



The Importance of Planning WE ARE... Virtual Tours

'We Are' virtual tours aim to provide insight for children and young people who will be joining the school or setting or are thinking about joining.

A virtual tour is an interactive tool made up of 360-degree panoramic photos, or panoramas. You may be familiar with Google Street View, which is a similar idea, but mostly restricted to roads. Your own virtual tour can include paths, corridors and rooms that children – and adults – can visit virtually, without being there on location.

Someone using a virtual tour can look around in literally any direction, and follow arrows to other locations, rooms and points of interest. They may also watch inset videos embedded in the tour, or use a floor plan to orient themselves.

Transition Tool

“One of the good benefits...is that they were able to see what it looked like before they went there...to ease that worry that they had built up a picture in their head...seeing the different faces of different staff. That's another huge thing that our children struggle with is relationship building. So seeing a couple of familiar faces so that when they did go they said, “Oh, I've seen you on a video.” ...So, that was a real benefit, I think, of having the stories to utilise as part of the transition for the kids.”

Outdoor Learning Centre staff member

Virtual tours can show things like:

- The entrance
- The indoor and outdoor spaces of your setting and how they are used
- Where people can go for lunch and breaks
- The people who work in the setting and are important to know



Good planning will lead to the creation of a tour that includes the things that are most important to you and the people who access and work in your setting. It can also cut down on the amount of work.

Find out more online

To view 'We are' virtual tour examples visit acorns-soton.org.uk





The Importance of Planning

WE ARE... Virtual Tours

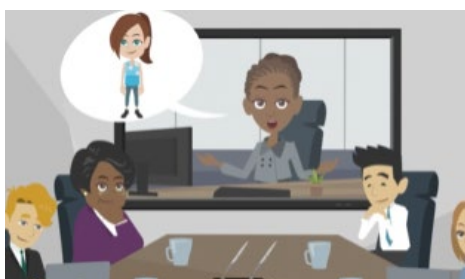
Section 1: Overall planning

The audience

Think about who the viewers of the 'We Are' Virtual Tour will be.

- How old are they?
- What gender might they be?
- What might they really want to know about your setting and the people who work there?
- How can you make the tour and videos accessible for them?
- Will they be supported by parents and carers when viewing the information?
- Will they be supported by other education professionals when viewing the information?

All of this is important to make sure what you create is relevant and understandable for your relevant audience.



The content

Narrow the information down. If possible and practical, establish a co-creation team of existing pupils or users of your setting, as well as teachers or parents, who can provide their thoughts on what to include. What are their thoughts about their experience? It's best to gather this information before filming, but keep in mind that ideas may change. People may suggest improvements or add more ideas as you go on.

Break your tasks down for easier planning. There are options you can consider including in your tour:

- short inset videos where staff introduce themselves at points throughout the tour
- common point-of-view routes through the site
- 360 degree panoramic shots that capture the noise and congestion at various times of the day
- videos that talk about specific features of the setting, such as quiet spaces or sports facilities

Location	Activity
Music Therapy in music room	Music therapy session with our music therapist
Relaxation Room	Interaction with surround experience
OT room	Intensive interaction with Antonia
Sixth form room	Work experience with Kate
Woodland area	Outdoor classroom – group reading session / sensory story with Adina
Woodland area to allotment	Walk
Hub	Exercise equipment with Nic
Outdoor sensory space	Waterplay and Sand play
Café	Lunch time
Classrooms	Activity In Class One with Hilda
Art Room	Collaborative art activity with therapy team
DT workshop	Making activity with Greg
Greenroom	Nurture with Stef and Emily
Beeches home	Looking into the lounge – leisure activity – yoga with Helena

The format

Think about whether you want to add interactive and extra features to your 'We are' virtual tour.

Virtual tours enable a walkthrough of your site, including photographs and 360 degree camera shots of rooms and spaces. You can also add interactive features such as short videos of staff introducing themselves, or activities including young people (with permission). Additionally, features such as narration and subtitles can be used.

Watch some example 'We are' virtual tours and decide what you want to include in your 'We are' virtual tour.

Great Oaks Virtual Tour https://www.greatoaks.school/transition/new_menu.html

Hill House Virtual Tour <https://www.whatsitlike.co.uk/user/75>

New Forest School Virtual Tour <https://www.whatsitlike.co.uk/user/78>

Find out more online

To view 'We are' virtual tour examples visit [acorns-soton.org.uk](https://www.acorns-soton.org.uk)





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Section 2: Preparation

Permission

It is great if you can show some of the people that young people will interact with in your setting. Including short videos of staff and showing some of the activities and interactions between staff and young people really brings the setting alive.

However, if you would like to include anyone in your film, you will need to ask for their consent. You must not film anyone without their consent.

If you can see someone in your shot while filming who hasn't given you their consent to film, you must let them know what you are doing. Ask them if they're okay to be filmed. If they are not okay with being filmed, respect their wishes and come to an agreement. They could move out of shot or you could move the camera so the person is no longer in frame.

You'll also need to think about other permissions and risks. For example, whoever is in charge of your setting will need to give their permission to film in the building.



Risk assessments

It's also a good idea to plan out risk assessments before the shoot to make the environment a safe space to work in. Think about:

- Where are the nearest toilets?
- How can you avoid damage to the equipment?
- Who can you go to if something goes wrong? Where will they be?
- Does anyone you're filming with have any medical conditions?

When the risk assessment is complete, show it to the relevant person in your setting.

Find out more online

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Section 3: Planning the items

For more detailed instructions and advice on filming a virtual tour and additional items, see the following guides: guide #6 How to film a 'We are' virtual tour; guide #7 How to film additional items for a 'We are' virtual tour.



How to Film a WE ARE... Virtual Tour

1

This guide is for when you are ready to start filming. For more information about getting started see "The importance of planning guide"

We recommend that the virtual tour photography takes place during daylight hours in an empty location.


Plan

Plan for which rooms and areas in the school you want to include in the tour.



- It's helpful to get a floor plan before filming. This will be a map of the building you can use to navigate with. This way you'll know which rooms are which as you're taking the panoramas.
- Has anything changed in the building since the floor plan was made? Has an area become blocked off or moved? If this is the case, make changes to your floor plan as you go along. This will help you when it comes to putting the tour together.
- Only include rooms relevant to the young people. If a young person wouldn't usually be able to access a room, then they shouldn't be able to access it in the tour either.
- Make sure your tour links together. If you take a 360-degree panoramic photo inside a room, you might also need one outside the door of the room and the corridor that leads to it. Otherwise the viewer may teleport to random areas without knowing where they're going.

Use a weighted stand for the camera. Be aware of the width of the tripod feet when taking the images, otherwise these need to be edited from the final versions. It may be good to use an average child's height for the stand, keeping the camera at the same height for all the shots.








Attach the 360-degree camera to the weighted stand and connect to a tablet or phone:

- In its protective case, the camera can screw onto the top of the stand. Make sure the camera is level (not at an angle).
- There are only 2 buttons on the camera, and you usually only need to use one - the on/off button.
- Turn the camera on, and load up the corresponding app on your tablet or phone.
- The camera transmits its own WiFi signal, which the tablet or phone can connect to. The first time you use the camera with a particular tablet or phone, you'll need to verify the connection over Bluetooth also.
- When connected, there is a big button on the app to control the camera. Make sure it is set to "Photo" to take indoor panoramic photos, or "HDR Photo" for outdoor ones. HDR will help make sure that the sun isn't too bright, or that shadows aren't too dark.

Put the camera in an empty space, hide nearby to take the 360-degree panoramic photo (or "panorama") by pressing the record button on the app, then wait for the photo to be taken. Repeat this step for as many areas as needed. With good planning, you can take 20 - 30 panoramas per hour.

Find out more online
To view 'We are' virtual tour examples visit acorns-soton.org.uk

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How to Film Additional Items for a WE ARE... Virtual Tour

1



Top Tip!!

ALWAYS make sure your cameras and other tech are charged after every session so that they are ready to use whenever you need them.

How to film a point-of-view video

You can create point-of-view videos to help people understand the scale of the location and specific journeys or routes that they may take within or around the site.

The filming time for a point-of-view video is the same as the time it takes to walk the route, though sometimes it may need 2 or 3 takes to get it right.

You can film these videos on a wearcam, GoPro, or the Insta360 camera. An additional bit of kit to go with the Insta360 camera is the 4k lens mod, an attachment which helps to keep the camera steady.

The route needs to be clear of obstructions and people.

Avoid turning corners too quickly, as this could be disorientating for people who will watch it.

Afterwards, you can record a voiceover (whilst you're watching the video) and add it to the video to explain where people are and what to look out for.





Remember: ALWAYS make sure your cameras and other tech are charged after every session so that they are ready to use whenever you need them. (We can't emphasise this enough!)

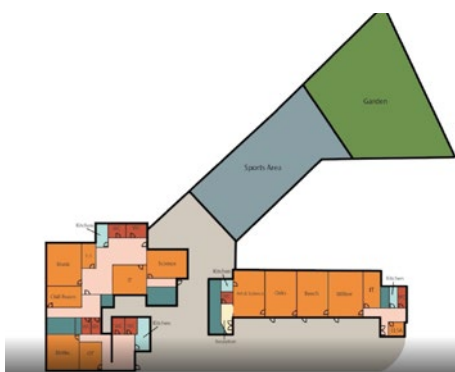
Find out more online
To view 'I am' Digital Story examples visit acorns-soton.org.uk







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Virtual tour

Decide which rooms and areas in the school you want to include in the 'We are' virtual tour. The co-creation team of current students or users of the setting will be helpful here.

- It's important to show young people where quiet areas are in the setting. Where can they go if they need some quiet?
- Think about which rooms may need inset videos. These can be included in the tour to add any additional information to an area. What's it used for? Who uses it?

Find out more online

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Reception to Garden (Narrated with Captions)

POV SOUND AND CAPTIONS



Point-of-view video

A point-of-view video is a video taken along a route from the point-of-view of the person walking the route. The co-creation team will be helpful here to discuss which routes are useful to see and understand for a new person joining or visiting your setting. Some of the young people might be willing to narrate as they walk along the route.

- Establish which routes you want to capture with the point-of-view videos.
- Each route should have a specific start point and destination (as opposed to a full tour of the site).

Inset videos

Inset videos provide the viewer with some idea of who people in the school are and what different spaces are used for! The co-creation team will be helpful here to discuss how many inset videos are needed, which staff need to be included e.g. teachers, office staff, lunchtime staff, and what spaces should be filmed.



- For a staff inset video, the most important thing is a smile! Then probably their name, and when the young people might be with them or what they might be doing (rather than giving a job title!). Some people will find it much easier if they plan what they are going to say before they start. The planning team could provide a step-by-step guide on what to include in the video to help those who are unsure of what to say. They could even hold up title cards if they don't want to speak.

- For spaces, the inset video could include a short section of an activity taking place (providing everyone being filmed has given permission).

Find out more online

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Planning the shoot day

Check the weather before you film so that you can avoid the rain if possible. This will help when filming outside but rain can also affect indoor shoots, as the lighting through the windows may make the room dim.

Ideally, filming needs to be carried out in empty rooms so that spaces can be captured clearly.

Discuss the plan with site management to ensure that there is no other planned work going on at that time - builders or maintenance or cleaners will be visible in the panoramic images.

Check that all equipment is a) working, b) fully charged, and c) has enough storage in the SD Card. You will need to charge batteries for the camera and the phone or tablet that connects to it

Planning for the inset video shoot

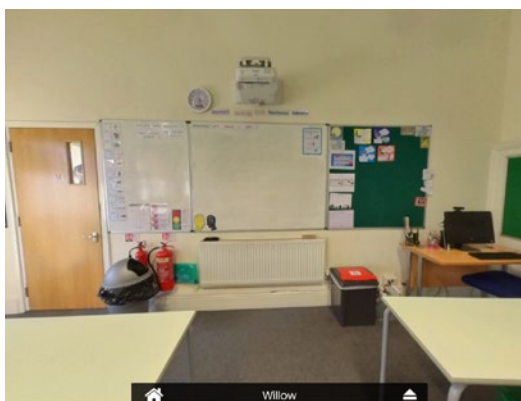
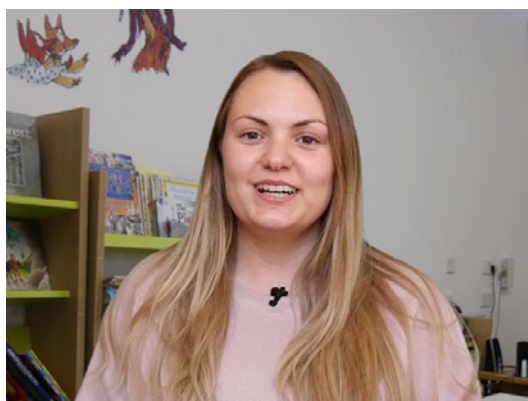
If you want to film all the inset videos in one day, you'll need to plan the schedule depending on each staff members' availability.

Find a quiet room with good lighting for the shoot. If people stand in front of a bright light or window, they'll end up as a silhouette!

If you can, you could set up a green screen which will lead to a much cleaner look.

At the end of your planning and filming, you should have some:

- Panoramic shots of the setting
- Some point-of-view videos that show routes around the site
- Some photos or short videos to introduce key staff to people joining or visiting the setting.



To view an animated version of this guide visit acorns-soton.org.uk

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Find out more online

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