



Toolkit for teachers

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Photo: Lesley Martin

Welcome to the Fringe

‘I loved the food, I loved the people, I loved the atmosphere,
I loved all the shows! Can’t wait to go back!’

Tasnia, young person at Tynecastle High School

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe takes place every August for just over three weeks. It's one of the world's greatest arts festivals, where you and your classes can see theatre, comedy, circus, music, dance and much more in venues and streets all over Edinburgh.

Performances happen all over the city, from concert halls to swimming pools! Thousands of shows happening in hundreds of venues mean there really is something for everyone at the Fringe. Our website, edfringe.com, has [more information about the Fringe](#) and [what shows are coming to the Fringe this year](#).

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society is the charity that underpins the Fringe. The founding principle at the heart of the Fringe is to be a festival which is open to all: a place where anyone with a story to tell and a venue willing to host them is welcome. No single individual or committee determines who can or cannot perform at the Fringe; the festival aims to give anyone a stage and everyone a seat!

The Society works to ensure that everyone, from every community, is welcome at the Fringe and we have dedicated officers for schools, communities and people with access requirements. [You can find out more information about the Society on edfringe.com](#).

What's in this guide?

This guide is designed to be a handy resource for schools and teachers planning a visit to the Fringe. It contains information on some of the benefits of a trip, as well as practical advice and resources to ensure a successful experience.

The information in this guide is based on feedback from teachers in secondary, primary and ASN schools who have previously brought classes, as well as from consultation events with teachers in Edinburgh. While we know that learners from different schools, ages, stages, abilities and requirements have different needs, this guide will give you a starting point to plan a successful Fringe visit regardless of which school you're from.



Photo: Lesley Martin

Bringing a group of learners to the Fringe can be a daunting thought, but there are hundreds of shows every year that will inspire, motivate and thrill children and young people.

Many schools already include a trip to the Fringe as part of their school experience – this toolkit is designed to help you join them.

If you have any questions or are looking for more advice, please email learning@edfringe.com.

What are the benefits of a visit to the Fringe?

‘I loved seeing the delight on their faces; seeing children who are quite quiet and reserved coming out of their shells; seeing them in a different light; seeing them laugh; hearing the excitement in their voices when we were talking about it the next again day. The writing that it generated was fantastic! They wrote enthusiastically, the ideas came tumbling out of them. Just giving them an experience that they might not otherwise have had was just great.’

Linda Grieve, Class Teacher at Craigentinny Primary School

Visiting one of the world's greatest arts festivals is a culturally enriching experience and grants young people in Edinburgh access to a cultural capital unique to their city. The variety of shows and experiences on offer also allows you, as an educator, the scope to direct the focus of teaching and learning.

Research has shown that access to theatre and drama can boost young people's academic performance, improve social tolerance and facilitate positive social change.¹

The pandemic has had numerous impacts across society, particularly for young people's social skills, development and mental health. The benefits of arts and cultural engagement on young people post-pandemic are plentiful and more important now than ever.

1 <https://static.entstix.com/sites/default/files/YoungerPopulationsTheatre-ACN.pdf>

A visit to the Fringe will meet the following Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes, in addition to any you choose to focus on:

- I have experienced the energy and excitement of... presenting / performing for audiences and being part of an audience for other people's presentations / performances. **EXA 0-01a / EXA 1-01a / EXA 2-01a OR**
- I have experienced the energy and excitement of being part of an audience for other people's presentations / performances. **EXA 3-01b**
- And, should you choose to discuss the performance after the visit:
I can respond to the experience of drama by discussing my thoughts and feelings. **EXA 0-15a / EXA 1-15a / EXA 2-15a / EXA 3-15a**

“There are so many benefits for our young people in visiting the Fringe: it's fun; experiencing new food; a greater awareness of the arts more broadly and what that has to offer; different career opportunities. Building their confidence: even if they just have to get up on stage, or even walking up the Royal Mile and talking to the performers about, their shows is getting them out of their comfort zone, which builds their confidence too.”

Hayley Grisdale, Art and Design Teacher at Gracemount High School



How to pick a show

With over 3,000 shows every year, there's a lot of choice at the Fringe. It's useful to start by thinking about why you're bringing your school group to the festival. Are you aiming to provide a cultural experience? Do you want to take them to a show that ties in with a project you're working on?

Tickets for Fringe shows are available online from February each year, with more shows added every month until the full programme is launched in June.

You can use filter settings on our website to narrow down the number of shows – look for the Advanced Search function.

The filters you might find particularly useful are:

- **Category and genre:** this will allow you to choose the type of performance you're interested in as well as identify some key themes.
- **Suitability:** each show will have a suggested age range which you can use to ensure they're appropriate for your learners.
- **Date and time:** there are shows on every day of the Fringe, from morning to late, but if you're looking to do something within school hours, you can narrow your search to a specific time range.
- **Special pricing:** you can use this filter to find shows with group discounts, 2for1 tickets as part of the Fringe Friends scheme and free shows.

Please note: free shows and street performers only make money through donations. Please be mindful that tipping at the end of the show is expected if you enjoyed it and can afford to. It can help young people's confidence to tip and talk to performers after the show.

Once you've created a filtered list of shows, you'll have a selection which is much easier to navigate. Depending on the age, stage and abilities of your young people, you may wish to engage them in choosing which show to see. You can arrange support for this with our Learning Team, who may be able to come to your school and facilitate a selection workshop, as well as providing information about the Fringe more generally. If you're interested in such a workshop, please email learning@edfringe.com.

“The children were amazed and so engaged. It was great for me – not knowing the class very well, it was great for me to get to know the children and how they responded to something new. They were so enjoying the atmosphere that I looked around and after 10 minutes of the show I saw they all still had their jackets and bags on, they were so engrossed!”

Norry Leonard, Class Teacher at Victoria Primary School

Programme

All Fringe shows are listed in the official programme, which is available from the Fringe Shop (180 High Street) and from locations across the city (we'll provide information on programme collection points on edfringe.com once all the locations are confirmed). There's guidance on how to navigate the programme in its early pages.

The programme can be a useful resource for children and young people to explore the Fringe and can also be used as a stimulus for teaching and learning.

Think about access

You can filter edfringe.com search results for 'accessibility', which lists shows with adjustments for people with access requirements, but our commitment to be a truly accessible festival goes beyond that. For more information about our access work please visit edfringe.com/experience/accessibility.

Should you be interested in booking shows for learners with access requirements, look for these symbols next to the show listings:

AD Audio description

CAP Captioning

BSL Interpreted or signed performance

RE Relaxed performance

TT Touch tour

WA Wheelchair access

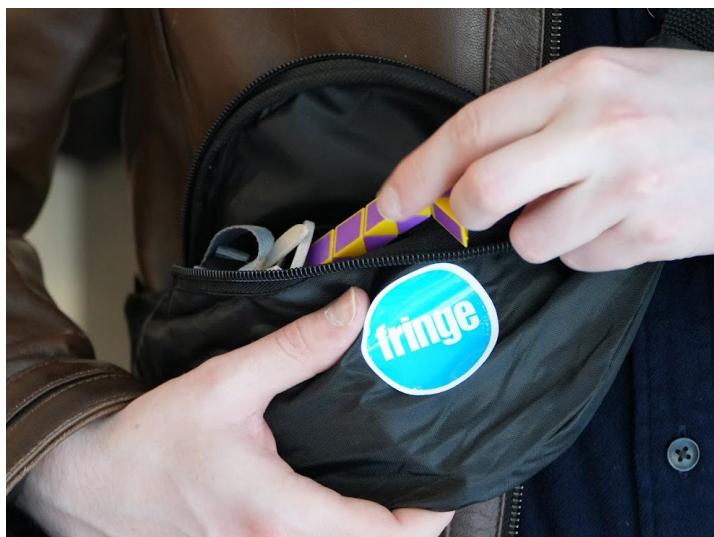
‘I think my young people can explore a lot of ideas and concepts they wouldn’t explore otherwise. Our school had trips to a number of shows and they featured themes of mental health, diversity, inclusion, and it’s important for learners to explore these in different ways. ’

Emily Bowerman, English Teacher at Tynecastle High School



Photo: Lesley Martin

Sensory resources



The Fringe Society has sensory resources which are available to borrow (free of charge) for adults or children who find the festival environment overwhelming, to help make your Fringe experience as enjoyable as possible.

We have multiple sensory resources available, chosen to help support various sensory needs.

To find out more about sensory resources, including where to collect them, please contact our access booking team at accessbookings@edfringe.com or visit edfringe.com/experience/accessibility#sensory-resources.

‘I’d love to come more often, it was such an enjoyable day. My job as a teacher is to create experiences for my class and this was a wonderful one which will last in their memory. They were happy to talk about it, complete work around it, happy to relive it through pictures and talk about their emotions and how they felt at different times; it was a thoroughly wonderful experience. ’

Dan O’Donnell, Class Teacher at Redhall ASN School

Booking and invoicing

There are many ways to book shows at the Fringe – most commonly at the box office, through the Fringe app or through edfringe.com – but for schools and teachers, you’re best to book directly with our Customer Services team. You can reach them at groupbookings@edfringe.com.

Our box office colleagues can set up your school with an account and order tickets for your chosen show. As the Fringe is fully e-ticketed, you will receive tickets to your email inbox – your confirmation QR code can be shown on a mobile device at your venue.

We can arrange for an invoice to be sent to your school, as long as it’s paid by the end of September.

‘It was great to have the children experience the atmosphere of Edinburgh during the Fringe. While we are a City of Edinburgh school, many children don’t really understand what’s going on in their city, so being there and seeing the crowds, the shows, the performers was just excellent. ’

Iain Smith, Class Teacher at Gilmerton Primary School

Planning your visit

Once you've chosen your show and booked your tickets, it's time to start planning the rest of your visit.

Travel

We recommend using public transport where possible. It's cheap, convenient, environmentally friendly and easy to use. Edinburgh gets very busy in August and finding space to park your school's minibus could be challenging. You may have concerns about using public transport, but overall the experiences of the classes who've used buses to visit the Fringe have been very positive:

‘I was definitely apprehensive about using public transport. I was worried about the idea of getting them all on a bus – what if there wasn't enough seats?’

It turned out to be brilliant actually; it worked really, really well!

The buses were so regular which was good for the kids to see and that they can travel up town and then they're into this amazing world!’,

Amanda Reason, Class Teacher at Craigour Park Primary School

If you are travelling by minibus or coach, there's some parking available on Regent Road and Johnston Terrace. Minibuses that hold up to 12 people can use normal parking bays. The City of Edinburgh Council website provides [more detailed parking information](#).

Lunch or snacks

Depending on the time of your show, you may need to consider time for your class to have their lunch or a snack. It's worth contacting the venue you're visiting as they may have a space you can use. The National Museum of Scotland, Scottish National Gallery and Scottish National Portrait Gallery all have lunchrooms, but you need to check with them in advance as they may require reservation. Depending on the weather, there are some outdoor spaces you could also use, including Princes Street Gardens, the Meadows and Holyrood Park.



Photo: Lesley Martin

If you have time, consider stopping by the Royal Mile to take in some of the world-class street performances; these take place every day of the Fringe.

When we spoke to Fringe-experienced teachers, they gave some good advice with regards to planning:

- **Plan early:** where possible, have the trip planned out in June, so when you come back from the summer holidays there's less to do.
- **Factor in time for conversation:** going to the Fringe is an exciting experience and your children and young people will want to talk about it!
- **Use your visit to produce work:** our teachers all had ideas about what they would do back at school after the visit, but encouraged colleagues to recognise when children and young people were inspired in different, unexpected ways and let them direct their own learning.
- **Involve your senior leaders early:** make sure that the senior leaders in your school know what you are doing, why, and what benefits you see for your learners.
- **Involve your young people:** find out what they know about the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and why Edinburgh is known as the festival city. Find out what they're interested in and if there's anything they want to see already.

Risk assessment

‘Don’t be scared...trust that you can take a group, you won’t lose anybody, and that it can really open their eyes to things that are right here.’

Emily Bowerman, English Teacher at Tynecastle High School



Photo: Andrew Downie

One of the most important aspects of your visit will be to appropriately assess the risk involved in bringing your group to the Fringe. The teachers who have visited the Fringe have told us that, at first, the size and scope of the festival was a concern, but they hadn’t encountered any difficulties that couldn’t be managed by thoughtful planning:

‘We didn’t experience any of the possible risks or dangers that we were concerned about! Don’t worry about it the way I did because there was absolutely no need, just go on and enjoy it!'

Amanda Reason, Class Teacher at Craigour Park Primary School

You can use our [risk assessment template](#) for the Fringe and tailor it to your group.

Content warnings

When you select a show on edfringe.com you can view all of the details including times, dates, venues, age suitability and any content warnings. These warnings may include distressing or potentially triggering themes, strong language or swearing or information about late arrivals, readmittance or phone recordings. Make sure you’re aware of these as well as the age suitability when bringing your class to a show, as all shows will vary on their warnings and additional info.

Developing teaching and learning

‘We built our trip to the Fringe into our maths work as the title of the show lent itself to activities around geometry, angles and degrees. This is on top of the fact that they now have such a richer experience of the wider world and that it’s something which is attainable to them – it’s not just on a screen, it’s there available to them.’

Hazel McKay, Class Teacher at Gilmerton Primary School

A visit to the Fringe can be enhanced with wrap-around resources before and after the visit to focus teaching and learning in a specific field, theme or topic.

This is easily done in Higher Drama, for instance, where learners are assessed on their critical response to live performance. For primary schools, additional support needs (ASN) schools and other secondary year groups and subjects, that focus can be decided by the educator with, or without, learner engagement.

‘This visit is the start of a whole-year project; it’ll help them with their critical response assessment in May. We’ve collected production photographs, shared notes, found professional reviews and sorted it into content they’ll need for their exams. So we made notes while it’s all fresh and we’re using this play as a template on how to write an essay.’

Laura Thomson, Curriculum Leader at Craigmount High School

To help schools and teachers with this, we've created some [teaching and learning resources](#) to help you back at your school. These cover a range of activities and curriculum areas and are easily adaptable to suit the needs of your learners.

If there are any resources or additional information you'd like, please let us know by emailing learning@edfringe.com.



Performer / Performance company

Saltire Sky Theatre

Penned by award-winning writer Nathan Scott-Dunn and returning to mark Hibernian FC's 150th Anniversary, 1902 delves into the world of Scottish football, telling the story of Hibernian's heroic victory in the 2016 Scottish Cup Final after a 114-year wait through the eyes of four young supporters. Discover the men behind the bravado in a tale of family, friendship and passion for their team. 1902 sheds light on the dark side of football, taking an access-all-areas approach to working class life in Scotland. Sold out five Fringe festivals and winner: OffWestEnd Award, Broadway Baby Bobby Award.



WARNINGS

Audience participation, Contains distressing or potentially triggering themes, Scenes of violence, Strong language/swearing



AGE SUITABILITY

16+ (Guideline)



ACCESSIBILITY AND ENHANCED PERFORMANCES

Babes in arms policy: Babies are not allowed in the venue

‘At the moment, we’re writing postcards to the company who are based in Korea. The children wanted to visit them, which created an impromptu lesson on geography using Google Maps, looking at distance, time and cost of travel. The writing of postcards though, maintains the fun aspect they all enjoyed and they were excited to come back and write.’

Norry Leonard, Class Teacher at Victoria Primary School

Other opportunities

Besides bringing your class to see a show, schools and teachers can engage with the Fringe in a variety of ways, including:

- **Teachers' CLPL opportunities:** We aim to have a national offer for teachers each year for continuous professional development – check edfringe.com for updates!
- **Community Stage:** reserved times and spaces to perform on as part of the Fringe street events.
- **Matchmaking:** we can match schools with performing companies who offer workshops and performances in schools during the festival.

‘After the summer holidays, I asked my drama classes, “Who here saw a Fringe or festival show?” And a lot of them didn’t know what I meant, didn’t know what was happening in their city. So, if you can take them to a show now, say, “Look how easy it is!”, if you can map it out for them and support them to see something, the hope is in years to come that they will be able to do that independently and see the magic of theatre.’

Laura Thomson, Curriculum Leader at Craigmount High School

Top tips

We asked Fringe-experienced teachers their top tips on choosing a show and developing effective teaching and learning around it. This is what they said:

- **Choose something exciting that your class or group will enjoy.**

A trip to the Fringe should be a fun and exhilarating experience, so choose something that will be enjoyable as well as relevant to your teaching and learning.



Photo: Lesley Martin

- **Ask for recommendations of venues, companies and shows from parents and colleagues.**

They may have seen a great show or know of a great space.

- **Do some research into the venue – when you’re choosing a show, you’re also choosing the venue.**

There are venues all over Edinburgh and they all have different facilities and offers. If you still have questions after looking on edfringe.com, why not contact the venue directly?

- **Prepare your class before the trip with photos, videos and activities, and reiterate expectations of behaviour.**

Remember, for some children and young people, this may be their first visit to the Fringe; spending some time establishing what you’re doing, where you’re going and what you’re seeing can help to reassure and excite your learners. You can find more on edfringe.com.

- **Contact companies directly and see if there are any options of wrap-around enhancement.**

Once you know what you’re seeing, why not see if there’s anything extra you can do with the company – you never know! The company name is always included on the show listing at edfringe.com and it’s relatively easy to Google a company for contact details (though many include their website on their show listing too, as well as their social media links). If you still need assistance, please email learning@edfringe.com.

Checklist

Date	Action	Complete
January – March	Speak with your senior leaders to discuss the benefits and outline an agreement for a visit to the Fringe.	
	Consider how the trip will be funded. Are there any local businesses who may be interested in sponsoring you? Will you focus on a free show and rely on donations?	
April	Do an initial search and filter of the shows available. Shows go live on the website from January, with a large proportion ready after the Easter holidays.	
April – May	Research some venues. Look for venues that are easy to get to and suit your needs, especially if you have access requirements. The Fringe Society's Learning team can help answer any questions you have.	
May – June	Pick a show. Either pick a good curriculum link or engage your young people (or both!) and find a show which will be enjoyable, engaging and impactful.	
June	Write letters to the parent(s) / carer(s). This is a good chance to explain why you're attending the Fringe and what you're looking to get out of it. Why not invite parent(s) / carer(s) to get their own tickets and meet you there?	
	Draft your risk assessment. We have an example on edfringe.com which may help.	
	Make a plan. Plan your route including timings, being mindful that Edinburgh is very busy in August. Plan for groups, contacts, meeting points and everything else you normally plan on a visit.	
	Contact the company. Let them know you're coming; it might come to nothing, but they may meet you after the show or there may be some workshops, resources or information that could enrich your teaching and learning.	
June – August	Have a good summer break! With all that done you can enjoy your time off knowing you've an exciting trip planned for your return!	
August	Collect your permission slips. As soon as you're back, send out the permission slips. It's good to include photo consent here too, especially if you're meeting the company as artists may want to take pictures with you and your young people!	
	Have a good time! Enjoy your visit and have fun!	