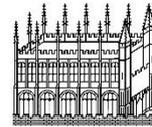


UK SCHOOL VISITS TO THE BODLEIAN LIBRARIES:

FAQs



Bodleian Libraries
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

PLANNING YOUR VISIT: WHERE AND WHEN?

> **Where is the Bodleian Library?** The historic Old Bodleian Library is located on the corner of Broad Street and Cattle Street, near the famous Radcliffe Camera, but the Education Office is across the road from the Old Bodleian, in the Weston Library. The Weston Library is the Special Collections library for the University of Oxford, and is part of the Bodleian Libraries group. Most of our activities for schools are based at the Weston, which has two small exhibition galleries, a lecture theatre, and a range of seminar rooms. The public entrance to the Weston Library is on Broad Street. Please see the [map](#) for more details.

> **When are you open?** We are open for school visits Monday–Friday from 9am–5pm, with galleries open 10am–5pm. Galleries are also open 10am–5pm on Saturdays and 11am–5pm on Sundays, but we cannot generally offer taught sessions at weekends. Occasionally the Library closes early. Visit our website for up to date information, including gallery closures: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/visit/hours>

PLANNING YOUR VISIT: HOW DO I BOOK AND WHAT CAN WE DO?

> **Do I need to book for a school visit?** We ask UK schools to book in advance, even for self–conducted visits to the exhibition galleries. For more information about booking and our programmes for schools please visit [the ‘School visits’ webpage](#)

> **Which schools do you work with?** For taught sessions at the Weston Library, we currently prioritize working with state secondary schools and colleges in Oxfordshire, and groups visiting the University of Oxford as part of Widening Participation activities. Other schools are very welcome to visit the exhibition galleries, book a tour of the Old Bodleian Library (tours@bodleian.ox.ac.uk), or request a printing workshop.

> **What do you offer for schools?** Taught workshops are available for groups from KS3 to KS5. For our current range of sessions, please see [the ‘School visits’ webpage](#). We are happy to work with Oxfordshire state school teachers to plan a bespoke session whenever possible.

> **What exhibitions can we see?** There are two small exhibition galleries at the Weston Library, which showcase a selection of the rare special collections items from the Bodleian’s collections of books, manuscripts, maps, archives, and ephemera. There are usually three exhibitions each year, and during changeover periods only one gallery will be open. Please see the website for dates and details of current and upcoming exhibitions: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/whats-on/current-exhibitions>

> **Can I book a tour of the Old Bodleian Library?** Tours of the Old Bodleian are arranged through the Tours Office, rather than the Education Office. You can find more information on the different group tours here: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/visit/tours/group> and book by emailing tours@bodleian.ox.ac.uk. Unfortunately it is not possible to book group tours of the Old Bodleian in advance from June–September, due to tourist demand.

> **Is there a charge for school visits?** Most school visits for UK state schools are currently offered free of charge, thanks to the generous support of The Helen Hamlyn Trust. Charges for additional activities such as tours of the Old Library or printing workshops may apply for UK state schools.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT: SAFETY AND ACCESS

> **Is the Weston Library accessible for wheelchair users?** The Weston Library is accessible for wheelchair users. There is lift access to all floors and several accessible toilet facilities. Please let us know if your group has any additional access needs in advance of your visit.

> **Can I download a risk assessment?** We have generic risk assessment guidance for schools which you can download from [the ‘School visits’ webpage](#) and adapt for your needs. Please contact the Education Office if you have any questions or anything that you would like to discuss further.

> **Is there a maximum group size?** Different activities have different maximum group sizes: see the types of visit detailed on [the 'School visits' webpage](#) for more details. We can often arrange a carousel of activities, or joint visits to nearby University museums, to accommodate larger groups. Please contact the Education Office to discuss your needs. For visits to the galleries, we ask that groups are no larger than 30. Group leaders remain responsible for their students at all times.

> **How many adults do I need to bring?** If you are bringing groups of students under the age of 16 we ask for a minimum of 1 adult to 10 students. For Early Years and Key Stage 1 children we suggest a ratio of 1 to 6.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT: ARRIVAL AND FACILITIES

> **Is there a coach drop-off point?** Details on coach drop off points and coach permits can be found on the Oxfordshire County Council website: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/coach-permits-oxford>

> **Is there any parking nearby?** The Weston Library does not have a car park but we may be able to offer parking for one small minibus on occasion. Please enquire when you contact us about your visit. Coach parking is not available. There is on-street pay and display parking outside the Library, on Broad Street. Visitors are advised to use the Park and Ride where possible. More details about parking in central Oxford can be found on the Oxfordshire County Council website: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/street-parking>

> **Where do we go when we arrive with our group?** Most school groups will be asked to meet inside the Weston Library, at the information desk on your right as you enter Blackwell Hall via the public entrance on Broad Street, but please check your booking confirmation for instructions and see the [map](#) for more details. You may wish to leave time for students to use the toilet facilities in Blackwell Hall before your visit begins, but we ask that groups do not arrive more than 15 minutes in advance.

> **Where are the toilets?** Public toilets are available in the Weston Library, to the left as you enter via the public entrance on Broad Street. Please be aware that these facilities are used by the general public, and supervise your students accordingly.

> **Where can we leave coats and bags?** A lockable storage box for school bags and coats is available in the Weston Library if necessary.

> **Do you have anywhere to eat packed lunches?** Unfortunately we do not currently have any indoor facilities for eating packed lunches. The Weston Library has strict controls on food and drink in order to protect the special collections, which are very vulnerable to moisture and pests. The café in Blackwell Hall is open to the public and you are welcome to purchase lunches or drinks there, but packed lunches cannot be eaten in the café. School groups can eat packed lunches on the steps outside the Weston Library in fine weather. Many cafes and fast-food restaurants are available within a five-minute walk of the Weston Library if older students are buying their own lunches. The Ashmolean Museum has compiled a list of potential lunch venues in central Oxford here: www.ashmolean.org/documents/education/AlternativeLunchVenues.pdf if you wish to make your own arrangements for indoor packed lunch facilities.

> **Can school groups visit the shop?** Groups of up to 10 at a time are very welcome to visit the shop. Group leaders are responsible for their students in the shop. We can also have goody bags put together in advance, on request.

LIBRARY RULES

> **Are there Library rules?** The group leader is responsible for the behaviour and conduct of their group when they are in the Weston Library. We have a Code of Conduct (included below) that we ask all groups to read and abide by.

> **Can we eat and drink in the Library?** Eating and drinking is not allowed inside the Weston Library, except food and drink purchased in the café area and eaten at café tables in Blackwell Hall. This includes all water, chewing gum, and sweets. This is in order to protect the special collections from pests and damage. Please let your students know about this rule in advance of your visit.

> **Can we smoke on the Library site?** The Weston Library is a no smoking site.

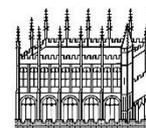
> **Can we wear backpacks in the Library?** Small backpacks can be worn in the galleries. For activities taking place in seminar rooms where special collections material will be shown, we will usually ask you to check your bags in at the security entrance.

> **Can we take photographs in the Weston Library?** Photography without flash is permitted in some exhibitions. Other exhibitions or individual objects on display cannot be photographed for copyright reasons. Please look out for the signage and if in doubt ask a member of education staff or gallery attendants, who will be happy to help. Please respect other people in the galleries when you are taking photographs. Written permission is required if you wish to use a tripod or video camera. Photographs are not generally not permitted in reader-only areas (upstairs in the Weston Library) but you are welcome to take photos in Blackwell Hall. In 'collections up close' sessions, please ask the curator if you would like to photograph the special collections material on display.

Occasionally we will ask teachers in advance to obtain parental permission so that we can take photographs of their school visit to use in online and printed publicity materials, and in reports to the Trust which funds the Bodleian education programme. We are always happy to share our photographs of your group with you, and hope that these will be an enjoyable record of your visit.

> **Can we draw in the exhibition galleries?** People are very welcome to draw in the galleries using pencils and coloured pencils, but we ask that messy or wet materials such as pens, ink, paint, chalk or charcoal are not used. Please bring clipboards so that your group can draw without leaning directly on the glass of display cases.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL GROUPS



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To ensure that everyone has a safe, enjoyable visit we ask that all school groups:

- Read, share and abide by this code of conduct
- Listen to and comply with any requests from library staff
- Walk, don't run
- Keep noise at a reasonable level – this is a working library where students, staff, and researchers are working
- Take extra care inside the exhibition galleries, as the lighting is dim and display cases have sharp corners
- Take extra care when objects are on open display in 'collections up close' sessions: this means not touching the books, being careful that jewellery or scarves don't snag, and moving
- Use cameras with respect for other library visitors and the collections. Photography without flash is permitted in galleries except where otherwise indicated. If in doubt please check with a member of staff. Photography in 'collections up close' sessions is at the discretion of the curator.
- Use mobile phones with respect for other museum visitors. If you are taking part in an education session we ask that mobiles are turned off or switched to silent.
- Avoid eating or drinking inside the Weston Library (except items purchased at the café in the café area)
- Be considerate to other library visitors – make sure the group leaves them space to move freely and avoid sitting on the floor inside
- Leave any library spaces you are using as you would wish to find them e.g. seminar rooms, toilets or galleries