

Q&A's for sites interested in hosting Beyond Classrooms Kingston

Q. Does our site need to provide classroom space or tables for all students?

A. We are very flexible when it comes to the classroom space/furnishings at a host site. We are not trying to replicate the classroom environment, so we work with host sites on a site by site basis. The 'non-negotiables' are safe, secure space, access to a bathroom, and in the case of an outdoor site, shelter from inclement weather.

Q. How involved in the planning of the content is the host site?

A. The level of involvement of the host site depends on the nature of the site. At a minimum, new sites are encouraged to participate in BCK's Teacher Orientation which is usually held at the end of August. (BCK also strongly advises all applying teachers to pre-visit their selected site over the summer months so that they will have a better idea of challenges/opportunities the site represents for their students.) Once teachers have been assigned to a site, and the teacher begins to develop a plan for their program week with BCK's Coordinator, then our Coordinator will reach out to the host site for input (usually by phone/email). One to two joint planning meetings are held with the host site, teacher and BCK's Coordinator prior to the program week (usually at the host site).

During the program week, host site staff are usually asked to provide a site tour for the class on the first day, to establish go/no-go areas with the students, and to discuss any specific safety/house rules they may have for the students while they are at the site. At some sites, their program person sits in with the students throughout the week; this is the exception rather than the norm. At most sites, site staff are available for the students/teacher/BCK Coordinator to check in with from time to time, but BCK programming is designed to run independent of the host site staff, so that the site can continue (if space permits) to take other class bookings for regular programming. BCK is NOT intended to be a drain on site staff resources!

Q. How many steps go into the application process?

A. The application process typically looks like this:

- initial contact
- host site observes BCK program in action at an existing host site
- host site meets with BCK Programming Committee representatives at the site to view the space, talk about programming options, routines etc.
- host site indicates willingness to participate and indicates preferred dates/grade levels
- Programming Committee site review team recommends that BCK partner with the host site
- host site details are added to the coming year's schedule, which is distributed to teacher applicants in April
- A Memorandum of Understanding is developed between BCK and the host site, laying out the nature of the relationship
- teacher/site allocations are made by the BCK Board following a review of all applications (generally by the end of May)

Q. Is there any remuneration/payment for the site for hosting groups of students/staff or for the resources and tools being used by the students?

A. Unfortunately, BCK is not in a position to reimburse host sites beyond expenses incurred during the week, (consumable supplies, out of pocket expenses) which have been identified at the planning stage. BCK currently charges schools a \$750/week programming fee. This covers about one third of the actual cost of a programming week. The balance of BCK costs are raised through grants, donations and sponsorship - we are a registered charity.

Q. We are a seasonal site and are only open for part of the year. Are we still eligible?

A. Absolutely! As long as your open hours coincide with programming dates (typically October to November, January to May; 8:30 am to 3:30 pm). You choose which dates work best for you.

Q. If the site is approved, potentially how many visits might they have in a school year?

A. Participating host sites currently experience a minimum of one BCK programming week per school year. Some sites host two programming weeks, because their second week is sponsored by a third party: (City of Kingston covers BCK and school programming costs each year for Local Government Week at City Hall; Canadian Geological Foundation covers 2/3rds of BCK operational costs for one program week at the Miller Museum of Geology).

Q. Will you need references from teachers who have visited our site?

A. We've not asked for site references in the past, as all of our current sites are known to us, or to one of our Board Members. It might be useful, but as indicated in above, once your site indicates that it is interested in being considered as a host site, representatives of BCK's Programming Committee make a site visit and meet with the site staff and make a recommendation to BCK's Board based on their observations and assessment.