this will be by public transport, in which case full instructions will be given to the group leader, along with a cheque to cover the cost of ticket purchase. In other cases, a minibus or taxi will be arranged, and the visit information pack will include all necessary information. In these instances, you will be met by either the host or your driver.

During the visit, all transport *related to the visit programme* is paid for. HTI Merganser are unable to cover costs of transport for sightseeing events: if these are included in the programme then all participants will be informed beforehand and asked to agree the costs before the programme is confirmed. HTI Merganser will not be able to refund any claims from transport that has not already been pre-arranged before the visit.

Transport during the visit may be by public transport, minibus, or a mixture of the two, depending on the visit destination and the locations of the schools that the group visits.

Accommodation and meals

In the current economic climate we are booking twin-share rooms on a bed and breakfast basis, in a mid-range hotel. The group leader will be provided with a single room. If breakfast is not included (as in some US hotels), we will make arrangements to cover the cost of breakfast with the hotel. If delegates wish to guarantee a single room, they are offered the opportunity to do so by paying a single supplement (depending on availability within the hotel). Any exceptional arrangements including single room bookings must be made through HTI Merganser before the visit.

We are unable to provide subsistence funding for lunch & dinner. In some cases schools may offer the group lunch, but there is no guarantee of this and participants should be prepared to pay for their own meals all week. We try to book accommodation within reasonable distance of a variety of restaurants.

Etiquette whilst abroad

You may like to take small gifts for the schools you will be visiting, from your class or small mementos of your school. We recommend you look at other visit reports to see what previous groups recommend.

We ask that you make yourself aware of local social etiquette and do your best to follow the local way of doing things. It is always appreciated if you can learn a word or two of the language: hello, goodbye, please and thank you at a minimum.

Personal safety and health

Please check with your GP if you are unsure if you will need a vaccination for your visit. It is unlikely that there will be funding available for your vaccinations from the DCSF TIPD programme. You should leave plenty of time to check this in case you need a round of treatment that will take several weeks (eg Malaria tablets).

If you are travelling to Europe it is important that you obtain an EHIC card. These are available from <https://www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/home.do>, and provide free European insurance cover for UK residents. If you have previously had an E111 form, these are now invalid and you need to replace it with an EHIC card. EHIC cards have an expiry date and it is important to check that yours is still valid.

Regarding safety, your host may offer some advice which will be passed on to you. Country-wide safety advice is available from www.fco.gov.uk.

Insurance and Emergencies

For the duration of the visit, you will automatically be covered by travel insurance arranged by our brokers and paid for by HTI Merganser. A copy of the full policy document will be sent to the LEA contact along with the final visit itinerary.

Please make a note of the policy number and of the emergency phone number, both of which will be given in the Emergency Contact section of the visit information pack. We hope you will not need to phone the insurers but, if you do, we would appreciate being kept informed of the matter.

Insurance claims must be made **direct to the insurer**.

Our direct phone line is +44 1454 629655. Outside UK office hours this phone will be switched through to a duty officer to answer any calls, so we would be grateful if outside UK office hours you would use it for real emergencies **only**.

We would advise you not to participate in any activity where there may be some doubt that you may not be covered without prior written agreement from HTI Merganser (such as extreme sports). HTI Merganser cannot take any

responsibilities for any costs incurred. Should there be any doubt whether you are covered, please contact us to view the policy.

After the visit

Immediately after a visit, we will contact the group leader requesting the following:

- That they write to or email the host a formal thanks
- Completion of a brief internal questionnaire regarding the organisation of the visit.
- A report to be sent to HTI Merganser within four weeks. Under the TIPD rules, HTI Merganser must submit this report to the DCSF within six weeks of the end of the visit. We therefore ask that it be sent to us within four weeks to give time to ensure that the report has been written appropriately and request edits as necessary. Guidelines for writing the report are available on the Teachernet website at:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/tipd/reports/writingreport/>

Approximately 6 months after the visit we will send a case study form to the group leader, requesting that each participant in the visit completes a copy and returns it to us as part of the follow-up into the impact the visit has on the classroom once the group has returned.

TIPD FAQs

1) **Who is providing the funding for the visit?**

The programme is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). HTI Merganser is a provider of the programme, using the DCSF funding to arrange your visit. **These visits are not funded by the British Council, although they manage other TIPD visits, also funded by the DCSF.**

2) **What is the purpose of TIPD?**

The aim of TIPD is to give teachers a brief insight into education systems abroad, to further their professional development and inspire new ideas for use in their own classrooms and across LAs. One of the key benefits is that by experiencing another education system individuals often have new insights into how things are done at home. Visits usually focus on a specific theme in relation to the education system.

3) **Can I make links with a school whilst on my TIPD visit?**

Yes – but remember that this is not the main purpose of the visit. The main purpose of the visit is to gain an insight into a foreign education system, and bring back new ideas. HTI Merganser will, however, provide information on how to take longer term links forward.

4) **Can I choose the visit destination?**

HTI Merganser's team of experienced consultants will be responsible for selecting a host in a suitable destination, based on the chosen visit theme. The destination may not be confirmed to the group until up to 6 weeks before the visit: applying to the programme should not be based on a visit destination.

5) **Can I adjust travel bookings to extend my stay, stop over en route, or include a family member?**

No. The visit is a professional visit and should be treated as such. Groups must travel together and keep to the travel arrangements booked by HTI Merganser. DCSF funding is available specifically for professional TIPD visits and should not be used to enable a holiday at the same time.

6) **What does the DCSF funding cover?**

- Flights from a UK airport (groups may be asked to travel to London from anywhere in the country, although we try to fly groups out of regional airports where appropriate)
- Accommodation on a twin-share, bed and breakfast basis whilst in the destination country. Anyone requesting a single room will be charged a single supplement.
- Transport related to the professional programme whilst in the destination country
- Travel insurance
- Visas if the whole group require them.

7) **What will I have to pay for?**

- Travel to the departure airport within the UK, although some LAs fund this cost
- Lunch and dinner whilst on the visit
- Any travel unrelated to the professional programme
- A single supplement, should you request a single room.

8) **How do I apply?**

Contact your LA Coordinator. If you are unsure who this is, contact HTI Merganser on 01454 629655 or tipd@merganser.co.uk and we will give you the relevant details.

Contact Details

Catrin Taylor
TIPD Administration Manager
HTI Merganser
130 Aztec
Bristol
BS32 4UB

Tel: 01454 629655

Email: tipd@merganser.co.uk

If you wish to contact your local authority regarding the programme and are unsure who the TIPD coordinator is, please contact the TIPD team on the email address or telephone number above and they will be able to inform you.

More information is also available on the HTI Merganser website www.tipd.org.uk and on the Teachernet website www.teachernet.gov.uk/tipd.