Risk Assessment Guidelines

Children under the age of 16 must be supervised at all times during their visit and remain the responsibility of the teacher/group leader. **We require a ratio of 1 adult for every 10 children.**

1. **Pre-Visit**
   We recommend that teachers make a pre-visit to the museum to plan their class visit. Free entry to special exhibitions can be arranged for teachers wishing to prepare for a booked school visit.

2. **Before your visit**
   Pupils and teachers should agree appropriate rules of behavior before coming to the museum. This is a good way to discuss the role of museums.

   - The museum is responsible for conserving irreplaceable collections. **Even if objects are not in cases** they should not be touched or leaned against. Please ensure pupils do not stroke the animals or touch objects even if they are in reaching distance.

   - **Please touch** signs. There are still lots for children to get their hands on, please look for the ‘please touch’ hand signs and interactive galleries.

   - Good techniques to keep in mind can be to ask children to sit down when talking to them and make sure they are in pairs or in a line when walking between areas.

2. **Size of group**
   We recommend that classes be split into smaller groups, though we are aware this is not always practical. Certain areas and activities will be inappropriate for a full class size so please check first.

3. **Museum staff**
   Different staff will be on hand to help you during your visit.

   *Enablers* – lead workshops, act as school hosts and look after you – they wear green polo shirts and body warmers

   *Visitor Services staff* – look after the galleries, help visitors find their way around – they wear lilac shirts and navy blazers.

4. **First aid**
   The Museum has several designated First-aiders. If anyone is injured please notify the nearest member of the Visitor Services Staff who will be able to help.

5. **Fire alarm**
   The Museum has clear procedures for evacuating the Museum in the event of a fire alarm. Visitor services staff – or an Enabler will escort you outside. You are responsible for keeping the group together.

6. **Getting lost**
   It is helpful to agree meeting points for your group in case your group is split up. We suggest the lighthouse lens in the Grand Gallery inside and the main steps on Chambers Street outside. Visitor Services Staff and Enablers will help lost children.
Potential hazards around the Museum

Museum Entrance Hall
When it is raining, slight risk of slipping and falling – especially if feet are wet

Throughout the Museum
- Large plate glass cases, doors or walls, which you might not see very well
- Potentially slippery floors and changes in flooring type and level.
- Sharp edges of walls, cases and stairways - stone, steel, glass.
- Escalators.
- Lifts.
- Fire extinguishers should NOT be touched.
- Objects, plinths and stands at low level that could be tripped over.

Special features to remind class about
- Some areas of the Museum are very dimly lit.
- Balconies – some of these have a considerable drop that is not obvious– keep away from edges and do not climb up.
- Large open spaces – please discourage pupils from running
- Low plinths which are a potential trip hazard.
- Exposed machinery — which could trap fingers or hurt if bumped into.
- Nooks and crannies in which children could easily hide from their teacher.
- Small staircases and narrow areas can lead to overcrowding and children bumping into each other.
- Small windows or ‘port holes’ looking onto other levels – discourage children from dropping or throwing things.