Health & Safety Information and Risk Identification for Schools & Colleges

Completing your risk assessment

Updated April 2019
Teachers are strongly advised to visit the Museum in advance of their school or college visit in order to conduct their own risk assessment. This document is designed to help you to complete a risk assessment for your visit and does not replace your own risk assessment. It should be used in conjunction with the Visit Guidelines document, which can be found on the V&A website – www.vam.ac.uk/primary or www.vam.ac.uk/secondary

Responsibility for the pupils on school or college visits remains with the teachers at all times.

The following risks should be considered when producing a risk assessment:

- Slipping, tripping or falling on entry to the Museum and within the building or in the garden, including the shallow pool
- Slipping, tripping or falling due to liquid, e.g. water leaks and spillages
- Sustaining light injury (for example cuts and bruises), on equipment in the Learning Centre, such as tables, chairs and craft items including scissors and glue, or collision with display cases and corners
- Trapping fingers in doors, including lift doors
- Being separated from the rest of the group

Security

Security at the V&A is taken extremely seriously. We welcome millions of visitors each year and their safety and security is paramount to us. We also have a duty of care to protect our collections and buildings, so that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

All aspects of Security are overseen by our Security Director and our highly trained V&A Security, Safety and Fire Teams. We operate in accordance with the Home Office Security Policy Framework and report our compliance each year to HM Government and the V&A's board of Trustees.

When you visit the V&A you will see some of our security services, but many more are operating behind the scenes. All of our Front of House staff are trained to deal with emergencies of all sorts, they will assist our visitors in every way possible. We test our procedures and response times on a regular basis to ensure that if a serious incident occurs our staff are correctly equipped and ready to assist.

The inside and outside of the Museum are covered by a comprehensive network of CCTV cameras. Images are monitored and recorded to help ensure the safety of visitors and the exhibits. Members of the Security team carry out bag searches at the entrances to the Museum, this includes school groups. Metal detector wands are used on some occasions and large bags or wheelie cases must be checked into the cloakroom. Unattended bags should be reported to a member of staff. Please do not touch them.

We have procedures in place should it be necessary to quickly restrict access and egress to the building (or part of it) through physical measures in response to a threat, either external or internal. In the event of an emergency warranting in-vacuation, please follow staff to move to the most sheltered area within the building.

We have a Visitor Experience Team and volunteers who work in every public space during opening hours to assist visitors and call for additional support if required.
Fire and Evacuation

The Museum has full evacuation procedures in case of emergency or fire. All fire exits are clearly marked and all staff have received training in evacuation procedures. Our security, fire and safety procedures are tested on a regular basis and updated as necessary. An alarm followed by an announcement is used to alert staff and visitors of an evacuation. In the event of a fire evacuation, lifts should not be used. Once outside, teachers should take the register and report any missing persons to a member of security staff (who will be in uniform) or to Museum staff wearing high-visibility jackets. Please ensure that your group understands the importance of following such procedures in the event of an evacuation.

First Aid

The Museum has members of staff trained to provide basic First Aid treatment, although First Aid provision is ultimately the responsibility of the teacher, or the group leader, who must carry First Aid at all times. Please report any accidents to a Gallery Attendant (uniformed staff) who will be able to call for the First Aider.

Museum Staff

All Museum employees are passed through the V&A’s security vetting system. Museum staff carry ID cards with their photograph, so they can be recognised by visitors. All staff leading teaching sessions are experienced in working with children. The Museum has a policy in place for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Supervision and Behaviour

Teachers and adults should remain with their pupils at all times and ensure they are accompanied in the event of evacuation. Groups must have the correct adult to pupil ratio (1:3 for Early Year Foundation Stage; 1:6 for Key Stages 1 & 2 and 1:15 for Key Stages 3, 4 & 5). The Museum reserves the right to refuse admission to groups who are not considered to have sufficient adult supervision. If the behaviour of any groups or individuals affects the safety or enjoyment of other visitors they will be asked to leave. Teachers should ensure that their pupils understand how they are expected to behave and have contingency measures in place in the event that anyone is asked to leave. Pupils should be instructed to inform a Gallery Attendant (uniformed staff) should they become separated from the rest of the group. Please ensure all pupils and accompanying adults are made aware of this in advance of their visit.

If you have any queries about your visit, please contact our Learning Co-ordinator – Schools and Colleges at schools@vam.ac.uk

We hope you have an enjoyable visit to the V&A.