

BIG PIT: NATIONAL MINING MUSEUM OF WALES, BLAENAFON

SAFETY INFORMATION TO HELP SCHOOLS PREPARE FOR SCHOOL VISITS AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Please remember that:

- schools are responsible for doing their own risk assessments, and that
- we are unable to fill in, check or sign any sections of school risk assessment forms as these are not our responsibility.

We recommend that teachers refer to the DfES document 'Health and Safety of Pupils/Young People on Educational Visits - A Good Practice Guide, 1988'. <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/visits>. This clarifies that it is the responsibility of teachers and group leaders to complete a risk assessment prior to any visit being made.

The safety information we provide is intended as a preparatory tool. It does not replace the need for your own risk assessment specific to the needs of your group and in line with the official guidelines and school/LEA policies.

Our safety information outlines the control measures undertaken by the museum to avoid or reduce risk, together with rules of conduct for visiting groups. Your risk assessment will take into account the age, ability and specific needs of your group, any risk associated with your transport or possible weather at the time of your visit, in addition to the Museum's safety information.

We advise that all teachers/supervisors on the visit have copies of your risk assessment/relevant safety information.

Lastly, at the end of the document we have attached extracts from the Museum's Child Protection Policy, for information.

SAFETY STATEMENT

Big Pit: National Mining Museum of Wales fully accepts its responsibilities under Health and Safety Legislation. A Health and Safety Policy is in place together with written risk assessments undertaken in respect of our legal duties relating to persons other than employees (i.e. visitors) coming onto our site and using our facilities.

Please be assured that the health and safety of visitors whilst on site is of our utmost concern. We have worked closely with the local authority regarding health and safety matters and want to ensure that your visit is a fun, enjoyable and learning experience.

We operate a policy for staff recruitment, training and assessment which ensures that all staff with a responsibility for the safety and welfare of visitors/ participants are qualified to undertake the duties they are assigned.

Teachers and other school staff are kindly requested to work in partnership with the Museum by actively supervising children within their care whilst on site.

Pupils remain the responsibility of the school during the visit, including lunchtime.

We strongly recommend that group leaders conduct a preview visit in order to assess any potential risks for your group.

BACKGROUND	
Experience	Big Pit ceased production as a working colliery in 1980, and opened as a museum in 1983. The venue has been open to the public for 21 years.
Venue / Attraction Details	<p>Visitors can descend the 90 metres into the mine and see where generations of Welsh miners worked. The underground tour is guided by an ex-miner and lasts around 50 minutes.</p> <p>On the surface, visitors can see the Mining Galleries, where a modern coalface is brought to life with light and sound. This AV presentation begins with a short film and lasts for 20 minutes.</p> <p>The Pithead Baths have been restored to show where each shift began and ended. The baths building also contains exhibitions telling the stories of those who worked within the mining industry, in addition to displays of mining objects and tools, and topics like geology and social life.</p> <p>Visitors can also see the original colliery buildings around the site, including the fan house, winding engine house, blacksmith's forge and stables.</p> <p>The Conservation Workshop is usually open to the public from Monday to Friday, and gives visitors a taste of what happens to museum objects behind the scenes.</p> <p>A typical school visit lasts around 4 hours.</p>
Visitor Numbers	Annually we receive approximately 141,000 visitors. More than 54,000 of these are part of formal education groups.
Contact Information	<p>To book a visit, discuss the details of your visit or arrange a preview visit - contact 01495 790311.</p> <p>If after your visit you have any concerns or experienced any problems regarding the management of the venue or safety and health of members of your party, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you.</p>

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Animal / Animals Fouling in Public Access Areas	<p>Dogs are allowed on site, but not underground or in any of the buildings or exhibition areas.</p> <p>Assistance dogs accompanying visitors who are deaf or blind are most welcome.</p> <p>Owners are expected to clean up after their dogs.</p>
Communication Systems	All departments of the museum have access to two-way radio systems. There is a Direct Audio Communication system (DAC) which allows communication between various points underground, and between the underground and the surface.

Criminal History	<p>Every member of staff has received the National Information Service (NIS) check which is designed specifically for the museum sector and is a recognised equivalent to the basic CRB check.</p> <p>Museum staff who have regular and/or unsupervised access to children are subject to enhanced CRB checks.</p>
Equipment	<p>All equipment is regularly checked to ensure it remains 'fit for purpose'.</p> <p>School staff must supervise children when using this equipment.</p> <p>Climbing on machinery within the site is not allowed.</p>
Emergency Evacuation	<p>Emergency evacuation procedures are in place. Museum staff are familiar with and practice these regularly. There is an alternative exit underground for emergency evacuation.</p> <p>Fire Safety Instructions are located in each department. These give details of the procedures which should be followed if the alarm is raised, and indicate the Fire Assembly Point locations.</p> <p>In case of emergency, an alarm will sound. You should leave by the nearest safe exit and follow the guidance of Museum staff.</p>
Facilities for Visitors with Special Needs	<p>Big Pit tries to accommodate the requirements of visitors with special needs. Please contact us <u>in advance</u> to clarify what provision can be made for visitors with special needs.</p> <p>Schools and group leaders must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place in order that appropriate supervision and assistance is available to pupils with special needs.</p> <p>Our Access Guide is available on our website www.nmgw.ac.uk/Big Pit/Access Guide or by 'phoning 01495 790311</p> <p><u>Physical Impairment</u> Most areas of the site are accessible to all visitors, but due to the steep nature of some areas we recommend that wheelchair users and those with mobility problems are accompanied by an adult helper. There are uneven and gravelled surfaces in places. It is only possible for 4 visitors in wheelchairs to be underground at any one time.</p> <p><u>Visual Impairment</u>The Mining Galleries includes an AV presentation with various light levels and colours. Museum staff are happy to allow visitors the opportunity to handle and touch a range of exhibits.</p> <p><u>Hearing Impairment</u> AV presentations can be seen throughout the museum. Induction loops are installed in the exhibition areas.</p>
First Aid	<p>If First Aid is needed, please contact a member of Museum staff, who will then summon a trained first-aider.</p>

Guided Tours / Interpreter-led Activities	<p>The underground tour is guided by an ex-miner.</p> <p>The Museum will have assessed the risks involved in a particular activity and will verbally advise you of these and the control measures adopted.</p>
Height Restrictions	Children need to be at least 1 metre tall to take the underground tour.
Insurance / Public Liability	As an Assembly Sponsored Public Body, the Museum does not carry commercial insurance, but any proven liability will be paid from the Museum's own funds or, if insufficient, by request to the National Assembly.
Lost Children	<p>Please advise children separated from their group to inform a Museum Assistant or member of Museum staff if they are lost.</p> <p>Should a group leader become aware that one of their group is missing, they should inform a Museum Assistant or a member of Museum staff who will take appropriate action.</p>
Maximum Group Sizes / Supervision	<p>Please ensure that your pupils are supervised at all times.</p> <p>We ask you to keep to the following ratio :</p> <p>School years 1 to 3 (ages 5 to 8) : 1 responsible adult : 6 children School years 4 to 6 (ages 9 to 11) : 1 responsible adult: 10-15 children School years 7 onwards (secondary age 11+) : 1 responsible adult : 15-20 children</p> <p>The above are the ratios suggested by the DfES. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their group.</p> <p>There is no maximum number for groups visiting, but there is a limit of 17 persons per guide for the underground tour. This will be organised by the member of staff who collects the group from the waiting room.</p>
Medical Needs	<p>School or group leaders should contact Booking Office staff if any pupil is known to have any specific need or serious medical condition. We will need to consider and discuss emergency arrangements with you.</p> <p>Where it is safe to do so, we will aim to include fully pupils with specific or serious medical conditions within activities offered.</p>
Required Visitor Conduct	<p>Visitors must not :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enter areas which are not open to the public • behave in an unruly manner • touch any working machinery • climb on any machinery within the site <p>The Museum reserves the right to ask groups or individuals behaving in an offensive or unreasonable manner to leave the site.</p> <p>All groups of students under the age of 16 must be supervised at all times and remain the responsibility of party leaders or supervising adults throughout their visit.</p> <p>Unsupervised groups may find that they are denied entry.</p>

Schematic Map	<p>A map is provided on your entrance ticket that gives information on coach/car parking and authorised pedestrian routes.</p> <p>You will find a larger map in the Planning Your Visit Booklet which may be photocopied for all group leaders.</p>
Site Inspections of Venue Facilities / Area	Museum staff conduct regular inspections of the facilities, which are recorded.
Site Staff Identification	All museum staff wear identification badges and can be approached if you have any worries or concerns. They will be able to help you or direct you to the appropriate place for help.
Vehicle Traffic	A Visitor Coach Park is available for use. It is located adjacent to the drop-off point at the main visitor entrance.
Weather Protection / Sun Safety / Clothing	Big Pit is an outdoor industrial site, so protective clothing is needed in case of bad weather. Sturdy shoes are recommended for the underground tour. Sun protection is advised during hot weather.
Welfare Facilities	<p><u>First Aid Room</u> There is a first aid room at the Pit Top area.</p> <p><u>Toilets</u> Toilets (including disabled toilets) are located on all 3 levels of the Big Pit site.</p> <p><u>Sandwich Room</u> There is a sandwich room which can accommodate 70 people. Schools should indicate at the time of booking if they wish to use this room.</p>

AREAS OF HIGHER RISK	
Buildings	<p><u>Blacksmith's Shop</u> Open fire in forge at times. Do not allow children to pass beyond the barrier.</p> <p><u>Conservation Workshop</u> Chemicals and paint substances being used at times. Do not allow children to pass beyond the barriers; take heed of advice of conservation staff.</p> <p><u>Mining Galleries</u> Dark areas, loud noises, and varying levels of light in parts of the presentation.</p> <p><u>Winding Engine House</u> Warn children not to distract the driver when the engine is in motion. Children must not pass beyond the barrier.</p>
Machinery	Original machinery is on display in the Blacksmith's yard, Conservation Workshop and near the Pithead Baths building. Children should be warned to take care near machinery.

Safety Equipment / Clothing	<p>The self-rescuers carried during the underground tour contain hopcalite. This is harmful if ingested or inhaled without control. Children should not attempt to open these without being instructed to do so by the Guide.</p> <p>The batteries carried during the underground tour may leak if damaged. In this event, the Guide should be informed and skin and clothing should be washed immediately.</p>
Underground Activities	<p>Children should remain with the group at all times underground.</p> <p>All visitors will be provided with hard hats for the underground visit.</p> <p>Big Pit is subject to the Coal Mines Act safety legislation.</p> <p>It is against the law to take smoking materials or incendiary substances underground. These include cigarettes, tobacco, matches and lighters, mobile phones, battery-operated watches and key fobs, calculators, radios, personal cassette players and all photographic equipment. This 'contraband' will be collected by the Museum guides before the underground tour begins and will be kept securely locked away on the surface until the tour ends.</p>
Slate Chippings / Gravel	<p>These cover the ground in some areas. Children should be warned not to throw or play with these.</p>
Review	<p>This document and related safety information is updated regularly.</p>

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CHILD PROTECTION AT NMGW SITES

Our Child Protection Policy appears in full on the Web under About Us/Strategy and Policy. Please read the extracts below before your visit.

Leaders/Teachers Responsibilities while visiting the Museum

The National Museums and Galleries of Wales wishes to ensure that children are protected from harm while at the Museum. In addition to the Museum's responsibilities, we ask that leaders/teachers of groups exercise their own responsibilities.

In particular, all leaders/teachers shall:

- Ensure they supervise the children/young people at all times
- In the case of an accident, contact a member of museum staff who will follow the NMGW Staff Emergency Procedures
- In the case of a lost child, contact a member of Museum staff who will follow Museum procedures
- Not have in their possession or consume alcoholic beverages or use illegal drugs or smoke on the museum premises
- Not verbally or physically abuse a child/young person
- Ensure adequate insurance cover for the group and leader
- Inform the group of how to behave while in the National Museums and Galleries of Wales
- Observe NMGW Fire Precaution Procedures

We wish to remind all leaders/teachers that the primary responsibility for the welfare of the children in their care rests with them at all times.

We will communicate concerns to the leader/teacher-in-charge, (unless this person is the source of concern) and reserve the right to follow this up with the school/organisation.

Concerns about the conduct of the leader/teacher will be reported directly to the school/organisation and possibly the police.

Group conduct while in the Museum

The Museum wishes all visitors to have an enjoyable visit. We therefore expect all visitors to display courtesy and respect for others and for Museum property at all times.

Group leaders/teachers should therefore not allow members of their group to:

- Use threatening, abusive or violent behaviour
- Bully (verbally or physically)
- Make any sexist, racist or other offensive remarks toward any other person or group
- Vandalise Museum property or displays
- Leave litter on the Museum premises
- Feed, touch, scare or hurt any animals present
- Enter areas of the Museum that are cordoned off
- Use bad language
- Smoke
- Consume alcohol outside designated areas (e.g. restaurant and picnic areas) or use illegal drugs
- Eat or drink apart from in cafes, restaurant and places set aside for school parties to eat their own refreshments
- Use mobile phones in the galleries

In the event that any of the above are not followed the Museum reserves the right to refuse admission and/or ask the group to leave.