

## Top Tips for Your Fair Experience - 2026

**Access to the 2026 Fairs venue is complicated and may involve a long walk and additional security screening. We advise you to plan your travel and to arrive early - see the instructions [here](#).**

**You are advised to use clear bags wherever possible. This will help with security checks. Large suitcases are strongly discouraged. You can read the venue security policies [here](#).**

**If you have a lot of materials, you are advised to ship them in advance. More information can be found [here](#).**

You will get the most out of the fairs with a clear plan. The goal is not simply to meet as many people as possible, but to build meaningful professional connections that support your students, institution, and long-term partnerships.

Before attending the conference, review the attendee list on the Whova app and make a short list of the people and institutions you are most interested in speaking with. It is unlikely that you will be able to speak with everyone in the time available, so prioritizing your outreach is essential.

### Questions to consider

Secondary Counselors/IECs	University Representatives
Which institutions have admitted your students? Which universities are located in regions where your students are beginning to show interest, or where you would like to introduce new options? Which universities would you like to invite to visit your school? Which institutions are you particularly curious to learn more about?	Which schools are currently sending students to your institution? Which schools would you like to build stronger relationships with? Are there geographic regions or school profiles missing from your current recruitment strategy? Who is currently attending your institution? Where are you traveling this upcoming year? Which counselors/IECs should you connect with in advance?

### Plan ahead

- Prepare a clear 30–45 second introduction to your institution, your students, and your priorities. Practice this in advance so your introduction feels natural and confident.
- These events are about relationship-building, not pitching. Focus on connection rather than promotion or sales.

- Reach out to high-priority contacts before the fair to schedule a meeting during the conference for coffee, a meal, or during one of the social events. The Whova app is often the easiest way to make these connections.
- If your institution has more than two attendees at the conference, decide in advance who will represent you at the fair. No more than two representatives are allowed behind the table. Remember, all reps must stand behind the table, and standing in the aisles is typically not permitted.
- Dress comfortably, including comfortable shoes, as you will be standing for long periods. We do not expect to have chairs for every table.
- Bring water or a drink in a closed bottle
- Arrive early so you have time to set up calmly. Be mindful of fair rules, shared table space, and event logistics.

### **What to bring**

- A small tablecloth/banner/decorations to cover your table (you may be sharing a table). Large or floor banners are not allowed.
- Business cards
- A table copy of your brochure or school profile
- A few copies of your brochure or school profile to give away (most attendees will have limited luggage space)
- A QR code linking to your brochure or school profile online, along with your contact information
- Your calendar or planner, so you can schedule visits and appointments
- Fully charged phone
- Portable charger or power bank
- Saved digital copies of brochures and QR codes in case Wi-Fi is unreliable

### **Optional**

The following are entirely optional and not expected. Most participants will have limited space and are not expecting gifts.

- Small, unique items from your home country
- Pennants, stickers, pens, pins, etc.

### **During the Fair**

- Be respectful of cultural differences in communication styles and expectations.
- Be professional, warm, and considerate of both attendees and neighboring institutions.
- Focus on the quality of conversations rather than trying to meet everyone. A few strong, meaningful connections are far more valuable than dozens of rushed introductions.
- If someone is busy, introduce yourself briefly, pick up a name card or contact information, and reconnect later. Follow up on the Whova app or through their contact.

- Take quick notes after each conversation so you remember important details and follow-up actions.
- Be considerate of lines and shared table space. If a longer conversation is needed, step aside and reconnect later.

Where appropriate, ask directly about next steps:

- School visits
- University visits
- Virtual presentations
- Student events
- Counselor fly-ins
- Future collaboration opportunities

### **Reminders**

- Do not feel pressure to meet everyone. A small number of meaningful conversations will be far more valuable than trying to collect as many business cards as possible. The strongest partnerships are usually built through thoughtful follow-up, not quick introductions.
- Be considerate and mindful of others waiting. Keep conversations focused and short if there is a queue.