



Volunteer Guide

OVERVIEW

Through Trane Technologies' partnership with Discovery Education, we have several resources available to support you in leading impactful in-school volunteer experiences as part of our Sustainable Futures program. They are perfect for in-class presentations, afterschool clubs, youth groups, career fairs, or other youth gatherings where discussions about STEM or careers would be welcome.

This guide was created to help employees bring resources to schools or youth organizations and prepare employees to work with students in small and large-group settings. It provides tips and suggestions for employees to engage, explain, discuss, and effectively facilitate the activities.

Please read this employee guide in its entirety in advance of contacting an educator, after-school program leader, or youth group adult facilitator.

STEP 1 | PLANNING & PREPARING

Once you are ready to connect with an educator or adult leading an after school or youth group, you will want to work with that person to ensure a seamless visit. Set up some time together to discuss key details that will make your visit both smooth and successful. A few items you may want to cover:

PREVISIT CHECKLIST

- Thank the school/youth organization for their interest in **Trane Technologies and Discovery Education's Sustainable Futures** program and provide an overview. An overview can be found at <https://sustainablefutures.discoveryeducation.com>
- Ask if there are any advance requirements or paperwork needed and any security policies.
- Learn about the setting of your visit, how many students you will be working with, and ask if there is anything that would be helpful to know in advance.
- Ask about the age/grade level of the students and tips on how to best interact with the age/grade level you will be presenting to.
- Discuss how much time is available for your visit and how much time you will need to set up once you arrive at the school.

- Decide together which one of the activities will be used.
- Determine what your role should be in facilitating the activity that day, and what role the educator/adult leader will play.
- Ask if the educator/adult leader will be printing out student worksheets or any printed materials you may have or if they would prefer you to bring them with you that day.
- Learn what technology will be available and use that to determine together how the activity will be facilitated.
- Ask for any tips! Educators have a honed expertise for connecting with students. Consider your educator a valuable resource!

PRESENTING TO STUDENTS

The employee activities have been designed to follow the agendas associated with each activity. However, every group is unique and different factors, like available timeframe or last-minute school schedule changes, will affect the exact nature of how your session unfolds so be prepared to be flexible with your session. Read the general characteristics of students in various grade/age groupings and be sure to ask the educator/adult facilitator what characteristics may be helpful for you to know about their students.

Grades K–5 - Student ages 5–11

- Learn through play
- Use stories to construct meaning
- Want to belong to a community that is safe and good
- Participative, spontaneous, and curious—they will actively answer questions if asked
- Aware of a small amount of occupations, usually only what they are directly exposed to

Grades 6–9 - Student ages 12–15

- Very curious
- Enjoy interacting with peers
- Like to work in small groups and are active learners
- Prefer conferring with classmates prior to being called upon
- Tend to be very self-conscious, easily embarrassed, and yet appreciate humor
- Might not be thinking of planning ahead yet for their future

Grades 10–12 - Student ages 15 and older

- Mature learners, especially by 12th grade
- Have more experience to help formulate questions and can visualize cause and

- effect presentations
- Beginning to plan for career choices and training beyond high school
 - Higher degree of self-confidence
 - Enjoy engaging in discussion
 - Can make connections between various subjects and content area and life experiences
 - Are able to understand abstract concepts, but still like hands-on activities
 - Appreciate being treated as adults and spoken to with respect and adult level interactions

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The students you are working with are welcoming you as a guest to their learning space.

A student classroom environment may include a handful of students or up to 40. Sometimes educators will have students seated in small groups and others will have students in rows. It can be challenging to effectively assess if students are engaged or understanding the information presented when in large groups. It may not be possible to build relationships and visit with students individually in a short amount of time. Walking around the space and making eye contact with different students can help personalize the experience. As students enter the room, or as you enter, say hello and introduce yourself.

Be sure to ask the teacher or adult leader about the audience you will meet. They can share helpful insights, such as experience levels, readiness for the information, or general abilities that will help you plan effectively for your audience. Be prepared to have fun! This is a great opportunity for you to reach and inspire students in your community and beyond.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION

When a visit is requested by a group in an area not easily accessible to an employee, there may be an opportunity to participate virtually instead of going to the site. There are several free platforms, such as Google Hangout or Skype, that would allow you to share materials, visuals, and chat with students as they are working.

Work with your assigned educator/adult leader to determine the applicable items from the checklist above, along with which platform will be used to connect online. Download all software in advance and test your connection to the computer in advance of your presentation. You may want to ask the educator, based on the set up in their learning space, how you can help by sharing your screen and walking students through the directions.

Regardless of whether your visit is virtual or in-person, practice several times in advance. Walk through the information you will be presenting, and time yourself to help work within the time you have available for your visit that day.

STEP 2 | DAY OF YOUR VISIT

Many community centers and schools will require visitors to sign in and out at the main office and wear a visitor pass. To ensure an efficient sign-in, have your ID ready, and have a printout of the activity you will be facilitating on hand for reference when you need it. Plan to arrive 30-minutes before your scheduled session.

What do you need to do when you get there?

- Ensure that all materials are available.
- If devices are needed, confirm how they will be distributed or if students have their own.
- Determine how the classroom is setup and how to use the space.
- Introduce yourself to the office staff in the school or the youth organization staff.
- Follow the procedures in the activity and as you have planned with the teacher or adult leader.

What can you do while students are working in a group or on an activity?

- Walk around the space and say hello. Ask them what excites them about STEM and what questions they may have about your career.
- You can also observe and assist as students may need your help. Try not to solve for the students but guide them to solve for themselves.
- Share a story. Students enjoy hearing stories about what you do for fun and what kinds of things you do at work.
- Be available for questions. Keep an eye on students' ability to process the information you are sharing and look for signs that students have questions or need assistance.

SELF INTRODUCTION (how and why you chose your profession, what exactly you do)

For any of the employee activities you choose, be sure to take a few minutes to introduce yourself. Start off by telling students your name and why you are visiting their class. Tell them about your experience with STEM, what your interests were at their age, and how that translated into the career you have today. Explain to them what you will be learning together and be sure to keep things brief, friendly, and relatable.

Students are going to be very interested and curious with having a special guest and will likely have a lot of questions! Work with the educator to determine the best method for inviting students to ask questions before, during, and throughout the activity.

STEP 3 | POST VISIT FOLLOW UP

Students and educators/adult leaders will certainly appreciate a follow-up note via email or a hand-written note or letter. If there were specific questions that arose or any follow-up items you noted during your session that you would address later, a follow-up note is the perfect place to provide that information.

Be sure to include the following in your follow-up note:

- Thanks again to the educator/adult leader, school or youth organization, and the students
- Remind them to use the resources at the [Sustainable Futures](#) program site and reiterate all the resources there are free for anyone to use
- Offer to come and visit again if you are open to doing that

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to read this employee guide and for supporting our bold corporate citizenship goals. We hope you find this experience rewarding. Don't forget to share highlights, and record your volunteer time on Sustainable Futures Zone.