

Self-Guiding at St Paul's: A Teachers' Manual



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Introduction

St Paul's Cathedral is London's Cathedral and embodies the spiritual life and heritage of the British people. It is the 'mother church' for the Diocese of London, the seat of its Bishop and a national church with an international spiritual focus.

For more than 1,400 years a Cathedral dedicated to St Paul has stood at the highest point in the city. Frequently at the centre of national events, traditions have been observed here and radical new ideas have found expression under the iconic dome. The present Cathedral, the masterpiece of Britain's most famous architect Sir Christopher Wren, is at least the fourth, and quite likely the fifth, to have stood on the site. Built after its predecessor was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, it was the first Cathedral to be built after the English Reformation and was designed to rise from the ashes of the pre-fire Cathedral like a phoenix: a symbol of resurrection now closely associated with St Paul's.

At the Cathedral's heart is its daily rhythm of Christian prayer and worship, and its central role as a space for worship and holiness remains unchanged and undiminished throughout its rich and fascinating history. A centre of worship, learning, debate and challenge, it is also considered an icon of resilience in the face of adversity and remains a rich and unique architectural heritage centre that welcomes thousands of visitors through its doors every day.

With traditional sightlines of the Dome radiating across the capital's skyline, preserved and protected by law, St Paul's today fulfils a unique role in the imagination of its now diverse, multicultural, multi-faith British public as being central to its civic and spiritual heart.

We welcome all those who wish to learn from this remarkable and inspiring building and this document is designed to support teachers as they plan their visit to St Paul's. We hope it will provide useful and sufficient information for teachers who would like to guide their students on a visit. It is also to be used as an information document for health and safety guidance and other aspects, to help ensure that the visit will not only be educational and informative but above all memorable and safe.



Self-guiding at St Paul's

It is important to book your visit in advance in order to ensure that the Cathedral is open and in order for us to keep a record of the number of school visitors. We can also advise you of any special services or events that may affect your visit.

Due to the sheer size of the Cathedral, and everything there is to see inside, teachers may like to focus their visit on a particular theme. Please take a look at our downloadable online resources for schools in our [Learning Library](#) to help you decide on an area of focus. This will help students grasp the essence of their trip without feeling overwhelmed by the extraordinary wealth of information encountered during their visit.

Remember that St Paul's is a very big place and to really do it justice you should aim to spend at least an hour looking around the Cathedral floor and Crypt. We also recommend that you allocate at least 45 minutes if you wish to visit the Dome & Galleries.

Booking your visit in advance

Once you have an idea of a date for your visit please visit [our website](#) and fill in the booking form.

You will be sent a confirmation email with relevant attachments and an invoice will follow. Should you have questions than please contact us on 020 7246 8353 or by emailing learning@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

Please also refer to this document which we hope will assist you with all aspects of your visit.



Preparation for your visit

Pre-visits

Teachers are welcome to come on a pre-visit and a member of the Schools & Family Learning team will meet them if at all possible. Please email or call us in advance to arrange a time and access to the building. Teachers on pre-arranged visits will be asked to provide ID on the day and are admitted free of charge but others accompanying them are asked to pay.

Briefing your adults and students

Please make sure that all adults have read the Guidelines for Visiting Schools at the end of this document and agree to abide by it. It would also be helpful for students to go through this with you as a class in advance of your visit so that your expectations are clear from the outset. It is important that all the adults and students in your group are fully briefed about what is expected of them.

Always check that your students know where they are going and have an idea of the significance of the Cathedral as a place of Christian prayer and worship.

Please remind them that they should not take calls on their mobile phones in the Cathedral. Remind adults that they are expected to look after and be in charge of their groups and should be prepared to discipline students if necessary. Many Cathedral staff are not able to distinguish between teachers and parent helpers so all should be aware that they are designated group leaders for the day and are expected to behave appropriately.

Groups may get separated when it is busy so adults must be responsible.

Very occasionally groups are asked to leave if they are being disruptive to the prayerful environment of the Cathedral.

On the day of your visit

Arriving & departing

Please bring a copy of your booking confirmation to show at the admissions desk on arrival. These details include a map of the Cathedral and directions to the West End entrance.

Visitors who have pre-paid can use any admission desk, including the 'fast-track' pre-paid desks. This will help you at times when the Cathedral is particularly busy.

Most schools arrive by public transport. We recommend this as the most reliable method. It is advisable to check the TfL website on the day for updates and to check that services are running normally.

For all methods of transport please see our [Visitor Information](#) pages on the website. This will give you a good idea of how long it might take to walk to the Cathedral from the nearest Tube and National Rail stations. It also gives information on security and bag checking on entry to the Cathedral.

For further information on coach parking please see the [City of London website](#).

Access

The North Transept entrance has ramped access, and this is the recommended entrance for wheelchair users and those requiring step-free access. The entrance leads directly onto the

Cathedral floor. This entrance leads to a lift serving the Cathedral floor and Crypt. For more details please visit our [Accessibility](#) pages on the website.

Please make sure you let us know on the booking form if you have pupils or staff who have such difficulties so that we can send any further information you might find helpful.

People with restricted mobility can enjoy visiting the Cathedral but need to be aware that the Dome & Galleries will not be accessible.

Group sizes

St Paul's is a large building and so we ask that large groups stagger their entry times. On the booking form you can choose entry times at half hour intervals per class. If you have any questions about this then please contact us on 020 7246 8353 or by emailing learning@stpaulscathedral.org.uk and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Whenever self-guiding groups are inside the building we require that groups are split into smaller working groups (we recommend a maximum of 10 students per group) as they look around the building. This is to ensure that groups are working quietly and sensibly at all times. Groups which make too much noise may be asked to leave the Cathedral and may be refused entry to the Dome & Galleries.



On the day of your visit

Toilets

The Cathedral toilets are located in the Crypt opposite the shop. Large groups can also use toilet facilities provided by the City of London in Paternoster Square, through the Temple Bar gateway opposite the NW Crypt entrance to the Cathedral. A charge of 50p is made for their use. Other nearby public toilet facilities (with disabled access) include those inside One New Change shopping centre on the first and lower ground floors. These are located beyond the Cathedral Gardens and across the road, New Change, at the east end of the Cathedral.

Shop

You are welcome to visit the Cathedral shop located in the Crypt. Please ask students to enter in small groups and ensure that they are adequately supervised by adults. Pre-ordered gift bags may be purchased via the Schools & Family Learning Department and details will be forwarded to you with your booking confirmation. If you would like to find out more please contact us for more information.

Health & safety

Please ensure that students are aware that the Cathedral is a heritage site and that they will need to bear certain aspects of this in mind in order to keep safe during their visit.

Remind students to look where they are walking. The Crypt of the Cathedral might be dimly lit and if the Cathedral floor is busy they may need to take care when walking past any lit candles.

When the Cathedral is busy keep students together and count them regularly.

Should you need First Aid please ask a steward who will know which members of staff are trained in this.

An announcement will be made over the public address system in the case of an evacuation. Please follow any instructions and ask a steward if you need any further advice.

If a member of your party gets separated from the group advise them to go to the Steward's Desk at the West End, Main Stairs or Crypt and report to a member of staff.

Teachers are responsible for the supervision and safety of the children in their charge at all times.

A ratio of 1 teacher to every 10 pupils is required.

Photography

Photography and filming is permitted inside the Cathedral, and on the Stone and Golden Galleries but not on the Whispering Gallery.

We do ask that you don't use tripods or take groups photos inside.

Please ensure all mobile phones and tablets are switched either to off or to silent.

FAQs

How do I book?

Please email us on learning@stpaulscathedral.org.uk or call us on 020 7246 8353. Please see page 3.

Why do I need to book in advance?

All UK school groups should book in advance via Schools & Family Learning. This ensures that we can notify you of any unexpected closures, special services or any other factor that may affect your visit. Your school will also be invoiced and you are required to pay in advance of your visit. Booking also enables the department to keep a record of the number of school visitors which is very useful for the planning of future Schools & Family Learning events.

How far ahead should I book?

For a self-guided visit, we recommend that you book half a term ahead. Very occasionally a special event will arise in the Cathedral diary which will mean that we will have to reschedule your visit. We endeavour to contact you as soon as possible to alert you to this. Such matters are, unfortunately beyond the control of the Schools & Family Learning Department and usually arise when a service of national importance is arranged at short notice following a significant or unexpected event.

How much does a self-guided visit cost?

Self-guided Visits for Primary and Secondary students

Cathedral Floor & Crypt only £3.00 (including VAT)

Cathedral Visit including Dome & Galleries £6.00 (including VAT)

Please note that all the above prices include the addition of VAT @ 20%

Adults

Accompanying adults are admitted free of charge up to a maximum of 6 per 30 students, representing a ratio of 1:5.

This ratio applies to both Primary and Secondary school groups.

Additional adults who are accompanying students requiring 1:1 support are also admitted free of charge.

Any further accompanying adults will incur a charge.

Payment

You will receive an invoice and instructions for payment with your confirmation letter.

What happens if we have to cancel?

If you have to cancel your visit, please let us know at least 4 weeks in advance of the booked date. We regret that if you fail to inform us of a cancellation within this time frame the full charge for the visit will be payable.

FAQs

What is expected of teachers and adult helpers on the day?

We expect you to be in charge of your group at all times.

We find that teachers need to give very clear guidelines to accompanying adults to ensure that they are fully aware of their role during the visit.

We do not charge adults with school groups (up to 6 per 30 students) as we expect them to be in full control of their groups for the duration of their visit.

Will there be any services or prayers during our visit?

Every hour on the hour prayers are led by a duty priest from the dais beneath the Dome.

All visitors are requested to either stand still or be seated and to be silent for the duration of prayers which last for no longer than two or three minutes.

If you would like your students to join in with prayers, you are welcome to seat them beneath the Dome at this time.

There is also a daily 12.30 Eucharist under the Dome which your group is welcome to attend.

If you choose to continue guiding your students during the service, we ask that you make all your group aware of the service taking place.

Can I make a preliminary visit to the Cathedral?

We welcome teachers who are intending to bring groups later in the term and will do our very best to meet you if at all possible.

Please see page 4.

Where can we park?

Although it is possible to bring schools by coach there is no coach parking or drop off point adjacent to St Paul's.

For further information on coach parking please see the [City of London website](#). Please make sure you always arrange and agree with your coach driver in advance of your visit where you will be dropped off and picked up.

Where do we go when we arrive?

Your confirmation letter will provide details of where to go when you arrive. You will also receive a map and directions to the main entrance of the Cathedral. Please see page 5.

Will students and accompanying adults need to have bags checked by security on entry?

When you arrive in the West End of the Cathedral your group may be required to have their bags checked by security staff before entering the building.

Can we leave our bags and coats anywhere in the Cathedral?

Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities for self-guided groups to leave belongings.

Where are the toilets?

The Cathedral toilets are situated in the Crypt opposite the shop. Please see page 6.

FAQs

Can we use the shop?

Yes. You may also pre-order gift bags via Schools & Family Learning. Please see page 6.

Can we eat lunch anywhere?

Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities for self-guided groups to eat their lunch inside the building.

As an alternative you are able to book the YHA, formerly the Cathedral Choir School, located in Carter Lane to the south of the Cathedral and across the road.

To book this facility in advance for a small donation per class please email stpaulsduty@yha.org.uk

In good weather the Cathedral Gardens at the east end of the building and the gardens to the south are the nearest green spaces for picnicking.

What should we know about visiting the Dome & Galleries?

School groups are welcome to visit the Dome & Galleries as part of a visit, however there is an extra charge. Please see page 7.

It takes on average 45 minutes for a school group to climb to the highest point, the Golden Gallery, and return to the Cathedral Floor.

When you do your risk assessment please consider carefully whether you will take your group up.

You must ensure that at least 1 adult to every 10 students accompanies them whilst visiting the Dome & Galleries.

If you do not have enough adults with you on the day you will not be permitted to access these areas of the building.

Do you have any online resources to assist with our visit?

We provide a wide selection of online resources for self-guided schools so that you are able to consider the area of focus for your pupils while they are at the Cathedral and download all relevant documents before your visit. Please see page 3.

What if I decide I would actually like to book a guided visit?

You are very welcome to book a guided visit if a slot is available.

Our guided visits are very popular with schools and tend to be booked well in advance.

Please book via the booking form on the [website](#), or if you have already booked as a self-guided group and would like to try to change to guided please contact us using the details below.

If you have any further queries regarding your booking please do not hesitate to call St Paul's Schools & Family Learning on 020 7246 8353 or email us on learning@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

Risk Assessment Advice

This advice aims to assist teachers/leaders with planning their visit to St Paul's Cathedral. We strongly recommend that the member of staff organising the visit makes a preparation visit to the Cathedral in order to carry out their own risk assessment. This should include the journey to and from the Cathedral. Risk Assessments are your responsibility; this is merely our advice to you. Please remember to email or call us to arrange a time and access to the building. Teachers on pre-arranged visits will be asked to provide ID on the day and are admitted free of charge although others accompanying them are asked to pay.

Location	Potential risk(s)	Additional information
Cathedral & Crypt	Risk from members of the public e.g. abduction or assault	Groups of children must be accompanied by an adult. A ratio of 1:10 is advised. Consult your own guidelines in school. Groups using public toilets in the Crypt must be accompanied by an adult.
	Fire	In the event of fire/alarm, Cathedral staff will direct all visitors to the nearest safe exit. Teachers are responsible for doing a roll-call of their pupils once they are in a safe place. Should any person not be accounted for, Cathedral staff should be informed immediately.
	Tripping on staircases	Staircases are minimal in length and well lit. Children should be reminded by teaching staff to take care and to look where they are walking/hold rails, keep to the right. Appropriate footwear should be worn.
Domes & Galleries	Adequate adult supervision	All school groups climbing to the Dome and Galleries are expected follow the minimum ratio of 1:10 adults to pupils. Any helpers must be briefed in advance and they should them to spread out evenly along the line of pupils. Insist on sensible, calm behaviour throughout.
	Asthma attacks/vertigo	The climb to the Dome and Galleries is long and steep in places. Schools are advised to make this known to parents and seek medical opinion/consent in advance, if there are concerns.
	Tripping on staircases	School groups are advised to walk in single file and children are reminded by guides to take care. There are hand rails. Stairs from the Golden Gallery can be slippery in wet weather and teachers should tell children to take extra care in this area. Appropriate footwear should be worn.
	Falling from a height	The barriers/railings around the galleries are tall. Stewards are positioned on each gallery and have two way radios. Children are asked to sit on the stone bench whilst in the Whispering Gallery and teachers should state that they are not to lean over the barriers around any of the galleries.
Whispering Gallery	Trips on floors and single steps	Uneven floor surface due to age/texture of stone flooring. Children should be reminded to take care. Warning signs are in place. Advise them to walk carefully and to remain cautious. Appropriate footwear should be worn.
Education Centre	Risk from members of the public	The Education Centre door is password coded and kept locked when a group is using the centre. Toilets within the centre may be used by unaccompanied children but we still advise adult supervision.
	Fire	Cathedral staff will direct all visitors to the nearest safe exit. Teachers are responsible for doing a roll-call of their pupils.
	Craft workshops Allergies/injuries	Seek parental advice on allergies to glues/materials. Children are instructed to use scissors safely.
All	Covid-19	The Cathedral follows current Government guidance on Coronavirus, this includes following a specific cleaning regime.

Visiting the Dome & Galleries

Schools intending to take students up to the Dome & Galleries of St Paul's Cathedral should be aware that there are over 250 stairs to the Whispering Gallery and over 500 to the Golden Gallery. Students and adults who suffer from breathing difficulties, such as asthma, climb these stairs at their own risk. St Paul's Cathedral advises schools to obtain parental consent to allow students to climb to these areas. They should be made aware that due to the safety of all people ascending to these areas, it is not always possible to turn round once climbing has begun and that stopping on the narrow staircases may cause long queues of people behind. Students who remain on the Cathedral floor must be accompanied by an adult. Suggested parental permission form to be added to general consent form for the trip:

I give/do not give consent for (name) _____

to climb the Dome & Galleries of St Paul's Cathedral during the school visit
on (date) _____.

Either: They do not suffer from any condition which would make such a climb hazardous.

Or: They have (e.g. asthma) _____

and will bring the appropriate medication on the day which will be held by a member of staff and be issued if necessary.

Or: They have (e.g. asthma) _____

and should not be permitted to climb to the Dome & Galleries of St Paul's Cathedral.

Guidelines for visiting schools

All adults (including parents) should read this information before your visit.

St Paul's is first and foremost a place of worship.

We therefore ask that all people are respectful when they are in the building.

Groups causing a disturbance may be asked to leave the Cathedral.

Please ensure that the mobile phones of both staff and pupils are turned off/on silent.

Please do not allow your pupils to eat, drink or chew gum while visiting the Cathedral.

Prayers are said on the hour on the Cathedral floor and groups are asked to be quiet.

You are welcome to join in with the Lord's Prayer.

There is a daily Holy Communion service at 12.30pm under the Dome, so please bear this in mind if you are self-guiding.

School staff and accompanying adults remain responsible for the welfare and behaviour of students throughout their visit to the Cathedral.

Pupils must be supervised by school staff at all times and we request a ratio of 1 adult for every 10 students in the building to ensure adequate supervision.

It is particularly important to have enough staff to escort groups up the Dome.

Please ensure all your accompanying adults are able to climb the Dome.

Photography is not allowed on the Whispering Gallery.

We reserve the right to refuse access to the Dome if there are not enough accompanying adults.

If you have an accident, please contact a steward.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, please follow the instructions of the stewards.

Groups should rendezvous in the Cathedral churchyard directly outside the North Crypt exit.

