

York Castle Museum: School Visit Pack

This document is intended to support schools who are planning a visit to [York Castle Museum](#).

If this document is used to inform 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 for Visiting Schools** once your booking has been confirmed.

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Get in touch

If you require further information, or any support in planning your visit, then please contact our Schools Learning Team at schools@ymt.org.uk.



York
Castle
Museum

A. Terms and conditions

Making a booking

- All visits must be pre-booked. This can be done through our [website](#) or by emailing the Schools Learning Team .
- Groups that arrive without booking may be refused entry. If a group is admitted, then an entry fee will be charged for the visit, even if a school is normally exempt.

Supervision

- Pupils must be supervised at all times during a visit to York Castle Museum.
- Visiting groups must meet our **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
- If a group does not meet the minimum ratio for adults to children, then they may be refused entry.

Toilets

- Children must be supervised when visiting the toilets. A member of the Museum Team will advise you where the nearest toilets are on arrival. Our toilets are open to the public.

Cloakroom and Lunchroom

- York Castle Museum has two spaces - **Dick Turpin's Tuck Room** and **The Green Room** - for schools to use as cloakrooms and/or lunchrooms. These can be reserved when booking a visit on a first-come, first-served basis.
- For health and safety reasons, each space has a maximum capacity of 32 people. Larger groups will be required to stagger their lunch breaks.
- Any belongings stored in these spaces are left at their owners' risk.

Timings

- Please arrive no more than 5 minutes before your scheduled arrival time.
- If you are going to be late, then please notify us by calling 01904 687687 or emailing schools@ymt.org.uk as soon as possible.
- If you have booked one of our led workshops, then it may be necessary to condense certain activities to account for a late arrival.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils remains the responsibility of group leaders.
- Please be respectful of other visitors as you move around the museum.
- We ask that pupils 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. 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.

Free teacher pre-visits

- We recommend that you carry out a **free teacher pre-visit** to York Castle Museum to familiarise yourself with the site. Teachers are entitled to bring up to one additional adult and two children with them as part of a free pre-visit.
- You can arrange a free teacher pre-visit as part of the booking process, or by contacting the Schools Learning Team at schools@ymt.org.uk.

Risk assessments

- We ask that you carry out a risk assessment in advance of your visit. To help you, please consult our **Site Risk Assessment for Visiting Schools**, which you will be sent once your booking has been confirmed, along with the hazard and accessibility information that can be found below in Sections D and E.

First aid

- A fully qualified first aider must accompany 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 require assistance on the day of your visit, please inform a member of the Museum Team. Accidents and near misses must be reported to a member of the Museum Team as soon as possible.

Cancellation Policy

- If you accept your visit but are then unable to attend, we ask that you contact us within five working days so that we can allocate your time to another group. Where possible, we will try and help you rearrange your visit to another date.
- If you cancel your booking less than one week before the visit date, then your school will be charged a cancellation fee amounting to 50% of the visit fee.
- If you cancel your booking less than 24 hours before the visit date, then your school will be charged a cancellation fee amounting to 100% of the visit fee.
- If we (York Museums Trust) must cancel your visit due to unforeseen circumstances, then we will offer an alternative visit date for your group.

B. Travelling to the museum

Address

York Castle Museum
Eye of York
York
YO1 9RY

Travel by public transport

- You can reach York Castle Museum by bus and train.
- The nearest bus stop is on Tower Street where the number 3 bus stops. There are several other bus stops nearby. For more information visit www.itravellyork.info/buses.
- The nearest train station is York. The 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 Car Park](#). This is a 7-minute walk from York Castle Museum.
- Coaches can also drop off and pick up passengers at designated rendezvous points. The nearest one to York Castle Museum is Fawcett Street (Castle Rendezvous).

C. On the day

Arrival

- Please arrive no more than 5 minutes before your scheduled arrival time. We recommend that you consider inclement weather when planning your trip, as you may be required to queue outside the museum.
- Your group will be met at the entrance by a member of the Museum Team. If you have booked a led workshop, this will be the individual responsible for delivering the session. If you have booked a self-guided visit, then this will be a member of our Visitor Experience Team.
- Please help our staff by identifying yourself as the group leader.

Toilets and belongings

- Your group will be directed to one of our lunch and cloakroom spaces to store bags and coats (if a space has been reserved during the booking process).
- 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, our Victorian street.
- York Castle Museum has two accessible, gender-neutral, toilets, one on each side of the building.
- All of our toilets are open to the public.
- The nearest nearest **changing places facility** can be accessed at [Silver Street Public Toilets](#) (Silver Street, York, YO1 8RY). This is a 10-minute walk from the Yorkshire Museum.

Induction

- A member of the Museum Team will then give the group an introduction to York Castle Museum, outline the code of conduct for visiting schools, and what pupils can expect during their visit.

Led workshop

- If you have booked a led workshop, then please consult the relevant **Teachers Workshop Pack** for more information about your session.

Self-guided visits: group management

- Some of the galleries at York Castle Museum are relatively small and can become easily crowded. When making a self-guided visit to the museum, we recommend splitting pupils into smaller groups of no more than eight for exploring the galleries.
- In the case of larger groups (40 pupils and over), we ask that pupils are divided into a minimum of two groups, with each group beginning their visit at a different part of the site.

Lunch

- If you have reserved one of our two lunch spaces when booking your visit, you will be allotted a 30-minute slot in which to have lunch.
- If you are bringing a group of 35 pupils or more, you will be allotted a 60-minute slot and asked to stagger your lunch break.
- Details about your lunch slot will be provided on your **Booking Confirmation Form**. This will be sent to you once you have booked your visit.

Shop

- The York Castle Museum 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. Details about your shop slot will be provided on your **Booking Confirmation Form**. This will be sent to you once you have booked your visit.

Photographs

- Photography for personal use is allowed around the museum, though there may be restrictions during special exhibitions.
- Flash photography and filming are not permitted in the museum galleries.

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 in 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 do not re-enter the museum until you are told it is safe to do so.

D. 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 for Visiting Schools**, which you will be sent once your booking has been confirmed, along with the hazard and accessibility information that can be found below.

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 York Castle Museum is open to the public Monday to Sunday, 10.00am to 17.00pm (except on Mondays, when it is 11.00am-17.00pm). Pupils must always be supervised by a responsible adult during a visit.
- Some galleries have areas (such as the stairs down from the **Shaping the Body** exhibition to **Kirkgate, Kirkgate**, the train carriage in the **1914: When the World Changed Forever** 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 objects in York Castle 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. Pupils should be supervised when using these, particularly the trench in the **1914: When the World Changed Forever** exhibition, which has a crawl space children.
- The After the War gallery in the **1914: When the World Changed Forever** 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**. Pupils must 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 slipper in wet weather.
- There are toys and games for children to enjoy in the **Exercise Yard**. Pupils should be supervised at all times when using these.
- There are several trees in the grassy area beside **Raindale Mill**. Storm damage can sometimes affect the stability of apparently healthy trees.
- Some of the trees in the area around **Raindale Mill** produce berries. Group leaders should ensure that these are not ingested.
- The area around **Raindale Mill** attracts many insects, including bees and wasps. Animal and bird droppings can 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 **Raindale Mill** is unpaved. Care should be taken to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- **Raindale Mill** and the surrounding grassy area is close to the River Foss. Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult when in this area.

E. Access information

- Comprehensive access information for York Castle Museum can be found on our [website](#).
- Our Visitor Experience Team are there to help all our visitors at any point during a 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.

Lift

- A lift provides access to the upper floors on the right-hand side of York Castle Museum (**Debtors Prison**). This area contains our **1914: When the World Changed Forever**, **The Sixties**, and **Castle Prison** exhibitions.
- Due to fire evacuation requirements, we can allow access to **no more than two wheelchair users** on the first floor of the **Debtors Prison** 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.
- Pupils should be accompanied by a responsible adult when using the lift.
- Due to the left hand side of York Castle Museum (**Female Prison**) being listed, it is not currently possible to provide lift access to the upper floors of the building. As such, our **Period Rooms** and **Shaping the Body** exhibitions can only be accessed using 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, our Victorian street.
- York Castle Museum has two accessible, gender-neutral, toilets, one on each side of the building.
- All of our toilets are open to the public.
- The nearest nearest **changing places facility** can be accessed at [Silver Street Public Toilets](#) (Silver Street, York, YO1 8RY). This is a 10-minute walk from the Yorkshire Museum.

Museum shop

- There is level access from the main entrance to the shop.
- The route through the shop is 800mm wide or more.

Museum galleries

- The galleries at York Castle Museum 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 hand rails on all stairs and seating is available throughout the museum.

The Female Prison

- The **Female Prison** is spread over six levels. It contains three exhibitions: the **Period Rooms**, **Shaping the Body**, and **Kirkgate**.
- The upper floors of the **Female Prison** are only accessible via stairs. This area includes the **Period Rooms** 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 the Museum Team 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 visitors must go up or down in one go is 19.

The Debtors' Prison

- The **Debtors Prison** is spread over two levels. It contains three exhibitions: **1914: When the World Changed Forever**, **The Sixties**, and the **Castle Prison**.
- There is a lift which can provide access to the **1914: When the World Changed Forever** exhibition on the first floor.
- There is an outside area which includes the **Exercise Yard**, **Riversdale Mill** and the surrounding riverside area.

- Some prison cells in the **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 **Castle Prison** exhibition are slightly uneven.

Light levels

- Some galleries have areas (such as the stairs down from the **Shaping the Body** exhibition to **Kirkgate, Kirkgate**, the train carriage in the **1914: When the World Changed Forever** exhibition, and **York Castle Prison**) with sudden changes in lighting levels (from bright light, to dim light and reverse).
- The lights on **Kirkgate**, the museum's Victorian street, change between a daytime and night-time setting. Some of the side streets can also be particularly dark, and there is a periodic flashing lightening effect. Visitors can choose to head towards the end of the main street, where there is an artificial tree, as the light levels do not change there.
- In some areas of the museum (such as the **Period Rooms** and around the costume displays in **The Sixties** exhibition), light levels are kept low to help in the conservation of our objects. There is always a lighter area nearby but, if you require assistance, please ask a member of our Visitor Experience Team.
- The **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.
- 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, 1914: When the World Changed Forever, The Sixties** and **Castle Prison** exhibitions include films with sound. In particular, some of the films in the **Castle Prison** exhibition can start quite suddenly. Please get in touch with us at schools@ymt.org.uk if you require further details.

Noise levels

- In busy periods some areas of York Castle Museum can become quite noisy, particularly the reception area which contains the museum shop and café.
- There are audio effects on **Kirkgate** so that visitors can hear what daily life sounded like for the Victorians. This includes the sounds of horses, music, people talking, birds, carriages, thunder, rain, dogs barking, cats yowling, and church bells. Members of the Museum Team may also 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 exhibition's displays of kitchens through time also have audio of people speaking to each other and sound effects for certain appliances, such as microwaves and kettles.
- The **1914: When the World Changed Forever** exhibition has numerous audio effects. These include people speaking, trains running, gunshots, aeroplanes, typewriters and barking dogs.
- **The Sixties** exhibition has a soundtrack of music from the period.
- The enclosed nature of the **Castle Prison** exhibition means that the space can become quite noisy when crowded.
- 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.
- A hearing loop is fitted in the building. Please speak to our Visitor Experience Team on arrival for more information.
- We have two pairs of ear defenders available for use by visitors. These can be adjusted for use by adults or children. Please ask staff for assistance if you wish to use them.

Smells

- The following artificial smells can be found in our **Period Rooms** exhibition;
 - Victorian parlour: lavender
 - Jacobean room: woodsmoke
- During the Christmas period, the following artificial smells can be found in our **Period Rooms** exhibition:
 - Georgian room: pineapple
- The following artificial smells can be found on **Kirkgate**:
 - Cocoa Rooms: chocolate, coffee
 - Coach house: horse, hay
 - Outside privy: Victorian street, urine
 - Outside Miss Poles: Victorian street
 - Tallow candle factory: tallow
- During the Christmas period, the following artificial smells can be found on **Kirkgate**:
 - Orange scent
 - Lemon scent
- The following artificial smells can be found in our **1914: When the World Changed Forever** exhibition:
 - Train carriage gallery: oil, smoke
 - Communication trench: earth
 - Cure of War gallery: antiseptic

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.
- Easy read guides and colour overlays for dyslexic readers are available on request.

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.