

Planning and Managing Group Visits to Museums

Distribution: To be brought to the attention of all Learning, Communities, and Front of House staff and teachers, parents and other helpers supervising group visits.

Introduction

It is to be hoped that group visits to any of the venues or site of Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums will be educational, exciting and enjoyable.

The health and safety guidance notes below are designed to help the organiser plan and manage visits as safely as possible.

- We highly recommend that group leaders conduct preliminary visits to tailor visit plans and risk assessments to your group and their needs.
- We advise that to ensure you get the most out of your visits, groups of 10 or more are booked in advance.
- Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums venues are public buildings which give access to members of the public without prior checks being made on an individual. Schools/groups should be supervised accordingly.
- All visits by groups should be done in line with any protective measures implemented by the visiting organisation and any measures in place at the museum at the time.
- Schools and Community Group leaders should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all group visits to ensure they can be done safely. Please look on the Museum/gallery website and refer to the hazard identification sheet when planning your risk assessment.
- Group supervisors are responsible for supervising their group and should follow latest government social distancing guidance.

General Safety

- When moving around the building please ensure that participants in the group walk, and do not run or climb. Please follow any directional signs that are in place to support safety. There are hazards such as stairs, pillars, objects and display cases, walking will reduce the risk of collisions, slips, trips and falls.
- Some exhibits have been fitted with safety guards or barriers and visiting groups need to be reminded not to remove, interfere with, or try to reach beyond the barriers provided for their safety.

- Please ensure your group are following the latest government guidance for visiting museums. We follow the advice from the [Department for Education around health and safety on educational visits](#).
- Please check our website for information about what to expect on your visit.

Group Activities and Workshops

Every effort is made to ensure activities are designed to be suitable for the age range and abilities of the participants in the group. When using equipment such as pens, pencils, scissors or paint please remind your group of the need to use the equipment in a careful and sensible way to avoid accidents and injuries. Please check with your venue to confirm current requirements before visiting.

All group sessions involving handling objects, tools or specialist equipment issued by museum staff will begin with a safety talk concerning the correct use of the equipment which is going to be used. Museum handling objects may be used, and advice will be given on safely handling objects, particularly those that may be unfamiliar, heavy or fragile.

Please inform museum staff in advance if there are any participants in the group requiring additional support and the nature of their needs, so that we can ensure that all participants can be provided the best possible experience.

Sufficient time will be left between groups to allow for cleaning and to prevent large groups waiting too long to enter the venue.

Supervision

Please remember that it is the organiser's responsibility to supervise the behaviour and oversee the activities of the group while within the museum. The organiser needs to ensure that their arrangements conform to their governing body or appropriate LEA guidelines particularly in ensuring the adult/child ratio for supervision is appropriate. Please refer to current Government guidance on group sizes and include at least one staff member, depending on the type of provision or size of the group. All other adult groups will need to follow current government advice on group sizes.

Please ensure that all adult helpers are prepared for the visit and receive a copy of this information sheet and all support material provided by TWAM for the visit.

Accidents and Emergencies

If anyone in the group is involved in an accident, or other incident of concern, no matter how minor, please contact a member of museum staff immediately and they will ensure that the necessary steps are taken.

Please ensure that you have a list of all the children/young people on the visit with you. If this is your regular class/group list, please ensure that any absentees are clearly marked and that any extras are added on. You will need to use this list in the event of an emergency evacuation. If the fire alarm sounds, please make your way calmly via the nearest emergency exit to the assembly point. Front of House staff will supervise the evacuation of the building.