

Thank you for booking a visit to the British Schools Museum.

We hope that this booklet contains all the information you need. If there is anything else you need to know or want to discuss with us please contact us on 01462 420144.

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Structure and practicalities of the day

A typical day runs from 9.40am – 1.30pm with sessions starting at 10.00am once school groups have had a chance to be briefed on the day and visit the toilets and get in to costume if necessary. There is a 10 minute transition time between each session to allow for smooth change overs and to catch time up if necessary.

Typical itinerary

Arrival time: Around 9.40 am for a 10.00am session start

Departure time: 1.20pm session finish for a 1.30pm departure

Itinerary	Session 1: 10.00 – 11.00	Session 2: 11.10 – 12.10	Session 3: 12.20 – 13.20
Class 1	1880 Gallery lesson	People and Places	Lunch & drill
Class 2	People and Places	1880 Gallery lesson	Lunch & drill

Snacks and coffee

A snack break is not included in the timings of the day. However, if you would like your pupils to have a snack break please let us know at the time of booking and we will extend the time between session 1 and session 2 and shorten your lunch break. Please note that pupils will have to bring their own snacks and you will have less time for drill at lunch time. Alternatively you could timetable lunch in the 11.10 – 12.10 session and eat at the end of the hour.

Tea and coffee making facilities are available for visiting adults during lunchtime. Please note that drinks are only allowed in the Schoolroom and Jill Grey Learning Space.

Shopping

If you would like your pupils to shop you must inform us in advance of your visit. Our gift shop is too small for school groups to use comfortably or efficiently so a pop-up shop with a selection of our most popular items will be set up in the Schoolroom so that pupils can shop during lunchtime. Individual items will cost between 50p and £3.00. Alternatively you could pre-order and collect your items on the day. Please contact us for details.

Dressing up and costume

Costume is available for the Victorian programmes. Please let us know in advance if you would like to use it and incorporate 'dressing up time' into your planned arrival time.

There are pinafores for girls and collars for boys. Waistcoats are available for up to 2 classes for the 1880 Gallery lesson; period caps will be used for the 1840 Monitorial lesson. Please note the caps have cords that hang below the chin so you may prefer KS1 pupils to just wear collars.

You are also welcome to come in costume and we would encourage you to do so if you can as it adds to the experience and helps the children get into character. Whatever you wear please remember that our buildings are old and our rooms have high ceilings. Even with the heating on full it can be very reminiscent of Victorian times (cold!) so please make sure everyone comes warmly dressed. Jumpers are essential unless it is really warm.

Late arrival

If you are held up on the way, don't worry we should be able to make time up for lost time. This usually involves starting quickly (e.g. not mentioning the toilets and/or getting into costume unless it is essential) and having a shorter drill session after lunch. If you are very late it may be possible to swap lunch and facilitated sessions but most session guides and teachers only work until 12.20 with stewards taking over at this point so this may not be an option. Please phone us on 01462 420144 if you know you will be delayed and we will see what we can do.

If you know that you will not be able to arrive until at least 10.00am please contact us and we can plan in advance the best way for you to get the most out of your visit.

If you are bringing three classes or have opted to do just one session the organisation of the day will be slightly different. Please check the details in your booking information and speak to us if you are not sure about anything.

Period Lessons

Preparing Your Group for a Victorian Lesson

To help your class get the most out of their lesson we strongly advise that you discuss with them before their visit what things might happen in the session. The experience is authentically Victorian - the teacher will be strict, stern and distant. Complete silence and instant obedience will be expected and children must never think for themselves or anticipate their instructions. Please remind them it is only role play and it will definitely end after an hour, but to get the most out of the session they should take it seriously.

During the 1880 Gallery lesson one pupil will have to wear the dunce's cap and another will be 'caned', others may have to wear or demonstrate the back straightener and left handers will be expected to write with their right hand – after all 'the right hand is the right hand for writing'. Participation in the lesson in this manner will be a reward for good behaviour/acting not for misbehaving.

Please bring a register (with surnames and first initials or whole first names and an indication as to whether the child is male or female if it may not be apparent from their name) for each class to give to the Victorian schoolteacher. This allows us to call a proper register at the start of each classroom experience. The register can also be used to indicate to the Victorian teacher any pupils with learning difficulties, or who are especially sensitive, so they are not put under too much pressure. Please also indicate which pupil should get the dunce's cap and which should be 'caned'.

Please note that the Gallery classroom is not accessible for wheelchair users and may prove difficult for those with restricted mobility to access. Please contact us to discuss options and alternatives if necessary. There is step free access to the Schoolroom for the Monitorial lesson.

The Monitorial system relied upon monitors assisting the schoolmaster. So if you have opted for the 1840 Monitorial lesson and are bringing year 5&6 pupils please select one monitor for every 10 (or part thereof) pupils that you are bringing. They will be told everything that they need to do on the day but should be able to listen to and follow instructions well and have the confidence to lead a small group of their peers in simple reading activities. For Years 1–3 the monitors will be taken from visiting adults. If you are a Year 4 teacher we will leave it to your discretion, you know your class best. The rewards and punishments are also different, 'tickets' will be awarded for good work while 'badges of shame' will be hung around the necks of pupils who are said to have misbehaved. As with the 1880 Gallery lesson participation in the lesson in this manner will be a reward for good behaviour/acting not for misbehaving. There is no need to bring a register for this lesson as calling a register was not part of the daily routine at this time. If there are any pupils you are concerned about please speak to the leader at the start of the day.

Visiting adults also have a role to play in setting the scene in the classroom and should behave in a similar manner to the Victorian teacher as far as is possible and appropriate for your group. Photography is permitted but please try to be as unobtrusive as possible. In the 1880 Gallery lesson visiting adults will be referred to and treated as pupil teachers. If you are accompanying younger groups in the 1840 Monitorial lesson you may be taking on the role of monitors. Please listen for and follow your cues.

Preparing Your Group for a World War Two Evacuee Lesson

To help your class get the most out of their lesson we strongly advise that you discuss with them before their visit what things might happen in the session. The experience is authentically wartime - the teacher will be strict, stern and distant. Complete silence and instant obedience will be expected and children must never think for themselves or anticipate their instructions. References will be made to the war and evacuation throughout, including the fact that they will not be going home at the end of the schoolday but to a new family who will be looking after them. Please remind them it is only role play, it will definitely end after an hour and they will be going home to their families at the end of the visit. However, to get the most out of the session they should take it seriously.

Please bring a register (with surnames and first initials or whole first names and an indication as to whether the child is male or female if it may not be apparent from their name) for each class to give to the teacher. This allows us to call a proper register at the start of each classroom experience. The register can also be used to indicate to the teacher any pupils with learning difficulties, or who are especially sensitive, so they are not put under too much pressure.

A gas mask drill will be held during the lesson. Instructions will be given that assume that all children will wear them but should a child choose not to after the entire class is encouraged to it will be 'overlooked' without fuss – no one will be forced to wear a gas mask.

Please note that the Gallery classroom, where this lesson takes place, is not accessible for wheelchair users and may prove difficult for those with restricted mobility to access. Please contact us to discuss options and alternatives if necessary.

Workshops

People and Places

Key questions:

What sort of people were involved in schools in the past?

What were their everyday lives like?

How have our homes changed from those in the past?

Session overview:

Pupils will find out what life was like for people from different classes in 1880 by asking questions and discussing ideas related to evidence from the time in the form of objects, documents and environments. Your class will be divided into up to three groups of no more than 11 pupils and will rotate round three 20 minute activities.

‘Your station in life’ takes place in the exhibition room and compares and contrasts the lives of the three types of people involved with the school: the pupils (labouring poor), teachers (professionals) and benefactors (rich). Pupils will look at photographs, documents and information from our admission registers and handle objects from the time to draw their own conclusions about Victorian society and ways of life.

‘Rest and relaxation’ takes place in the Headmaster’s house, where pupils visit the bedrooms and parlour to find out more about how people in 1880 spent their time at home and children’s role in the family. This highlights many of the differences between life today and in 1880.

‘Everyday necessities’: Just like us, people in 1880 needed to eat, keep warm and keep clean but they didn’t have electricity or plastic, which make our lives easier, so they had to do things using their own power and the materials of their time. Looking at objects in the kitchen, scullery and yard will help pupils discover exactly what this involved and compare and contrast it to how we do things today. Most visitors go away with a new appreciation of modern washing machines and bathrooms!

Additional information:

As this session takes place in two locations and usually involves splitting a class into three groups, three accompanying adults are needed for classes of more than 22 pupils. There is no additional charge for accompanying adults.

The majority of this session takes place in the Headmaster’s house, which is not accessible for wheelchair users and may prove difficult for those with restricted mobility to access. Please contact us to discuss options and alternatives if necessary. The Toys, Play and Design workshop takes place in an area of the museum with step-free access.

Toys, Play and Design

Key questions:

How are our toys different to those from the past?

What do toys from the past tell us about how people lived in the past?

What were toys made of and how did they work?

Session overview:

This session explores traditional toys from the past. Pupils will look at what the toys are made from, what they represent and who would have played with them in order to find out more about life in the mid to late 1800s. This is a very hand-on session in which pupils are encouraged to handle, play with and discuss the toys.

KS1 pupils will focus on similarities and differences between their lives and those of children in the past, including identifying differences in the materials used to make toys. Just like children from the past they will have the opportunity to make a simple moving toy (a thaumatrope) that doesn't require electricity.

Older pupils will have more opportunities to explore the technical side of old toys, examining how they work and what they are made from. They will also get the chance to think more about what the range of toys available tells us about everyday life and society in the mid to late 1800s.

Life as an Evacuee

Key questions:

What was daily life like for children during World War Two?

What did children and adults have to do differently because of the war?

Session overview:

Pupils will find out what life was like for children their age during World War Two by handling objects, documents and information from the time, visiting a recreated air raid shelter and talking to someone who was a child during the war. There will be three parts to the session: a whole-class object-handling session followed by two parallel activities for half of the class at a time.

Object handling – in small groups pupils will be given an object from the time (some are replicas e.g. the incendiary bomb!) and challenged to look at it, feel it and try it out to determine what it is made of, what it does/did and why it was needed as part of everyday life during the war. Having become experts, they will then have to find a way to explain this to the rest of the class.

Air raid shelter – pupils make their way down into the cellar where our Anderson shelter can be found. They will get the opportunity to explore it, to discover and discuss how time would have been spent during air raids and imagine the combination of fear and boredom involved.

Reminiscence – this is your chance to talk to a volunteer who was a child during the war so make sure you come with lots of questions.

Additional information:

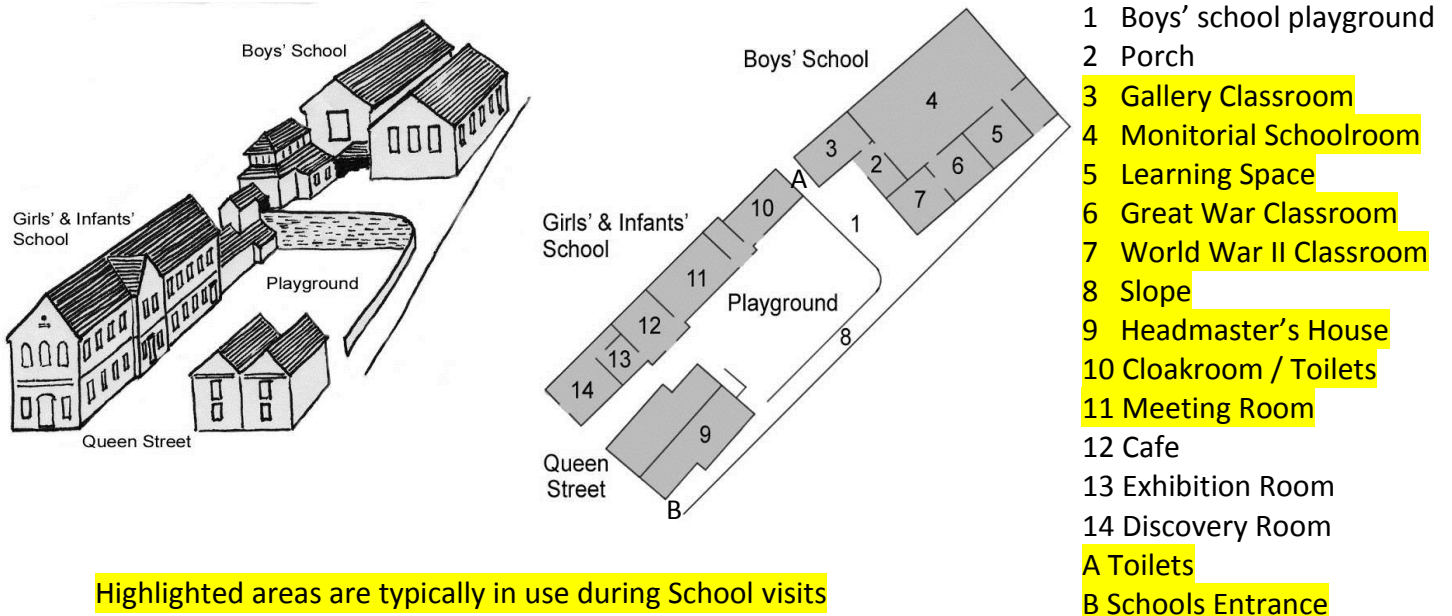
Please note that the air raid shelter is not accessible for wheelchair users and may prove difficult for those with restricted mobility to access. It may be possible to substitute the air raid shelter activity with another activity so please contact us to discuss options and alternatives if necessary.

We always plan to have a volunteer who was a child during the war available for the reminiscence part of the session but please be aware that this may not prove possible on the day, in which case we will run another activity in its place.

Lunchtime

You will have around 1 hour to eat and do drill. If you have opted to shop this is also the time that your pupils will have the opportunity to visit our pop-up shop (see page 2 for more details).

Finding your way around the British Schools Museum (map)



Where will we eat lunch?

If you bring two classes you will eat in the Monitorial Schoolroom. If you bring one class you will probably eat in the Jill Grey Learning Space but may eat in the Schoolroom. On a three class visit both the Schoolroom and the Jill Grey Learning Space will be in use for lunch.

What activities can we do when we have finished eating?

All groups are automatically booked in to do drill after they have had their lunch. If you would prefer self-guided time please let us know at the time of booking so that we can rota the appropriate volunteers.

Drill

Drill is a form of Victorian PE. We do a type of drill designed to be done indoors or in "close quarters" called Modified Desk Drill. This version of Modified Desk Drill was arranged at the suggestion of Joshua Girling Fitch who was a government education advisor and Chief Inspector for the eastern counties. He was also the brother of William John Fitch the longest standing Headmaster of the Boys' School.

Drill is an active but directed way to finish your visit. It can take place inside or outside and can take between 5 minutes and 35 minutes as needed so there is less pressure to finish eating lunch within a specified time.

Self-guided time

We advise doing drill but self-guided time is an option if you prefer.

There are two areas of the museum that you can visit during your self-guided time:

The Monitorial Schoolroom* (map number 4)

The twentieth century classrooms (Great War and World War II classrooms off the Monitorial Schoolroom, map number 6 and 7)

Each of these areas can accommodate a full class and there will be a room steward on hand to help your pupils investigate the area and follow their interests. You can visit as many or few of these areas as you choose and organise your group as you wish but please make sure that pupils are properly supervised at all times and there is not more than one class in any space at any one time. Food, drink, bags and coats must be in the Schoolroom or Learning Space while you look around. Laminated activity sheets will be available to help focus your pupils.

*Not all areas are available at all time for three class visits. Please check your booking information for details.

Risk assessment and preliminary visits

The information below outlines Health and Safety arrangements at the British Schools Museum to help you write a risk assessment for your visit. You are also welcome to book a preliminary visit in order to complete a risk assessment and/ or do any other planning that you wish to do for your visit. Please contact the museum on 01462 420144 if you would like to arrange a preliminary visit.

Arrival and departure

The Museum is located on a busy road. Please ensure that you pull up on the museum side of the road so that groups do not have to cross the road to access the Museum. If you choose not to do this there is a pedestrian crossing further down the road. For everyone's safety British Schools Museum volunteers and staff have been directed not to help school groups cross the road.

We recommend that you lead pupils directly from the coach and through the schools entrance rather than assembling them on the pavement first. You can either line them up on the slope before going into the Schoolroom or proceed directly to the Schoolroom. A member of staff or volunteer will be on hand to guide you.

Moving around the site

The Museum consists of a collection of grade II and II* listed buildings dating from 1837. As such there are many uneven surfaces, slopes, steps and other trip hazards. Pupils should walk at all times and listen to the instructions given to them by British Schools Museum volunteers and staff. The playground is used for car parking so please take care and supervise your pupils when they are crossing this space

Use of toilets

Pupils' use of the toilets must be supervised by visiting members of staff. Space is limited in the toilet areas and care needs to be taken to ensure that pupils do not trap their fingers in cubicle doors.

Supervision and behaviour

The Museum is a public building and adult group leaders must accompany their pupils at all times to supervise their behaviour, ensure their Health and Safety with particular attention to the points outlined above, and accompany them in the event of an evacuation. If your visit is on a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday you may share the site with another school. On Tuesdays we are also open to the public.

Groups must have the correct adult-to-pupil ratio; details of which can be found on your booking form. If you have opted to do People and Places and have more than 22 pupils in your class you will need to have three adults with the class.

If the behaviour of anyone in your group adversely affects the safety or enjoyment of other visitors or volunteers or staff, or causes damage to exhibits, this person may be asked to leave. Please brief your students about appropriate behaviour and have contingency measures in place in case anyone is asked to leave the building.

First aid

Dealing with any medical problem that might arise for a pupil whilst they are visiting the British Schools Museum is the responsibility of the staff accompanying them. Some first aid supplies are available but the Museum does not have any qualified first aiders.

The nearest accident and emergency department is at The Lister Hospital, Stevenage, tel. 01438 314333.

Fire and evacuation

In the event of an evacuation you will be directed off the site by a British Schools Museum volunteer or member of staff. Please follow their instructions. Visiting adults should distribute themselves throughout their group with one bringing up the rear.

The assembly point is the car park outside Wilshere Court. At the assembly point you should take the register and report any missing persons to Museum staff.

Contact us

If you have any queries, require further information or would just like a chat about your visit please the museum on 01462 420144.