

UK SCHOOL VISITS TO THE BODLEIAN LIBRARIES:

FAQs



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](#) and '[getting here](#)' information 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 offer taught sessions at weekends. Occasionally the Library closes early. Visit our website for up to date information on [opening 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-led 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](#) (email 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 more information, please see the '[School visits' webpage](#). We are happy to work with 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](#).

> **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 [group tours webpage](#) and book by emailing tours@bodleian.ox.ac.uk. Unfortunately advance booking is not possible for 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 printing workshops may apply for UK state schools, and tours of the Old Library are charged at the normal rate for all groups.

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 and adapt for your needs. Please [contact the Education Office](#) if there is anything that you would like to discuss further.

> **Are there any specific Covid-19 requirements?** Please check the Bodleian website and generic risk assessment guidance for the latest details.

> **Is there a maximum group size?** For visits to the galleries, we ask that groups are no larger than 30. Taught 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. Students should not be left unattended by teachers, and 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 15 students.

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](#).

> **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 by special arrangement. 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](#).

> **Where do we go when we arrive with our group?** Please meet inside the Weston Library at the information desk on your right as you enter via the entrance on Broad Street, unless we make other arrangements in our booking confirmation email. See the [map](#) for more details. 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 main entrance. Please be aware that these facilities are used by the general public, and supervise your students accordingly.

> **Where can we leave coats and bags?** It simplifies your visit if students can avoid bringing large bags to the library, as we do not have a dedicated secure storage area. Coats and bags can be kept with you on the ground floor in the Weston Library. If your activities take place upstairs, we will make individual arrangements to store bags safely.

> **Where can we eat packed lunches?** Unfortunately we do not have any indoor spaces 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, staining, 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. The Ashmolean Museum has compiled a [list of potential lunch venues](#) in central Oxford if you wish to make your own arrangements.

> **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 in advance 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 make arrangements to store bags safely. If possible, it is easiest for students to avoid bringing bags.

> **Can we take photographs in the Weston Library?** Photography without flash is permitted in most exhibitions. Some 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

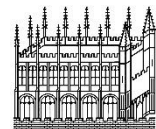
galleries when you are taking photographs. Written permission is required to use a tripod or video camera. Photographs are not generally permitted in reader-only areas (upstairs in the Weston Library) but you are welcome to take photos on the ground floor. In 'collections up close' sessions, please ask the curator if you would like to photograph the special collections material on display.

Occasionally we will ask teachers for assistance to obtain permission to 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.

> **Can we draw in the exhibition galleries?** Visitors are very welcome to draw in the galleries using pencils and coloured pencils, but we ask that messy or wet materials such as ink 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.

Any other questions? Please email education@bodleian.ox.ac.uk and we'll be happy to help.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL GROUPS



Bodleian Libraries
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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

- Read, share and abide by this code of conduct.
- Comply with instructions, including signage and any requests from library staff.
- Avoid eating or drinking inside the Weston Library (except items purchased at the café in the café area.) This includes bottled water and chewing gum.
- Walk, don't run.
- Keep noise at a reasonable level - this is a library where hundreds of students, staff, and researchers are working.
- Take extra care inside the exhibition galleries, as the lighting is dim and display cases have sharp corners.
- Use mobile phones with respect for other visitors. If you are taking part in an education session we ask that mobiles are turned off or switched to silent.
- 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 slowly.
- Be considerate to other library visitors - make sure the group leaves them space to move freely and avoid sitting on the floor inside.
- Use cameras with respect for other library visitors and the collections. Photography without flash is permitted in galleries unless 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.
- Leave any library spaces you are using as you would wish to find them.