

Lead Docent Checklist for VTS and Other School Tours

1. Get in touch with the tour contact promptly after receiving tour confirmation.

- Confirm that the contact person will be attending the tour. (Often the contact person serves only as the coordinator and does not accompany the actual tour so important tour information may not be communicated.)
- Confirm the date, time, and number of students on tour.
- Inquire about transportation plans. (Some groups scheduled for more than one tour time may arrive on one bus, resulting in one group wandering the museum prior to their guided tour.)
- Inquire about any special accommodations or requirements. (Remember Mia now has a Social Narrative posted for those on the autism spectrum. It's posted on Mia's website [artsmia.org], under the Visit tab, scroll down to Accessibility heading.)

Ask them...

- To divide into groups of 15 before arriving at the museum, with one adult chaperone assigned to each group.
- To have children wear nametags with large legible first name.
- To leave their coats on the bus, if the weather permits.
- To refer to the handout "Mia Tour Guidelines" included with the Tour Confirmation.

Gather as much information as you can about the group without imposing on the contact person's time.

- Does the teacher have specific objects or cultures to be included on the tour?
- Has the group reserved a lunchroom?
- Is anything else planned for the day, before or after the tour?

2. Call all docents assigned to the tour at least one week to ten days before the tour. (Note: It is fine to use e-mail, but ask the docent/s to confirm your notice to ensure the information is received.)

- Share pertinent tour information.
- Coordinate and assign tour routes. Be sure to check the Biweekly Tour Schedule for other tours at the same time that might affect the routes.
- Arrange to meet 10 to 15 minutes before your tour to discuss last-minute arrangements.

3. The day of your tour...

- Greet your tour group.
- Distribute evaluation forms.
- Introduce and assign docents to tour groups.
- If school arrives late, establish the tour end-time and inform all docents.

Various tour issues and suggestions/procedures for handling those issues:

- ***Issue:*** Often the contact person serves only as the coordinator and does not accompany the actual tour so important tour information may not be communicated.
- ***Suggestion:*** Ensure that all tour information is communicated to the person serving as the supervisory chaperone (often a teacher) on the tour. You may wish to ask for a name and telephone number from the contact in order to speak directly with the chaperone/teacher.

- ***Issue:*** Some groups scheduled for more than one tour time may arrive on one bus, resulting in one group wandering the museum prior to their guided tour.
- ***Suggestion:*** Suggest they pick up a museum scavenger hunt at the information desk. There are several options; each designed for a different age group.

- ***Issue:*** The number of children listed on your tour confirmation is dramatically different from the number they are actually bringing.
- ***Suggestion:*** If the discrepancy in group size changes the docent/guide requirements, notify Paula and Jennifer in the tour office at 612/ 870-3140. They will make the necessary adjustments.

- ***Issue:*** A child may require the museum to provide special services such as a wheelchair, interpreter, assisted listening device, etc.
- ***Suggestion:*** Wheelchairs are available at both the 3rd Avenue lobby and Target Atrium. Assisted listening devices are available. If the child requires an interpreter from the museum, call Paula and Jennifer. Scheduling an interpreter often requires a four-week notice.
- ***Note:*** Check to see that elevators are turned on and working before your group arrives. Ask the guards for assistance.

- ***Issue:*** The group is ten or more minutes late.
- ***Procedure:*** Notify Paula and Jennifer to contact the school. When/if the school arrives, confer and confirm with the school and all docents to determine your tour plan (e.g. return at the originally scheduled time and cut the tour short, or extend the tour end-time). Most school buses run on a tight schedule and cannot alter their schedules.

All docents are responsible for checking the galleries for changes and referring to the weekly schedule for tours and events taking place in the museum.