

Self-guided visit: Information for Teachers

Please read the following information carefully before completing a York Castle Museum: School Visit Booking Request Form.

This document details the terms and conditions, as well as guidance, for primary and secondary schools when undertaking a self-guided visit to the York Castle Museum.

A self-guided visit is defined as a visit that is made by a group independently to one of our sites. A self-guided visit does not include any form of led activity by a member of York Museums Trust staff.

If used by schools to inform visit planning and/or risk management, then it remains the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that it meets with the requirements of their employer's guidance for visits, along with any Health and Safety policies. You will be sent a copy of our site Risk Assessment once your booking has been confirmed.

This document contains the following sections:

- A. Terms and Conditions
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- G. Access information

Get in touch

If you have any questions about your visit, then please contact York Museums Trust on 01904 687687 or email schools@ymt.org.uk.

A. Terms and Conditions

Making a booking

- All groups must pre-book their visit, even if they are planning to deliver activities themselves. This can be done via our website by completing a copy of our [York Castle Museum: School Visit Booking Request Form](#). Any groups that arrive at one of our sites without pre-booking may be refused entry.
- The maximum group size that can be pre-booked is 70 people. Teachers and group leaders are not counted in this number.
- Visiting groups must meet the minimum ratio for adults to children:
 - Under 5's (Reception and Foundation Stage): 1:3
 - School Years 1-3: 1:6
 - School Years 4-6: 1:8
 - School Years 7-11: 1:10
- Be aware that if your group does not meet the minimum ratio for adults to children, then you may be refused entry.
- To avoid disappointment, please book your visit at least 4 weeks in advance.
- We are unable to take provisional bookings.
- Once a form has been submitted you will receive an email confirming whether we are able to accommodate your booking, along with key information, within five working days.

Entry Fees

Schools in North Yorkshire

- There is **no entry fee** for any primary or secondary school groups (Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4) who are visiting the York Castle Museum from a **school in North Yorkshire**. Please note that this excludes groups visiting from any independent/private schools.

Other schools

- The following entry fees apply to any primary school groups or secondary school groups who are visiting the Yorkshire Museum from a school outside of North Yorkshire, as well as groups visiting from any independent/private school:

Site	School Child	Additional Adult (in excess of the free adult/child ratio)
York Castle Museum	£4.00	£8.00

- Please note that there will be a charge for any accompanying adults in excess of the free adult/child ratio (as noted above).

Cancellations

- If you accept your visit but are unable to attend, please contact us within 7 working days of the visit as we may be able to allocate your time to another group.
- If you need to cancel at short notice then we ask, where possible, that you notify us by no later than 12pm the day before your visit.
- Where possible, we will try and help you rearrange your visit to another date if you still wish to make a visit.
- If we (York Museums Trust) must cancel your visit due to unforeseen circumstances, then we will offer an alternative visit date for your group.

Lunchroom

- There are lunchrooms on site which schools can reserve as part of the booking process on a first-come, first-served basis.
- For health and safety reasons, each lunchroom has a limited capacity and so it may be necessary for larger groups to stagger their lunch breaks.
- You can also have your lunch outside in the Exercise Yard and the area around Raindale Mill.
- School groups are unable to eat their lunch in the York Castle Museum Café.

Teacher Pre-visits

- We recommend that you carry out a pre-visit to familiarise yourself with the site so that your trip runs smoothly. You can arrange a free familiarisation visit as part of the booking process.

Risk Assessments

- We recommend that you carry out a risk assessment in advance of your visit. To help you, please consult our site Risk Assessment, which you will be sent once your booking

has been confirmed, along with the hazard and accessibility information that can be found below (Sections F and G).

First Aid

- We ask that a fully qualified first aider accompanies your group on the day of your visit. The primary responsibility for the welfare of your group rests with group leaders. Should a member of your group need assistance on the day of your visit, please inform a member of our Visitor Experience Team.

Opening Hours

- The opening hours for York Castle Museum are Monday, 11.00am-5.00pm; Tuesday-Sunday, 10.00am-5.00pm.

B. On the Day

Arriving at the museum

- Please arrive no more than 10 minutes before your scheduled arrival time.
- If you are going to be late, please notify us by calling 01904 687687 or emailing schools@ymt.org.uk as soon as possible before your arrival.

Induction

- On arriving at the site, the group leader should make themselves known to a member of our Visitor Experience Team. The group leader will be asked to sign the group into our visitor register. The register is used in case of an emergency evacuation of the building.
- A member of the Visitor Experience Team will show your group where bags and coats can be stored during the visit and where the nearest toilets are. They will also give your group a site induction.

Toilets

- The nearest toilets to the museum entrance are located through the archway to the right of the shop counter. There are also toilets on Kirkgate, the Victorian street.
- There are two accessible toilets in the museum, one on each side of the building. Both are gender-neutral toilets.
- We ask group leaders to supervise students in small groups when using these facilities.
- The nearest Changing Places facility can be accessed at Silver Street Public Toilets (Silver Street, York, YO1 8RY). Please visit the City of York Council [website](#) for more information. The toilets are a 10-minute walk from York Castle Museum.

Group management

- Some of the galleries at York Castle Museum are relatively small and can become easily crowded. Therefore, we recommend that you organise in advance of your visit for larger groups to be split into smaller groups of no more than 8 people (teachers and group leaders are not counted in this number).

Code of Conduct

- The behaviour of the group remains the responsibility of group leaders. Please be respectful of other visitors as you move around the museum.
- All children must be supervised by a responsible adult. We ask that group leaders make checks at regular intervals to ensure all members of their group are accounted for, and that any missing students are reported to a member of staff immediately.
- We ask that children do not run in the museum.
- No food or drink can be consumed in the galleries. The only exception to this is water contained in a bottle with a sports cap.
- There are numerous hands-on activities to enjoy throughout the museum, including opportunities to dress up, and to crawl into a First World War trench. We ask that children are supervised when using these resources, that any instructions provided are followed, and that everything is left neat and tidy afterwards for other visitors to use.

Shop

- The York Castle Museum gift shop has a range of gifts, books and mementos.
- We ask that group leaders supervise students and bring them into the shop in small groups of no more than 8 pupils at a time.
- Your group will be issued a timeslot in which to visit the shop as part of the booking process.

Photographs

- Photography, without flash, for personal use is allowed around the museum, though there may be restrictions during special exhibitions and the use of tripods may be restricted when busy.
- Filming is not permitted in the museum galleries.
- Don't forget to tag us in any photographs you upload to social media @YorkCastle.

Fire Evacuation

- If the fire alarm sounds, please follow the directions given by museum staff to the nearest fire exit and assemble on the grassy area at the front of the museum.
- Your group leader is responsible for making a head count of your group and informing the warden (identified by a fluorescent jacket) at once if anyone is missing.
- Please note that when the alarm sounds some doors in our buildings automatically close.
- Please do not re-enter the museum until you are told it is safe to do so.

C. Site map

- A map of the museum can be downloaded from our [website](#).

D. Travelling to the museum

York Castle Museum
Eye of York
York
YO1 9RU

Travel by public transport

- You can get to the York Castle Museum by bus and train.

- The nearest bus stop is on Tower Street where the number 3 bus stops. This is within 150m of the museum. There are several other bus stops nearby. For more information visit www.itravelyork.info/buses.
- The nearest train station is York. The train station is a 25 minute walk from York Castle Museum.

Travel by coach

- Information about coach drop off and pick up points and parking for coaches can be found on the City of York Council [website](#).
- The nearest coach park to the museum is [St. Georges Field Coach Park](#). The coach park is a 7 minute walk to the museum.
- Coaches can also drop off and/or pick up passengers at designated rendezvous points. The nearest one to York Castle Museum is Fawcett Street (Castle Rendezvous).

E. Covid-19 Information

- If anyone within your group is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, please do not visit our sites but delay your visit until it is safe to do so.
- Our sites remain open to the public so please be aware that your group may encounter other individuals.
- While the wearing of face coverings is no longer required by law, we continue to encourage all people aged 11 and above to wear one (unless exempt) when visiting our sites if they so wish. Children are not required to wear face coverings on visits.
- Hand sanitiser stations are available at key locations throughout the site, such as outside the toilets.

F. Hazard Information

- We recommend that you carry out a risk assessment in advance of your visit. To help you, please consult our site Risk Assessment, which you will be sent once your booking has been confirmed, along with the hazard and accessibility information that can be found below (Sections F and G).

Outside the museum

- York Castle Museum is located near Clifford's Tower. This is a busy public area, so children should always be supervised by a responsible adult.
- Visitors should be mindful of nearby traffic, particularly in the Castle Car Park, on Tower Street (B1227), and on the road in front of the museum.
- There is level access to the museum entrance, though the surface of the paving slabs is slightly uneven in places.

York Castle Museum

- The museum is open to the public between Monday and Sunday. Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult.
- Some galleries (such as the Shaping the Body exhibition, Kirkgate, and York Castle Prison) have sloped changes in floor level. Care should be taken to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- Some galleries have areas (such as the stairs down from the Shaping the Body exhibition to Kirkgate, Kirkgate, the train carriage in the First World War exhibition, and

York Castle Prison) with sudden changes in lighting levels (from bright light, to dim light and reverse).

- Light levels in York Castle Prison are particularly low. Many cells have low entrances, with raised thresholds, and the floor is sloped and uneven in places. Care should be taken to avoid bumping heads, as well as slips, trips and falls.
- Several shops in Kirkgate have raised thresholds at their entrances. The Kirkgate street has a cobbled floor, though there is a smoother path around the edges. Care should be taken to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- Some artefacts in the museum are displayed on plinths that may be at head height for children. Care should be taken around these.
- There are interactive displays and activities for children to enjoy throughout the museum. Children should be supervised when using these, particularly the First World War trench which has a crawl space for children to crawl into.
- The After the War display in the First World War exhibition contains video footage of conflict (titled Collateral Murder) that children, young people, and some adults might find distressing.
- There are two sets of toilets in the museum: through the archway to the right of the shop counter, and by Kirkgate. Any children within your group should always be supervised when using these facilities. Extra care should be taken when opening and closing toilet cubicles to prevent fingers from being trapped.

Exercise Yard and Raindale Mill

- The surface of the Exercise Yard can be slippery in bad weather.
- There are toys and games for children to enjoy in the Exercise Yard. Children should be supervised when using these.
- There are several trees in the grassy area beside the Raindale Mill. Storm damage can sometimes affect the stability of apparently healthy trees and branches. Group leaders should be aware of this.
- Several trees in the area around the mill produce berries. Group leaders should ensure that these are not ingested by children.
- There are ruins in the area around the mill. These should not be climbed upon.
- The area around the mill attracts many insects, including bees and wasps. Animal and bird droppings can also occasionally be found on paths and grassy areas. Visitors should avoid contact with these and wash their hands before eating.
- The sloped path leading down to the mill is unpaved. Care should be taken to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- The Raindale Mill and surrounding area is close to the river Foss. Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult in this area.

G. Access Information

- Comprehensive access information can be found on our [website](#), including a [visual story](#) for visiting York Castle Museum.
- Our Visitor Experience Team are there to help all our visitors at any point during their visit. They can help you find your way around the museum and answer any questions you may have.

Getting around outside

Museum entrance

- Visitors should be mindful of nearby traffic, particularly in the Castle Car Park, on Tower Street (B1227), and on the road in front of the museum.
- The main entrance has level access.
- The main door is sliding and automatic. The door is 1960mm wide.

Getting around inside

Reception Desk

- The reception contains an admissions desk, the museum shop and a café.
- There is level access from the main entrance to the reception desk. The desk has a lowered section for wheelchair users.
- We have a sticker system in place for visitors with sensory issues:
 - Red sticker: you do not wish to be approached.
 - Yellow sticker: you would like staff to answer questions when asked.
 - Green or no sticker: you are happy to be approached and spoken to.
- Please ask for one of these at the front desk if this would be useful.

Lift

- A lift provides access to the upper floors on the right-hand side of the building, which is known as the Debtors' Prison. This area contains our First World War, the 1960s and York Castle Prison exhibitions. Please note that due to fire evacuation requirements, we can only allow access to **no more than two wheelchair users** on the first floor of the building at a time.
- The lift can be found through the arch located to the right of the shop.
- The lift is 762mm wide and 1016mm deep.
- The lift does not have any audio cues to tell you which level you are on, though there is a screen which indicates which museum floor the lift has reached.
- Children should be accompanied by a responsible adult when using the lift.
- Due to the Female Prison building being listed, it is not currently possible to provide lift access to the upper floors. As such, the Period Rooms, Toy Stories, and Shaping the Body exhibitions can only be accessed via stairs.

Toilets

- The nearest toilets to the museum entrance are located through the archway to the right of the shop counter. There are also toilets on Kirkgate, the Victorian street.
- There are two accessible toilets in the museum, one on each side of the building. Both are gender-neutral toilets.
- The nearest Changing Places facility can be accessed at Silver Street Public Toilets (Silver Street, York, YO1 8RY). Please visit the City of York Council [website](#) for more information about how to access the facility. The toilets are a 10-minute walk from York Castle Museum.

Museum Shop

- There is level access from the main entrance to the shop.
- The route through the shop is 800mm wide or more.
- There are some narrow spaces between certain shop displays. Please inform a member of the Visitor Experience Team if you require assistance.

Museum Galleries

- The museum's galleries are housed in two separate buildings: the Female Prison and the Debtors' Prison.
- The routes through both buildings are one-way systems. The route to the Female Prison begins up the ramp behind the admissions desk, whilst the route to the Debtors' Prison begins up the stairs to the right of the museum shop desk.
- There are handrails on all the stairs and seating is available throughout the museum.

The Female Prison

- The Female Prison is spread over 6 levels. It contains four exhibitions: Kirkgate (the Victorian street), the Period Rooms, Toy Stories, and Shaping the Body.
- The upper floors of the Female Prison are only accessible via stairs. This area includes the Period Rooms, Toy Stories, and Shaping the Body exhibitions.
- Any visitors using a walking frame can access the upper floors. However, the visitor must be with someone who can help carry the walking frame up and down the stairs. Members of museum staff are unable to help with any lifting.
- There are a total of 93 stairs (46 'up' and 47 'down') spread over six staircases. The greatest number of stairs you must go up or down in one go is 19.

The Debtors' Prison

- This building is spread over two levels. It contains three exhibitions: the First World War, the 1960s, and York Castle Prison.
- There is a lift that can provide access to the First World War exhibition on the upper floor.
- There is an outside area which includes the Exercise Yard, Riversdale Mill and the surrounding riverside area.
- Some of the prison cells in the York Castle Prison exhibition have narrow doorways and may not be accessible to those using mobility aids. In addition, some cell entrances have low ceilings and raised thresholds.
- Some of the floors in the York Castle Prison exhibition are slightly uneven.

Light levels

- Some galleries (such as the stairs down from the Shaping the Body exhibition to Kirkgate, Kirkgate, the train carriage in the First World War exhibition, and York Castle Prison) have sudden changes in lighting levels (from bright light, to dim light and reverse).
- The lights on Kirkgate, the museum's recreated Victorian street, change between a daytime and night-time setting. Some of the side streets in Kirkgate can also be particularly dark, and there is also a flashing lightning effect. Visitors can choose to head towards the end of Kirkgate, where there is an artificial tree, as the light levels don't change there.
- In some areas of the museum (such as the Period Rooms and around the costume displays in the 1960's exhibition) light levels are kept low to help in the conservation of our objects. There is always a lighter area nearby, but if you do require assistance, please ask a member of our Visitor Experience Team.
- The York Castle Prison exhibition is particularly dark. If visitors wish to avoid this gallery, then they can ask a member of our Visitor Experience Team for assistance. Information on how to circumvent this part of the museum can also be found on page 22 of our [visual story](#).

- As part of our Mechanical Marvels display, 14 twentieth century penny arcade machines have been installed at various points throughout the museum. Many of these have flashing lights when activated.

Films

- Please be aware that our Period Rooms, Shaping the Body, First World War, 1960's, and York Castle Prison exhibitions have films running in them. In addition, some of the films in the York Castle Prison gallery start quite suddenly.

Noise Levels

- The York Castle Museum can get very busy. Some areas of the museum can become quite noisy, particularly the reception area which contains the museum shop and café.
- There is a soundtrack playing on Kirkgate so that visitors can hear what daily life sounded like for the Victorians. This includes, amongst others, the sounds of horses, music, people talking, birds, carriages, thunder, rain, dogs barking, cats yowling, and church bells. Museum guides may also occasionally play the street piano.
- The entrance to the Shaping the Body exhibition can be quite noisy, as there is a catwalk with music playing and audio of people shouting and applauding. The displays of period kitchens also have audio of people speaking to each other and of functioning kitchen appliances, such as microwaves and kettles.
- The First World War exhibition contains numerous soundtracks in its galleries, which include, amongst others, the sounds of people speaking, trains, gunshots, aeroplanes, typewriters, and barking dogs.
- The enclosed nature of the York Castle Prison exhibition means that the space can get quite noisy when crowded.
- Most of the films that can be found in our Period Rooms, Toy Stories, Shaping the Body, First World War and York Castle Prison exhibitions have audio.
- The 1960's exhibition has a soundtrack of period music.
- As part of our Mechanical Marvels display, 14 twentieth century penny arcade machines have been installed at various points throughout the museum. Many of these have audio when activated. In particular, there is a device at the entrance to the Toy Stories Gallery – Harry Corbett's Sooty TV Concert – which suddenly plays music for short periods.

Smells

- The following artificial smells are present in Kirkgate:
 - Coco Rooms: chocolate, coffee.
 - Coach house: horse, hay.
 - Outside privy: Victorian street, urine.
 - Outside Miss Poles: Victorian street.
 - Tallow candle factory: tallow.
 - Over the Christmas period, orange and lemon scents are used on Kirkgate.
- The following artificial smells are present in our First World War exhibition:
 - Train carriage gallery: oil, smoke.
 - Communication trench display: earth.
 - Cure of war gallery: antiseptic.
- The following artificial smells are present in our Period Rooms exhibition:
 - Victorian parlour: lavender.
 - Jacobean room: woodsmoke.
 - Over the Christmas period, a pineapple scent is used in the Georgian room.

Signage and display information

- All our signage and display information use a clear font and is at least 16pt.
- 80% of our visual interactives have subtitles.

Emergency evacuation procedures

- We have emergency evacuation procedures for disabled visitors.
- The fire alarm has flashing lights.

Mobility Aids

- We have walking sticks and a manual wheelchair that visitors are welcome to borrow on a first-come, first-served basis. Please speak to a member of our Visitor Experience Team on arrival.

Animals

- We welcome all assistance dogs to our sites. We ask that they are appropriately trained, supervised, and always kept with you as we have many objects on open display. Water can be provided on request.
- Where possible, assistance dog owners should bring their Assistance Dog UK (ADUK) identification book and animals should wear the appropriate tabard or harness.