



YORK  
MINSTER

# SELF-GUIDED TOUR GROUPS

*Pre-Visit Information*

YORKMINSTER.ORG    

Registered Charity No. 1201499

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# WELCOME

*from the Canon Missioner, Reverend Maggie McLean*

*“Our vision for students visiting York Minster is that they will be intrigued and inspired by this sacred space. That, through the experience of being here and discovering the Minster’s story, they will learn about the important place the Minster holds in our nation’s heritage and its continuing life of faith and discipleship.*

*What you will find in these pages is the essential information you will need in order to make your visit an inspirational and memorable experience for your group. We very much look forward to welcoming you on your visit.”*



# YORK MINSTER

## WHAT TO SEE?

*Stand in awe of the Great East Window, the largest expanse of medieval glass in the country. Spot everything from God's Creation to the Apocalypse in this monumental 600 year old masterwork.*

*With its spectacular suspended ceiling and some of the Minster's most intricate and astonishing stone carvings, York's gothic Chapter House is one of the cathedral's most inspiring spaces. Used as a meeting place for York Chapter for over 800 years it is a symphony of light, space and medieval art.*

*Get up close and personal at the Quire Screen. Meet fifteen of England's medieval Kings, masterfully carved in stone and bordered by a host of angels.*

*Visit the mysterious Five Sisters window in the North Transept. Dating to the 1250's this mountain of glass was probably inspired by geometric Islamic art as seen by Crusaders returning from the Middle East. Can you spot the geometric patterns hidden within?*



# UNDERCROFT & TREASURY

## WHAT TO SEE?

*Take time to explore our Accredited Undercroft Museum. Discover the layers of history of York Minster including intact remains of the Roman fortress or principia, along with a wall fresco and an ancient drain that still works today!*

*Explore the lives of the people past and present who have made this one of the greatest cathedrals in the world. Dynamic audio-visual interactives and artefacts reveal an inspirational and human journey of two thousand years.*

*See the awe inspiring hand illuminated York Gospels; the 1,000 year old Viking engraved Horn of Ulf and the casket that once held the heart of a crusader. The Undercroft Collection will provide a captivating and absorbing experience for all.*



# SELF-GUIDED TOURS

## WHAT TO EXPECT

*Self-Guided Groups are invited to explore York Minster in their own way. Guided by your Group Leaders, pupils can discover everything from the majesty of the Great East Window to Roman foundations buried beneath their feet. Take your time to explore the stunning medieval architecture and sacred spaces.*

- Self-Guided Tour groups are free to discover all parts of York Minster floor including the Undercroft and Crypt. Timed Tower Tours are also available upon request (see page 7 for more information).
  - We have a variety of trails and activities available for all teachers and pupils who visit. These guides help to provide structure to the visit and encourage pupils to engage and interrogate the Minster as they move around the building. These resources are available in advance of your visit on our website.
  - We recommend Self-Guided groups allow 1-2 hours to fully explore York Minster.
  - When visiting the Undercroft and Treasury larger groups must be staggered in order to fully enjoy the space and to meet fire regulations. Each room can comfortably accommodate ten escorted pupils at a time and pupils must be accompanied by teachers or other responsible adults at all times.
  - At the end of your visit schools exit via the Gift Shop which has a wide range of items including gifts at pocket money prices.
  - Whilst York Minster does provide toilets, be advised they are open to the public as well as pupils.
  - Groups that are made up of minors or other vulnerable individuals must be supervised by responsible adults in the group.
  - Please be aware we have no bookable lunchroom facility. Schools are welcome to use Dean's Park as a picnicking area without prior booking however this area is weather dependent and does not have any cover provided. Groups must leave the park tidy after use.
- Schools are welcome to arrange a free pre-visit to the Minster with our bookings team. Alternatively you can use our [Visual Stories guide](#) to help plan your visit.**



# THE CENTRAL TOWER

*Experience panoramic views of York from the highest point in the city – York Minster’s Central Tower.*

## **Tower Trip Availability**

- Up to 50 places are available on each trip.
- Tower Trips cannot be booked in advance due to external factors such as weather but can be booked upon arrival if available.
- Tower Trips are self guided tours and take place at timed, regular intervals.
- Be advised that the Tower can be closed at short notice due to adverse weather conditions, essential building works, or emergencies.
- Tower Trips last approximately 45 minutes

## **Health and Safety**

- No children under 8 are allowed to climb the Tower.
- There are 275 steps up to the top of the Tower and we strongly recommend that anyone with a health condition that may be affected by the climb should discuss the potential risk with their GP. Minster staff are authorised to decline access to the Tower.
- Part of the climb uses a walkway on the outside of the building which is fitted with a guardrail. The top of the Tower is enclosed in a safety cage.

## **Supervision Required To Climb the Tower**

- Any group wishing to climb the Tower with over 10 children (aged 16 and under) must be accompanied by a minimum of 3 school-approved adults.
- One adult should lead the climb and descent, one should walk in the middle of the party and one should remain at the back.
- It is the group leader’s responsibility to ensure no children ascend or descend the Tower ahead of the lead adult. This controls the pace of ascent and descent, and also leaves one adult free to escort anyone down the Tower who may need to leave.
- Groups of 10 or less may climb the Tower with two adults (one front, one back) on the condition that if anyone needs to be escorted down from the Tower the whole group must come down with them.

**If you require more information to plan your visit, you can contact Bookings on: 01904 557200**



# ATTENDING EVENSONG

*The Minster is an active place of worship, where all are welcome to visit and attend services. Services are always free, but may need to be booked.*

- Evensong and Evening Prayer are services held at York Minster. All are welcome to attend. Please see our [online calendar](#) to find out when they take place.
- The service lasts approximately 45 minutes and Evensong includes choral singing by the choir, readings from the Bible, and occasional hymns.
- Evensong uses the pattern of worship laid out by the Book of Common Prayer authorised in 1662.
- Many people attend the service as part of their regular worship at York Minster, and the words and music have great meaning for them.
- We welcome people of all faiths and none to join us at the service, to participate fully or simply observe how we come together as a diverse community.
- All those attending Evensong are asked to arrive at least 15 minutes in advance and stay for the whole of the service, in order to minimise disruption.

*If you would like your group to attend Evensong, please contact the Booking Team in advance so we can arrange for you all to be seated together.*





# CODE OF CONDUCT

- School groups must be accompanied at all times by a teacher or supervising adult and remain the responsibility of these guardians throughout their visit.
  - We require a minimum adult to pupil ratio of 1:10 for all school groups. The Minster is a large and busy place, so for primary school groups we recommend an adult to pupil ratio of 1:5. If groups arrive without the minimum required ratio of 1:10, we reserve the right to decline the visit. Any adults providing 1:1 support for individual children should be additional to this ratio.
  - Many people visit the Minster for prayer or quiet reflection. We ask all visitors to respect this holy place and other visitors by not shouting, running or making unnecessary noise.
  - All activities in the Minster stop at regular intervals for a few minutes of silence while short prayers take place. We ask everyone to stand or sit quietly while these are said and remember that York Minster is a place of prayer and pilgrimage for many people.
  - Lunchtime services take place throughout the week. Visitors are welcome to continue exploring the building but we ask groups to remain quiet and respectful at these times.
  - Please respect the Minster as a living church and allow congregations to worship in a peaceful environment by refraining from taking photographs during services and acts of worship.
  - We do not have a formal dress code and welcome visitors who are dressed casually, but recommend warm, practical clothing as the Minster can be cold even during the summer months. Visitors are welcome to keep their hats on inside if they wish to.
  - Please keep your belongings with you at all times. Discretionary bag checks may occur upon entry.
  - Everyone is welcome to use their mobile phone as a camera, but please ensure all devices are set to silent mode and refrain from making or taking calls inside the Minster.
  - Flash photography is allowed throughout the Minster with the exception of the Undercroft and Treasury (for the protection of the delicate objects on display).
  - You must not use images or sound recorded inside the Minster for any commercial purpose or upload them online without our prior consent. All commercial rights for all images created inside the Minster remain the property of The Chapter of York.
  - If you plan to film any part of your tour, you must obtain the permission of the member of staff or volunteer guide leading your tour before the tour starts. You must also gain written approval from us in advance of the visit if you plan to publish or broadcast any material for any other purpose than teaching within the classroom or private use.
- ## Shop
- Our shop is the primary exit from the Minster. All pupils must be supervised whilst in the shop and can only leave with a group leader to ensure they are safe once outside. Be aware that our shop entrance is one way and once pupils have entered the shop they will not be able to move back into the minster.
  - We ask group leaders to stagger pupil entrance into the shop to prevent overcrowding. The shop can comfortably manage 10 students at a time. There is space inside the Minster near the shop entrance for groups to wait for their turn.
  - For safeguarding we ask that one group leader remains in the shop with pupils all times, one stays with the groups waiting to come in to the shop and another waits outside to supervise pupils once they have left.

# RISK ASSESSMENT & SAFEGUARDING

## Risk Assessment

You can find our Self-Guided Tour Group Risk Assessment [online here](#). Please use this to ensure your own Risk Assessment is fully up to date.

We welcome group leaders to make a free pre-visit to risk assess York Minster for your group. Please contact us on 01904 557 200 or email [bookings@yorkminster.org](mailto:bookings@yorkminster.org) to arrange this. Alternatively our [Visual Stories guide](#) provides details.

## First Aid

- There are designated qualified first aiders on site. If there is a medical emergency in the group you must report it immediately to a member of Minster Staff or the Minster Police. All accidents must be reported and entered in the accident book.
- Two Automated External Defibrillators are kept in the York Minster Police Cabin and at the Tower Top.
- Injuries requiring more than York Minster First Aid attention will be dealt with by calling an ambulance.

## Safeguarding

- School staff and accompanying adults **must** always remain with their groups for the whole of their visit.
- Images and video are monitored and recorded in and around York Minster as part of security footage for the purposes of crime prevention and public safety. This scheme is controlled by The Chapter of York.
- York Minster toilets are open to the general public. Please ensure that your group is supervised at all times and that you follow your own safeguarding procedures if using the public toilets.

York Minster's full safeguarding policy is available on [our website](#) for you to review.

**If you have any queries please contact the Cathedral Safety Officer Dee Cooley, on 07843 339980 or email [deec@yorkminster.org](mailto:deec@yorkminster.org) for further information.**



# ACCESSIBILITY

## At the Minster

- To enter and exit the Minster we have steps and ramps fitted with handrails.
- The Minster floor is accessible via ramps, excepting the High Altar Sanctuary in the Quire and the Zouche Chapel, which are only accessible via steps.
- Wheelchairs are available on request.
- Registered assistance dogs are welcome in the Minster.
- The stone flooring is generally sound but uneven in places. Groups should wear practical footwear.
- The Minster can be cold even during the summer months. We recommend dressing warmly.
- Accessible toilets open to the public are available and include adjoining baby changing facilities. York Minster toilets are open to the general public. Please ensure your group is supervised at all times.
- We do not currently have a changing spaces toilet. The nearest site with one is at York Explore Library on Museum Street.
- The structure, floor and furnishings of the Minster are in places highly patterned and ornate. This may be a challenge for anyone in your group who is vulnerable to an adverse reaction (such as over-stimulation) when they encounter these features of the building.
- Sudden loud noises may occur during your visit (eg. maintenance work or organ practice). Ear defenders are available on request.

## The Undercroft and Treasury

- Due to Health and Safety controls there is a limit to the number of people with mobility or assistance needs that the Undercroft can accommodate at any one time. If several members of your group have specific needs, please contact us in advance so that we can help you to manage this aspect of your visit.
- A lift offers accessible entrance and exit to the Undercroft, where the floor level changes gradually through the use of ramps.
- A further platform lift is available to access the Treasury and Crypt from the Undercroft.
- Some areas have low levels of light.
- Hands-on interactives are positioned at a height that is accessible to wheelchair users.
- The Undercroft is an enclosed underground space. It is lit artificially throughout and has no natural light.
- Some areas are accessed by narrow corridors which can create bottlenecks.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation the accessible exits are via lifts or a stairclimber, which has a maximum weight limit of 160kg or 25st. Wheelchair users must be able to get from their wheelchair and into the stairclimber assisted by their teacher, supervisory adult or carer. If this would not be possible, please let us know in advance of your visit.

# BOOKING YOUR VISIT

To book your visit contact our Bookings Team at:  
01904 557200.

Office Hours Monday-Friday 0930-1600

Email us at: [bookings@yorkminster.org](mailto:bookings@yorkminster.org)

Alternatively you can make an inquiry via our  
website [here](#)

## Pricing

Pupils aged 0-17 - £6pp

Pupils aged 18+ - £13pp

Adults - £13pp

Accompanying adults are given free admission based on the recommended number of adults to children (one to ten pupils). Carers providing one to one support are free of charge. Any additional adult tickets will need to be paid for.

## Payment

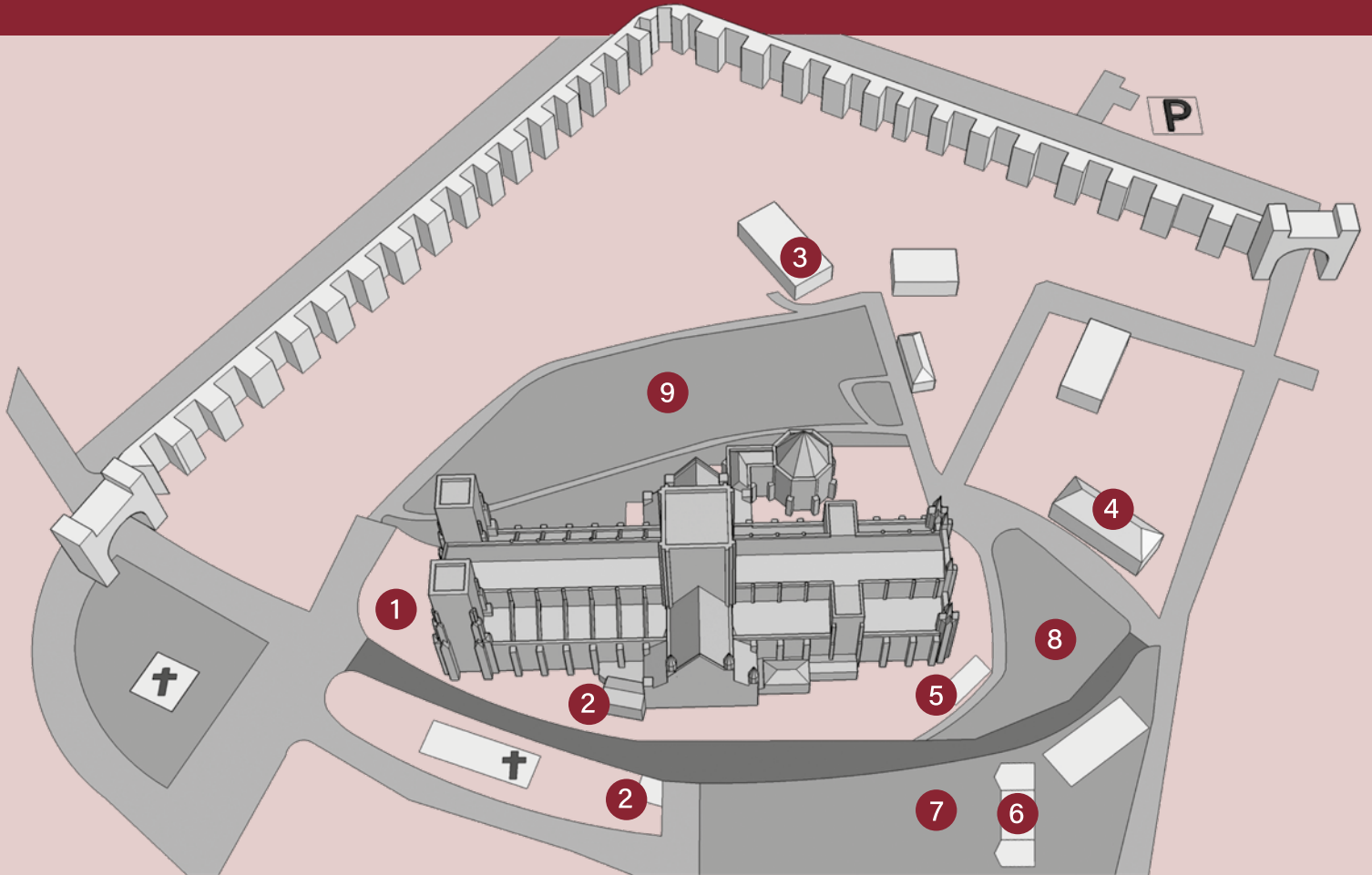
Most groups pay for their visit upon arrival via credit or debit card. This ensures groups are charged for the true number of pupils attending. We ask that group bookings are paid for with a single payment.

Groups can pay in advance of their visit by contacting our bookings team. Please be aware that all ticket information is confirmed at that point and refunds are not available.

Schools can also be invoiced for their visit if they have an account with York Minster. If you do not have an account and would like one, please contact the Bookings Team in advance of your visit.



# WELCOME TO YORK MINSTER



- |   |                                    |   |                        |
|---|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Main Entrance                      | 6 | York Minster Refectory |
| 2 | Minster Shops                      | 7 | Minster Gardens        |
| 3 | The Old Palace                     | 8 | College Green          |
| 4 | St William's College               | 9 | Dean's Park            |
| 5 | Works Department and Masons' Lodge |   |                        |

