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## What information do teachers want?

Over the 2021-22 school year Art Fund researched the needs of teachers as part of our Teacher Art Pass project (TAP). We surveyed 1,000 mostly art teachers about their needs and spoke to science, history and geography teachers to check our findings.

Read the Teacher Art Pass report [Teacher insights for museums 2021-22](https://www.artfund.org/professional/blog/what-do-teachers-want-from-museums).

**TAP Teachers told us they want museums, galleries and historic houses to provide clear information about how a visit will impact on specific topics they are delivering through their curriculums.**

Teachers struggle to find out which museums, galleries and historic houses are close to their schools. Half of TAP teachers did a google search to find a museum to visit.

The greatest barriers to visiting are time to arrange visits and transport costs. If a school can walk to you, you have already removed the cost of transport barrier to visiting.

Teachers want to be able to find out quickly:

* The subject and areas of the curriculum your museum can be used to teach.
* Recommended length of trip or size of exhibition
* Facilities e.g. whether there Is a lunchroom, toilets, cafe, access
* Adult:pupil ratios for visits (1:10 for primary visits and 1:15 for secondary is often used)
* Whether you have a pro forma risk assessment
* Museum education team contact information
* Instructions on how to book a school group visit

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## What type of visit to offer?

There are two types of school visit:

* Self-guided: the school visits your venue and tours your public spaces. Sometimes additional school resources are provided by the venue. See this GEM resource about creating self-led school trails for your site: [A toolkit for developing trails with impact](https://gem.org.uk/resource/self-led-school-trails-a-toolkit-for-developing-trails-with-impact/)
* Museum-led: the school visits your venue and tours your public spaces, plus takes part in an activity delivered by museum staff or volunteers. Sometimes this is in a specific space. The Wild Escape website has resources you can use to run a workshop for a school visit.You can download the story and Licaf resources on our resources page [here*.*](https://thewildescape.org.uk/resources)

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## What policies do you need in place?

* **Health and safety and Safeguarding policies:** To welcome school groups you will need to update your health and safety and safeguarding policies to plan for school groups.
* **Visit policy**
  + How many pupils can visit at once? A class can be between 20 to 35 children. Can you take multiple classes? Most Primary schools have two classes in a year group. Some have four.
  + What pupils to adult ratio will you require? Many museums require 10:1 child to adult ratio for Primary schools and 15:1 for Secondary. Schools often have their own requirements.
  + When can schools visit – can they visit anytime in the week?
  + How will you provide for any access needs for children? Schools will often be able to provide advice and guidance on meeting the Special Educational Needs (SEN) for any of their pupils.
* **Charging policy**: Will you be charging for school visits? Will different schools pay different prices? Who will decide what schools pay?

**Risk assessments**

Providing a proforma risk assessment teachers can use for their visits is very helpful, but bear in mind many schools, and museum health and safety managers, will require teachers to complete their own. Museums sometimes provide their own risk assessment for schools to use as a model, or a list of Q&A that teachers would need

to write their own risk assessment.

Guidance and templates for creating a risk assessment can be found on the [Health and Safety Executive](https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm#article). Further information is also available on the [Council for Learning Outside the Classroom](https://www.lotc.org.uk/plan-deliver-lotc/planning-lotc-experiences/get-ready-managing-risk/) website.

* Leeds Museums and Galleries [health and safety guidance](https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Health-and-Safety-Guidance.pdf)
* Science Museum [risk assessment for groups](https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/learning/plan-educational-visit/risk-assessments-schools) information
* Museum of London [risk assessment for teachers information](https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/application/files/5616/5790/3287/RISK_ASSESSMENT_ADVICE_ONSITE_VISITS_JUL2022.docx.pdf)

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## Setting up your booking system

Once you have agreed your policies you can then plan what information you need to record to book a school visit, and what information you will send to schools when they make a booking.

**Booking form**

We have created a booking form that you can download on our ‘[resources page](https://thewildescape.org.uk/resources)’ with thanks too you (with thanks to Leeds Museums who provided the original form).

Colleagues at Leeds Museums and Galleries and the Great North Museum: Hancock have also provided examples of their booking forms and information they provide for schools to help you decide what to include:

* Great North Museum: Hancock museum [school visit information](https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/learning/school-and-group-visit-practicalities)
* The Story Museum [booking form](https://storymuseum.s3-assets.com/School-Visit-FAQ.pdf)

Also see the [GEM website](https://gem.org.uk/resource/guides-developing-learning-programme-services/) for school visit information and booking forms.

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We have written a template email and letter about The Wild Escape that you can adapt to write to your local teachers that you can download from our [resource page.](https://thewildescape.org.uk/resources)

## Contacting teachers

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1. How will a school group contact the museum to find out about

a visit or to make a booking? Is this information easy to find?   
Teachers have very little time available to arrange visits. What information will you collect when you make a booking? Have you considered GDPR requirements?

1. Who do you need to tell about school visits in your Front of House (FOH) team? Do they have any suggestions for how a visit could run, or concerns about managing visitor flow?
2. How will a school group check in at your museum? Eg teacher to front desk while group waits outside, FOH provide timetable for visit and welcome group or FOH call learning member of staff to welcome and direct?
3. Where will the school group enter your venue? Is there sufficient space for one or more classes or can you move them quickly to another space to congregate? Where will the group store coats and bags? Consider making a portable rack available.
4. Where will the school group take part in any activities? Is there space in a gallery, or do you have a room? Is the room large enough, comfortable and welcoming? (see www.spaceforlearning.org.uk for guidance on setting up spaces)
5. Consider which materials you can use. Scissors, glue, pens and paint can pose a risk to vulnerable art works. Curators often insist on using pencils only in exhibition spaces. How can you still make the experience fun, despite these limitations? What resources could help? Have you thought of movement, music, photography or drama?
6. Are there toilets for the school group to use? Will they get exclusive use at specific times of the day? This Is often the first thing that the school wants to sort on arrival so plan It Into your timings for the day!
7. Is there space for the group to eat lunch? Do you have sufficient bins in the space and cleaning materials for spills or sweeping after lunch? (allowing 20 or 30 minutes per group in a space)
8. Will the group visit the shop? Do you need to manage the number of children in the shop? (sometimes this is managed with half the children having lunch and half in the shop) Could you consider offering pre-ordered goody bags for the school group which can be prepared and paid for beforehand to save time In the shop?
9. How will you evaluate visits and make changes as a result of feedback? Perhaps you will chat with teachers and pupils on the day, provide a written questionnaire, or email a questionnaire (online forms work well for this) after the visit?

*Sam Cairns, Learning Producer, The Wild Escape*

*September 2022*

## Checklist for planning school visits