

Appendix 3

Hexham Old Gaol Risk Assessment

The Old Gaol is a Tynedale Council facility and operates within the Council's rigorous Health and Safety Policy. Its activities and resources are risk assessed in accordance with Tynedale Council policy.

This sheet contains basic guidance to help you complete your risk assessment for your visit to the Old Gaol.

Multi Levels

Vehicle access to the Old Gaol is very limited and groups are therefore advised to walk from the Wentworth Car and Coach park or the Market Place. There is a narrow pavement adjacent to the main entrance.

There are several stone steps and permanent wheelchair access to the museum entrance.

At the beginning of your visit you will be given a short Health & Safety brief.

- We explain the use of the lift between each floor and ask that a maximum of nine pupils travel with an adult in the lift at any one time.
- There is also a narrow spiral stone staircase with a steel handrail between each floor. Access to the stairway is through an alarmed wooden door on each level. We ask pupils to walk in small groups on the left hand side of the stairs, one behind the other, with an adult in front and behind.
- At the top of the stairs is a wide platform which allows access to the roof of the museum. Access to the roof is not allowed for school parties and the door is kept locked.
- We ask pupils not to run in the museum and to stay with their group leaders at all times.
- We also explain the procedure for evacuating the building.

Facilities

Our staff has first aid training and there is a first aid box on site.

Although there are no public toilets at the Old Gaol (the nearest being at the Wentworth Coach and Car Park), a staff toilet is available for pupils' use at the back of the reception area and shop. We ask that group leaders take responsibility for managing toilet visits.

Notes for Teachers/Adult Helpers are attached, which we advise you distribute copies to all adults in your group before your visit.

Museum

The Old Gaol dates from 1330, making it the oldest recorded purpose-built

prison in England. Visitors can walk through recreated scenarios from Hexham's stormy past and try out a range of interactive resources and activities.

Each level of the museum is accessible by our glass walled lift. Although the lift also takes visitors down to the dungeon area, access is not allowed to this display. A short audio presentation is automatically activated for passengers. The dungeon can also be viewed through a hatch in the ground floor, which is covered by toughened glass.

Shop

We ask that visits to the museum shop take place in small groups and are accompanied by an adult.

Free pre-visits

Free pre-visits offer you the chance to meet a member of the Museum team directly involved in the service for schools. We offer a tour of the Museum and an opportunity to see our resources and the activity sheets we provide. Please telephone Flora Fairbairn on **01434 652351** to arrange a visit.

We are also happy to send you copies of activity sheets in advance of your visit to assist with lesson planning.

Guidelines for Education Groups

In preparation for bringing an education group to the Old Gaol, we request that all adults accompanying your group read the following guidelines:

- There may be a range of other visitors enjoying the Old Gaol during your visit and we would be grateful if you could brief your group accordingly. The behaviour and discipline of pupils/students remain the responsibility of Group Leaders (teachers/tutors and adult helpers) at all times during your visit.
- Required adult: pupil ratios are dependent on the ages of pupils. We are happy to advise you of the current Northumberland County Council guidelines at the time of booking.
- Please ensure that Group Leaders remain with their groups at all times.
- In order to avoid "traffic jams" on our narrow spiral stairs, we would request that small groups walk in single file with an accompanying adult leading and behind.
- The museum floor is level throughout, with wheelchair ramps where appropriate. However, the spiral stairs are narrow and sensible footwear is recommended.
- In the interest of safety, we ask visitors not to run in the museum.
- Some objects from our collection are on open display. Please remember that these items are museum objects and should be treated with respect.
- We would be grateful if visitors did not eat or drink, or carry open food or liquid, while in the museum.
- The Old Gaol is a no-smoking building.

Thank you for your co-operation