



Visits for Home-Educated Students 2023-24



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## Introduction

*To welcome curiosity and invite wonder, where faith lives and history happens.<sup>1</sup>*

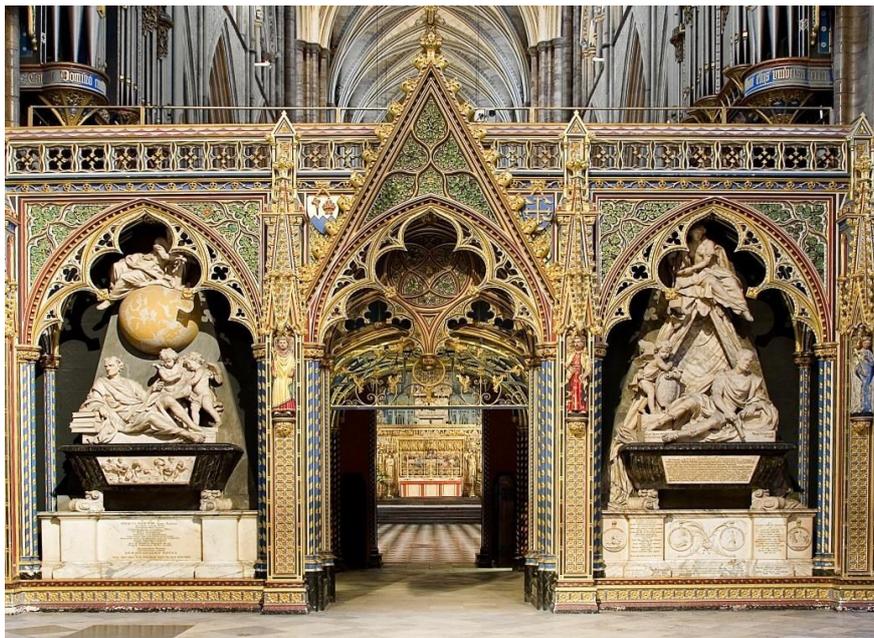
We love to welcome all groups of learners, and believe that Westminster Abbey is a fantastic educational resource whatever your faith background. At the heart of our learning programme is the belief that access to our team of expert Learning Officers is the key to a successful visit to the Abbey. The Learning department has over a decade of experience guiding groups– in 2019 we were voted *Best Venue for learning History* in the School Travel Awards. Our hope is that educational visits can serve as an inspiring introduction to the Abbey.

For those who choose a self-led visit we can also support your visit in a number of ways to maximise your children's learning and enjoyment of the Abbey.

This booklet is intended to support you in planning your visit to Westminster Abbey.

It contains information regarding

- Charges
- Payments and Cancellations
- Safety, Security and Safeguarding
- Preparation and on the day of your visit
- Terms and Conditions for Home Educated Guided Groups



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## Guided visits

Anyone wishing to book a guided visit for home educated students is required to form a group of at least 10 school-aged children. Where possible, we ask that students be of the same Key Stage so that we can more effectively tailor our session.

We offer a range of guided visits, themed tours and workshops. Please see our [current programme](#) on the website for details.

Contact us to discuss your visit by emailing [learning@westminster-abbey.org](mailto:learning@westminster-abbey.org) or by phoning 0207 654 4965.

Useful information to provide in your initial email or phone call:

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of date (We do not offer guided visits on Saturdays or during August)
- Tour or Workshop title
- Number of students and adults (particularly if you wish to bring a larger group)

Services:

You are welcome to attend Holy Communion at 12.30 or Evensong at 5pm.

Please let us know if you wish to do this in advance of your visit so we can arrange for seats to be reserved.

## **SEN and Access**

It is important to us that our sessions are accessible to everyone and we endeavour to tailor our sessions to the needs of pupils. Provision can be made to adapt sessions for pupils with Special Educational Needs; please call us to discuss specific requirements. It is important that you inform us about any special needs (including accompanying adults) on your booking form.

People with restricted mobility can enjoy visiting the Abbey and its surrounding areas but need to be aware that there are a number of steps and uneven floors. There may be some difficulty for those using wheelchairs in some of the chapels. Please make sure that you let us know on the booking form if you have such difficulties. Unfortunately, our Education Centre is up a short flight of steps. If you have someone who is unable to climb these, we can make arrangements to welcome the whole group in a different venue. Please make this clear on your booking form.

## Self-led visits

Providing that individual families book a self-led visit with the Learning Department on **a week day during school term-time**, they are entitled to the concession rates afforded to school groups.

A self-led visit means that you are able to take your own time around the Abbey, and will not be guided by a member of the learning team.

Please note that a self-led visit does **not** include use of our multi-media guides.

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Families visiting at the weekend or during school holidays will have to pay the normal entrance charges. These visits do not need to be pre-booked but check the Abbey website for opening times as these often vary

You can download one of our self-led trails [here](#) to help you as you go around the Abbey with your group.

## Charges and Payment

Home Educated students visiting during term time are charged the same rate as UK school groups:

Guided Tours (KS1-5)	£6 per student
Guided Tour + Workshop	£8 per student
Queens Diamond Jubilee Galleries add-on	£2 per student

Self-led visits:

Primary students (aged 4-11)	£2 per student
Secondary student (aged 12-18)	£6 per student

*Adults*

1 adult per 10 children (one adult per five students for KS1 students) is free of charge

Any other adults £14 per additional adult

### **Adults:**

We require the following numbers of adults to accompany your group of home educated students. We do not charge for these adults. Adults accompanying students with SEND may come in addition and will not be charged.

**Any additional adults will be charged £14 each.**

Number of Pupils KS2-5	Number of Adults Required (no charge)
1-20	2
21-30	3
Number of Pupils KS1	Number of Adults Required (no charge)
1-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-25	5
26-30	6

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## Making a Booking

1. Submit an online enquiry from our website, telephone us 020 7654 4964, or email [learning@westminster-abbey.org](mailto:learning@westminster-abbey.org). Include as much detail as possible, as well as three possible dates.
2. Once we have agreed a date, you will be sent a booking form. This must be returned to us **within 1 week**.
3. We will email you a confirmation letter. Please keep this safe and ready to show on your visit.

## Payment:

**Guided Groups:** You will be sent an invoice based on the numbers indicated on the booking form three weeks before your visit date. If you wish to reduce your numbers after this date, we cannot reduce the amount owed as we calculate our staffing.

Payment is due by the day of the visit. Please send a cheque or pay by bank transfer in advance. Cheques are made payable to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. If you are paying by BACS please include the date of your visit and school name as a reference. Bank details are found at the foot of your invoice.

**Self-led groups:** You will pay on arrival at the Cloister Entrance. When you arrive, please make yourself known to the marshals on duty who will arrange for you to enter and pay the amount you have been quoted. You must also have the confirmation email sent to you by the learning department to show to Abbey staff.

## Cancellations:

If you need to cancel your guided visit please give as much notice as possible. If you cancel with less than 15 working days' notice (i.e. three weeks), full payment will be required as we will be unable to offer the slot to any other group. This also applies to groups who wish to rearrange their visit; within the cancellation period payments are **not** transferable to different dates.

On very rare occasions, Westminster Abbey alters its opening hours or closes for special events. We endeavour to give you as much as notice as possible if this happens. In this instance payment is refundable and we will try to rearrange your visit.

## General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):

We hold the email addresses of group leaders booking visits on our secure Customer Relations Management system in case we need to make contact about the visit. We will not contact you unless it is about this specific visit. If you wish to join our mailing list please sign up online [here](#).

Once the visit is completed, we retain the group leader's email information linked to the group but we do not use it to make contact again unless a new booking is made.

On our booking form, we also ask for a contact mobile number in case we need to make contact on the day of the visit (e.g. if the group has not arrived). This information is not kept electronically, and the hard copy of the booking form is destroyed after one term.

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## Safety, Security and Safeguarding

### Health & Safety information:

We want you to feel happy and safe during your visit to Westminster Abbey. If at any point you do not, please let your guide know. If anything makes you feel uncomfortable, please speak up.

Please ensure that all members of your group are aware that the Abbey is an ancient building and that they need to bear certain things in mind in order to keep safe during their visit.

- Adults are responsible for the supervision and safety of the children in their charge at all times. Please make sure each adult knows who is in their group and that they are responsible for them during the tour.
- Do not enter any part of the Abbey that is marked 'Private' or which has been roped or cordoned off to prevent access for safety reasons.
- Should there be a need for First Aid there are Abbey staff trained in this.
- An announcement over the public address system will be made if an evacuation of the Abbey needs to take place. Please follow the instructions and directions given by the Abbey Marshals (red gowns).

If you are having a guided visit, your guide will also make the following points as part of their introduction:

- Pupils should look where they are walking - some areas are dimly lit, floors and steps are uneven and there are a number of low doors and steps that may not be immediately obvious.
- It can be very busy. Keep together and count your pupils regularly!
- If you need any help you can always ask a member of staff/volunteer in red or blue gowns or staff on the Information Desk.

We can provide a copy of our risk assessments for guided tours and workshops.

### Security

The safety and security of all our visitors is very much a part of Westminster Abbey's daily life.

We understand we have a very important responsibility when it comes to your safety. As the security situation in the UK is ever changing, we are constantly reviewing our safety and security arrangements, including:

- Comprehensive CCTV coverage, monitored 24 hours a day.
- A professionally trained security department.
- Constant patrols by both police and security staff.

Additionally, we maintain very close operational links with the Metropolitan Police, giving us good knowledge of any known risks as they occur, as well as a quick response in the event of an incident.

### Evacuation or Lock Down

An announcement over the public address system will be made if an evacuation or lockdown of the Abbey needs to take place. Please follow the instructions and directions given by the Abbey Marshals (red gowns). If in any other part of the Abbey precincts, please follow Abbey staff instructions.

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During a visit your group may be in small groups; not all groups will be evacuated to the same muster point. Staff will endeavour to locate all members of the party and if possible will reconvene in the Education Centre.

### **Searches**

You may be required to open your bags on entry to the Abbey. Our trained security staff monitor entry points.

### **Safeguarding**

All groups need to be aware that the Abbey is a public building and can be very busy at times. Children should be adequately supervised. The Abbey requires a ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils (1:5 for KS1 and younger) and provides free entry for groups leaders on that basis. A copy of the [Abbey Safeguarding Policy](#) is available to download.



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## Preparation and On the Day

### Welcome film

Please ensure that all your pupils and adult helpers have a chance to view our welcome film before you visit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Dp5ASRD3I8&feature=youtu.be>

### Briefing your students

We encourage you to prepare your young people for your visit by talking to them about the Abbey's place in history and explain that the Abbey is a working church. You should explain that there will be tombs so ensure that the young people are comfortable with the idea of visiting a place that has human remains.

### Arrival – Guided groups

On the day of your visit please come to Number 1 Dean's Yard and ring the bell for the Education Centre. A member of the team will come and let you in. There are three toilets available here.

You may leave bags and coats in the Education Centre which is secure. A member of the Learning team will welcome you, check your departure time and exact group numbers. They will divide your party into groups if necessary. Maximum group size for touring is 17 people (including adults). We try to place children of similar ages into groups to ensure that the material is covered in a relevant and accessible way. If you have children from different age groups you may not be with them on the tour. Please let us know if this is likely to be a problem.

### Arrival – Self-led groups

When you arrive, please go to the Group Entrance via the Cloisters. Deans Yard, SW1P 3NP. Make sure you have your confirmation email with you. Sometimes we have long queues, so it is useful to show this email to ask for admittance at your booked time slot.

### Lunchroom and Cloakroom

Packed lunches may be eaten in the Cloisters, an undercover area of the Abbey; just let us know before your visit. It can get very cold here on a winter's day. College Garden may be available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. Behaviour in these areas should continue to be appropriate to a place of worship. Please take all rubbish home with you.

### Bag storage

Guided groups may leave belongings in the Education Centre when they are in the Abbey for their guided visit. If you are also self-guiding as part of your visit, you must take your bags with you when you leave the Education Centre.

### Younger Siblings

Guided tours and themed events are not suitable for children under 5 years old. Groups on a tour must stay together inside the Abbey and there are many uneven floors and steps in the Abbey which can make it awkward for prams and toddlers to keep up. For this reason we discourage younger siblings from attending the guided tours. Parents may prefer to wait in the Cloisters for the guided tours to finish, providing at least one adult

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remains with the group. If it is essential that younger siblings attend a tour, please do ensure that they stay with the group and please indicate on the booking form that they will be attending. Although we do not charge children under 5 years of age, we do need to know if they will be attending so that we can regulate group tour sizes



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## Terms and Conditions

By signing the booking form for your visit, group leaders agree to act as liaison between the Abbey and other home educators on the visit and to abide by these terms and conditions.

Please ensure that ALL ADULTS have read this and understand what is expected of them.

- Large groups must be split up into smaller groups accompanied by at least one adult.
  - The Abbey requires a ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils (1:5 for KS1 and younger) and provides free entry for staff on that basis.
  - Adults are responsible for the behaviour of the young people in the Abbey and precincts. Please ensure all adults in your group are aware of their responsibilities.
  - You are expected to abide by the instructions given by Abbey staff at all times.
  - Groups causing disruption may be asked to leave.
  - Photography is permitted in the Abbey but please be sensitive to others.
  - Please dispose of any gum before entering.
  - If eating in the Cloisters or Abbey Gardens, please take all your rubbish with you.
  - Groups arriving after their allotted entry time are not guaranteed entry. If you are running late please contact the Learning Department on 020 7654 4965.
  - Guided groups are required to give 15 working days (i.e. three weeks) notice of any cancellations. Full payment will be required if cancellations are made with less notice or in the event of a no-show.
  - Guides will keep to the tour time as written on the booking form. We are unable to extend tour times except by prior arrangement.
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