Alternatives to an MSPs in Schools or Your Parliament visit

The Outreach staff are available to run educational sessions in schools at least three days a week. On occasion, however, it will not be possible for us to arrange an MSPs in Schools follow-up session for a school, due to pressure on MSPs’ availability on Mondays and Fridays.

If we are unable to book your class an MSPs in Schools session, and you do not wish to or are not able to visit the Scottish Parliament to attend business in the debating chamber, we may still be able to offer the Outreach Education session for your class(es).

There are other ways you could follow up this session, and engage with your MSPs and the Scottish Parliament:

You could:

- write to (or have the pupils write to) their MSPs to arrange a visit from one or more of them.

- a small group of pupils could arrange to visit an MSP at their constituency office to conduct an interview – written, recorded or videoed. They could then write a ‘newspaper report’ or prepare a presentation for the rest of the class on meeting the MSP.

- using the MSPs’ short videos on the Scottish Parliament’s website, pupils could compile a short biography of each of their MSPs.

- use the search facility on the website to find out the last subject one or more of your MSPs talked about in the chamber, the last motion they submitted or look for a topic that the MSP has raised that the pupils find interesting. Write to the MSP to ask them why they felt it was important to raise the issue. [NB for this, use the search link from an MSPs personal webpages. MSPs’ webpages are available through the third option, headed MSPs, along the top of the Parliament’s website homepage. Search is selected from the list of links, in blue, below the MSPs photograph. This route will automatically narrow the search to that specific MSP, rather than search the entire website.]

- chose and develop ideas about a local or national issue that the class believe their MSPs should help solve (NB try to ensure that it is a devolved Scottish Parliament issue, rather than a council or reserved matter). Write to all eight local MSPs explaining the problem and asking for assistance. Alternatively, a small group of pupils could take the issue to an MSP in person at a local surgery, by arranging an appointment.
• the whole class, or small groups of pupils, could pick a local or national news story – again ensuring it is a devolved matter – and write to their MSPs outlining the story, and perhaps including a copy of the article or articles. They could ask for the MSPs views on the issue and how to solve it.

• if the class have been studying a project or topic, such as smoking, healthy eating or the environment, they may wish to write a report about what they have found out and what they think could be done by people in Scotland and by the Parliament to improve that area. They could then send their report to MSPs for comments.

If the class have photographs, reports, newspapers or other physical evidence of their project that they would like to let us know about, we would be very happy to receive a copy of it. We aim to hold a small exhibition of pupils’ work on the MSPs in Schools project in 2008/09 late in the academic term. The exhibition would be held within the Scottish Parliament, to raise awareness of the programme, and also profiled at citizenship conferences around Scotland.