School Visits | Welcome

Built to the glory of God, the Cathedral is a living church that has been at the centre of life in Chichester for over nine centuries.

We invite children and young people to explore and discover our sacred space, it’s fascinating history and inspiring art for themselves.

Our new Creative Learning and Discovery team was established in September 2024. Our creative learning programme which includes workshops for schools will unfold over 2025 as part of our 950 celebrations.

We appreciate and understand how stretched everyone’s budgets are. Unless we’ve approached you about an outreach project, there is a small charge for school and group visits to Chichester Cathedral. We rely heavily on donations from all our visitors. With this financial support along with charges to groups, we can continue to care for our buildings and communities for the future. These charges go towards booking administration and upkeep of our facilities. Your generous support helps keep Chichester Cathedral open and accessible.

**Chichester Cathedral | A living place of worship**

Chichester Cathedral is a Christian place of worship. Prayers are said on the hour from the pulpit and are broadcast over the Cathedral PA system. If your visit coincides with our hourly prayers, we ask for quiet as a mark of respect to our Christian community. If you would like to take part in an act of worship on your visit, we are happy to help arrange this.

It is common for difficult topics to arise when visiting the Cathedral with children and young people. Please consider their need for support whilst engaging with these themes. We often get lively, thought-provoking questions from children and young people visiting us. We love discovering and exploring these questions together as a group and we welcome those of faith and none to explore the bigger questions of life while they are with us. Your enthusiasm in helping children and young people understand and talk about difficult questions is a way in which everyone can get the most out of their visit.

Occasionally circumstances arise whereby a special service must be arranged at short notice, such as a funeral, and we reserve the right to alter your visit as required but we will endeavour to make the experience as good as possible and close to what was originally intended. On rare occasions we may need to cancel your original date and offer an alternative date.

**School visits | Frequently asked questions**

**Do we have to book in advance?**

Yes.

All school groups, no matter the size of the group must book their visits to Chichester Cathedral in advance. This includes nurseries, international schools, specialist schools, primary schools, pre-prep schools, prep schools, senior schools, secondary schools and colleges or sixth forms. This forms part of our safeguarding.

We’ll help make sure you’re prepared for your visit, let you know if there are any closures or services on the day or at the time of your visit and help make sure your visit is a success.

We want every group to arrive reassured that everyone in the Cathedral is abiding by the same safeguarding rules and has confidence in the measures we have in place.

**How far in advance must I make my school visits booking enquiry?**

We ask all school, academy and college groups to submit their provisional book form at least one month in advance of their visit using the enquiry form on our website. This is for all types of visits.

If your trip is less than a month away, please call the creative learning office on 01243 812497 or email rosie.bradberry@chichestercathedral.org.uk and we will try to facilitate your visit.

**Is there a space where we can eat and drink?**

Packed lunches can be eaten on our site in two different locations:

The Eastern Arm is an enclosed area within the Cloisters with heating and it is away from the public behind glass doors. The use of the Eastern Arm lunch space comes with no additional charge if it is used as part of an organised visit to the Cathedral.

Alternatively, if the weather is pleasant school groups can sit and eat on the Southwest Lawn.

Both the Eastern Arm and The Southwest Lawn are offered on a first-come, first-served basis and must be booked in advance of your visit.

You are responsible for ensuring that the space is left clean and tidy. A cleaning fee of £25.00 will be charged if a lunch area is left unclean and/or untidy.

If you would like to use the Eastern Arm lunch space as part of a trip to other organisations in the city which does not include a visit to Chichester Cathedral there is a charge of £25.00 per hour for this provision.

Alternatively, you may wish to use Bishop Palace Garden or Priory Park which are both run by Chichester District Council. Please contact CDC if you wish to use their public park as part of your trip.

**What are the toilets like?**

Toilets at the Cathedral are public facilities. There are nine individual toilet cubicles which are off the North Transept opposite our shop. We have one accessible toilet. We are not able to supervise your pupils in the toilet area. Please make sure that you have considered your school’s supervision policy and be sensitive to the comfort and safety of our visitors in these shared facilities.

**What should we wear?**

We prefer for all school groups who have a uniform to adhere to the school uniform policy while visiting the Cathedral. Wearing school uniform helps us identify school groups quickly. If you do not have a school uniform or would prefer to not wear school uniform, please let us know.

Open-toed shoes and high-heeled shoes are discouraged due to the uneven surfaces at the cathedral.

In the cooler months it is advisable to wear warm clothing as the Cathedral is a large space and part of the Cathedral, particularly outside can get chilly.

**Can we take photos?**

Respectful non-flash photography is permitted at Chichester Cathedral, and these are the key things to consider:

We primarily want all children and young people to come and experience our beautiful Cathedral in person and with their own eyes. We typically encourage children with their own cameras to take photos to remember their learning visit by taking key photos that will be helpful for a project for example an art project on stained glass windows. If your school has a no-phone or no photography policy, please let us know in advance.

The Cathedral is open to the public and is a popular tourist destination. It's possible that your children will walk in front of someone taking a picture. However, if you believe someone is taking pictures of your children or young people, always let a member of Cathedral staff know.

Photography of children from outside your group and photography of acts of worship, including of our choir, is prohibited.

We don’t allow use of drones, tripods or flash without prior permission. Make sure your flash is switched off; the relatively low light levels often trigger an automatic flash.

There are times when we may ask if your school is happy to be part of our promotional photography. We will always discuss this with you in advance and in person on the day.

**Is there anywhere we can put our bags?**

No. Unfortunately, we cannot offer bag storage at this time.

Please always keep your belongings with you. We are unable to accept any responsibility for loss or damage to personal belongings while you are with us.

**Will another school be visiting at the same time?**

There are only so many days in the calendar where we can accommodate school visits, so we sometimes have multiple schools visiting at a time. As such, it’s essential to regularly count or register your group and remind your group of the importance of staying together.

**Does the Cathedral have a risk assessment?**

All creative learning and discovery activities at the Cathedral are risk-assessed to protect our employees, volunteers, contractors and members of the public. We have a continuous programme of review to ensure our site and its precincts are as safe as they can be.

We are able to share our risk assessments upon request but please note that these are only a small part of a much larger body of risk mitigation across our organisation.

**Do we need a risk assessment?**

Visiting schools should conduct their own risk assessment prior to their visit in line with Department for Education guidelines.

Key considerations you might make in hazard identification and risk reduction at Chichester Cathedral:

* Have we shared information about our participants that might impact the risk level of activities?
* Are we aware of the presence of potential trip hazards, e.g. steps, steep or muddy surfaces, uneven pavements, kerbs etc.? Can we signpost the position of ramps and handrails to minimize this risk?
* Have we considered the presence of prickly, stinging or poisonous plants in flower displays at the Cathedral and/or growing in our flower boarders?
* Chichester Cathedral is in the centre of a busy university city. How will we monitor pupils when travelling through the city? What risks are posed by the public, travel, animals and vehicles in the vicinity of the Cathedral? N.B. Dogs are permitted within the Cathedral and its grounds and remain the responsibility of their owners.
* Chichester Cathedral is host to many events and concerts, have we considered the presence of wires on the floor under trunking or mats, additional power outlets or bulky audio-visual equipment?
* The Cathedral is both a place of quiet and of great noise (members of the public, organ rehearsals, singing, and announcements). Have we considered how best to capture children’s attention and issue instructions? Have we considered how young people may react to loud noises?
* Have we considered how to manage our young people’s response to low light levels in the cathedral particularly on a dark day. Have we consulted the creative learning and discovery team for additional support for young people and/or accompanying adults with visual impairments?
* The cathedral has fire safety and security protocols in place and a trained fire warden or security lead will direct you to the most appropriate exit and assembly point if the fire or security alarm sounds. Have we considered how we will assist in keeping our group together and calm in this situation?
* Have we ensured that we are able to provide the required supervision ratio?
* Have we shared our health and safety risk assessment, safeguarding risk assessments, mitigations and other relevant information with all adults accompanying the group?
* Do we have a designated first aider? Does everyone in our group know who this is?

**School visits | A Warm welcome awaits**

Thank you for your interest in visiting Chichester Cathedral. If you have any questions about your visit please do not hesitate to get in touch with our creative learning and discovery team. We very much look forward to welcoming you and your students.