**Risk assessment guidance for schools**

2024-25

**This information will help you write a risk assessment for your school visit to The Postal Museum.**

**Planning visits**

We strongly recommend that you make a planning visit to risk assess potential hazards in the museum and on your journey. To book your visit email **schools@postalmuseum.org**

**Supervision**

Teachers and adult helpers are responsible for the health and safety of their group and should supervise students at all times.

It is important to meet our minimum ratios to provide adequate supervision on the Mail Rail ride and in Sorted! (if relevant).

Minimum adult: student ratios (not including additional SEND support):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EYFS Nursery**  | 1:3 |
| **EYFS Reception**  | 1:4 |
| **KS1** | 1:4 |
| **KS2** | 1:6 |
| **KS3**  | 1:10 |
| **KS4+** | 1:15 |

**Groups and group leaders**  Split your class into equal-sized groups. Assign adult helpers to a group with a group leader. Write the groups on your itinerary. Classes should stay in these small groups throughout the visit.

**Lost students**

Tell our staff immediately if any students become separated from their group and you are unable to find them. We have procedures to deal with these situations efficiently.

**Museum staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers have undergone a standard police check. Learning Facilitators delivering interactive sessions have undergone a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

**First aid**

There is a first aid room for minor injuries and illness. Tell our staff immediately if one of your group requires assistance.

**HAZARD IDENTIFICATION**

Any changes or hazards that arise on the day of your visit will be included in your Welcome briefing.

**The Postal Museum – general risks**

The Postal Museum is split over two buildings. The Postal Museum is on one side of the road, and Mail Rail is on the other. The road has a temporary pedestrian crossing.

Put your class into groups before you set off. Schools should arrive at the entrance point indicated on your itinerary.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY/AREA**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES** | **RISK LEVEL**  |
| Arrival on Phoenix Place | Moving vehicles Building works  | * School groups to use zebra crossing
* Students led by teachers when crossing the road
* Students divided into small groups with an adult group leader
* Schools to arrange coach drop-off and collection in a safe location
 | Moderate |
| Museum spaces  | Students getting lost  | * Teachers bring register and take regular head counts
* All adults have a printed Itinerary and Museum map
* Museum staff and volunteers to guide and help school groups
 | Low |
|  | Fire  | * Fire and evacuation covered in Welcome briefing
* Fire hydrants throughout museum site
* Fire exits clearly marked
* Fire alarm system in place and regularly checked
* Museum staff to lead fire evacuation
 | Low  |
| The Postal Museum Courtyard and entrance  | Slips, trips and falls  | * Courtyard cleaned every day and has non-slip flooring
* Handrail and slope for wheelchair access
 | Low |
| The Postal Museum Welcome Space  | Slips, trips and falls Retail units and café tablesStudents getting lost | * School groups supervised by museum staff and volunteers
 | Low  |
| The Postal Museum toilets (ground floor) | Slips, trips and falls Students getting stuck in toilets Flood caused by leaving the tap running  | * Students visit toilets in small groups with an adult leader
* Teachers remind students about taps and check cubicles
* Toilets checked regularly
 | Low  |
| The Postal Museum lifts  | Students getting stuck in the lift or ending up on the wrong floor  | * Students with access requirements to use the lift with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| The Postal Museum shop  | Stock falling on students Freestanding units | * Shop is not open (Tuesdays). Schools that wish to should visit the shop in small groups
 | Low  |
| The Postal Museum stairs between floors  | Slips, trips and falls Spillages Overcrowding  | * Students use stairs in single file with adult supervision
* Stairs and handrails regularly checked
 | Low |

**The Postal Museum Exhibition Space – specific risks**

The exhibition space is monitored by museum staff and volunteers. Schools should circulate the exhibition space in small groups to avoid overcrowding.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY/AREA**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES**  | **RISK LEVEL** |
| The Postal Museum exhibition entrance  | Automatic closing doors | * Students enter exhibitions in small groups with an adult leader
* Museum staff to monitor entrance
 | Low  |
| Freestanding objects and displays (including vehicles and pillar boxes on support stands)  | Slips, trips and falls Bumping into objectsObjects moving from support stands  | * Students told about appropriate behaviour and not to run in the galleries
* Students reminded not to touch museum objects
 | Low  |
| Partition walls between exhibition zones  | Students getting stuck between gaps in partition walls  | * Students told not to squeeze between gaps in the walls
* Adult group leaders supervise groups
 | Low  |
| Viewing displays at high level  | Displays falling from heightSlips, trips and falls  | * Displays maintained regularly
 | Low  |
| Interactive feely boxes, and handling boxes (Zone 1)  | Bumps and collisions | * Adult group leaders supervise groups.
 | Low  |
| Interactive phone boxes (Zone 2 and Zone 5) | Trips when entering kioskTelephone cable could get wrapped around a child’s neck | * Adult group leaders supervise groups
* Students use kiosk one at a time
 | Low  |
| Interactive pneumatic tube (Zone 5 and Zone 5) | Fingers jammed in the tubesLoose parts (pencils and paper) | * Adult group leaders supervise groups
* Students use interactives in small groups.
 | Low  |
| Interactive touch screens and digital games (Zones 1, 2, 3 and 5)  | Bumps and collisions Static, electric shocks  | * Regular maintenance and safety checks
 | Low  |
| Interactive dressing up (Zone 2) | Slips, trips and fallsEntanglement in clothingLoose items (buttons) | * Museum staff and volunteers keep dressing up tidy
 | Low  |
| Interactive handling table (Zone 4)  | Bumps and collisions  | * Height of table is adjustable for younger children and wheelchair users
 | Low  |
| GPO film interactive (Zone 4) | Electric shocks from faulty equipment or exposed cables  | * Regular maintenance and security checks
 | Low  |
| Make a stamp interactive (Zone 5)  | Stool seating AV screenUse of Internet | * Students told about appropriate use of interactive
* Regular maintenance and security checks
 | Low  |
| Write a postcard interactive (Zone 5) | Moveable seating | * Adult group leaders supervise groups.
 | Low  |
| Folding stools hanging on walls (Zone 5)  | Stools falling on the floor Finger traps  | * Stool fixings are safety checked every month
 | Low  |

**Learning Space A – Interactive sessions**

Teachers and adult helpers must attend interactive sessions. We encourage adults to take an active part in the learning, as instructed by the session facilitator.

Mobile phones must be on silent. Photography is welcome but we politely ask schools not to film sessions on phones or tablets.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AREA/ACTIVITY**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES**  | **RISK LEVEL** |
| Tables, chairs and benches (including stacked furniture)  | Slips, trips and falls Bumps and collisions   | * Tables, chairs and benches set up in advance
* Stacked chairs on trolley

  | Low  |
| Windows  | Falling from open windows | * Students told not to sit on window ledges
 | Low  |
| Electrical sockets | Electric shock from fingers in socket  | * All sockets have child-safety cover
* Regular maintenance and checks
 | Low  |
| Flooring  | Slips, trips and fallsSpillages  | * Flooring cleaned regularly
* No food/drink allowed
 | Low  |
| Sink area and overhead cupboards  | Water Risk of flooding from leaving tap on Bumps to head | * Students to use the sink with adult supervision
* Adults check taps are off and wet paper towels are put in the bin
* Cupboards have child-safety locks
 | Low |
| Wall cupboards  | Finger traps Falling objects  | * Sink area covered by a shutter when not in use
* Teachers to remain vigilant and remind students not to touch
 | Low  |
| AV screen and stand  | Electric shock from screenLoose cables Stand running over feet  | * Museum staff to position screen safely
* Brakes applied to the stand
* Students supervised by adult leaders
 | Low  |
| Sliding partition wall between Learning Space A and B  | Trapped fingers Cuts and bruisesBumps and collisions  | * The partition will either be open or closed. This will be prepared in advance by museum staff
* Students supervised by adult leaders
 | Low  |
| Movement in the Learning Space  | Slips, trips and falls Collisions  | * Students to follow instructions from session facilitator
* Teachers to remain vigilant and intervene if needed
 | Low  |
| Students with physical disabilities (e.g. wheelchairs) | Injury to students with special educational needs or physical disabilities | * Students need to be supervised by an adult on a one-to-one basis
* Tables adjustable for wheelchairs
* Disabilities identified on booking form. Activities can be adapted in advance
 | Low  |
| AV presentations, sounds and music | Electric shocks from AV screenLoud noises | * AV screen set up in advance by museum staff
* Students who are sensitive to noise to be identified on booking form
* Students to wear glasses to view screen as needed
 | Low  |
| Tables and chairs set up for lunch  | Slips, trips and falls  | * Students to sit in small groups with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Food and drink  | SpillagesAllergies Scalds and burns  | * Adults alert museum staff about spillages
* Food waste put into bins provided
* Teachers responsible for students with allergies and bring appropriate medication
* No hot drinks in the Mail Rail depot
 | Low  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Interactive sessions – specific risks** Interactive sessions take place in Learning Space A on Level 1 of The Postal Museum. Learning Space A is accessible by stairs or a lift. |
| **MAIL RAIL SCIENCE SHOW**  |
| Pneumatic tube demo | Finger trapsCuts and bruises  | * Students follow facilitator’s instructions
* Equipment has regular safety checks
* Student volunteer will sit on floor to use leaf blower safely.
 | Low  |
| Circuit demo  | Object handling  | * Equipment has regular safety checks
 | Low  |
| Toolbox demo  | Object handling Finger traps Cuts and bruises | * Facilitator to hand out equipment and supervise demo
 | Low |
| **ENGINEERS GOOD IDEAS!** |
| Toolbox investigation | Object handling Standing at tables | * Teachers and group leaders hand out equipment and supervise use
 | Low |
| **THE JOLLY POSTMAN – ONCE UPON A BICYCLE**  |
| Magic spoons activity | Object handling  | * Teachers hand out and collect spoons
 | Low  |
| Growing into a beanstalk  | Physical participationStanding up and sitting down  | * Students sit in small groups on bench seating
* Benches safety locks are checked regularly
 | Low  |
| **JOLLY CHRISTMAS POSTMAN**  |
| Christmas hats  | Dressing up  | * Teachers hand out and collect hats
 | Low  |
| Physical interaction | Physical participation Standing up and down  | * Students sit in small groups on bench seating
* Benches safety locks are checked regularly
 | Low  |
| **SORTING OFFICE MATHS CHALLENGE**  |
| Sorting parcels  | Object handling | * Facilitator and teacher hand out parcels.
* Students take turns.
 | Low |
| Handling weighted parcels | Object handling | * Facilitator to provide clear instructions and supervise use.
 | Low |
| Building street and posting letters | Physical participation. Standing up.Object handling.  | * Facilitator and teacher to supervise students.
* Facilitator and teacher to hand out doors and letters.
 | Low  |

**Mail Rail building – Specific risks**

Mail Rail exhibition and ride are in the original car depot. All due care has been taken to make the former working environment safe while maintaining the authenticity of the original industrial heritage.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY/AREA**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES**  | **RISK LEVEL**  |
| Mail Rail Welcome Space (ground floor) | Slips, trips, falls Retail units Students getting lost | * Museum staff or volunteer to greet group and provide briefing
 | Low  |
| Mail Rail shop | Freestanding retail units  | * Shop is not open (Tuesdays). Schools that wish to should visit the shop in small groups
 | Low  |
| Mail Rail lift to depot (ride and exhibitions) | Students getting stuck in the lift  | * Students with access requirements to use the lift with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Mail Rail stairs between floors  | Slips, trips and fallsSpillages  | * Students to use stairs in single file with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Industrial heritage features (walls, floors and ceiling) | Slips, trips and fallsRough edges Cuts and bruises | * Schools told about industrial heritage in briefing and teachers remain vigilant
 | Low  |
| Tables and chairs set up for lunch  | Slips, trips and falls  | * Students to sit in small groups with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Food and drink  | SpillagesAllergies Scalds and burns  | * Adults alert museum staff about spillages
* Food waste put into bins provided
* Teachers responsible for students with allergies and bring appropriate medication.
* No hot drinks in the Mail Rail depot
 | Low  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Mail Rail Exhibition** Classes should explore the exhibition space in small groups to avoid overcrowding. The exhibition space is monitored by Visitor Hosts and volunteers.  |
| **ACTIVITY/AREA**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES**  | **RISK LEVEL**  |
| Freestanding objects and displays | Slips, trips and falls Bumping into objectsObjects moving from support stands | * Large objects have a clear space of 1.4m around them
* Students reminded about behaviour and told not to run in the exhibition space
 | Low  |
| Interactive (Timeline/city scape) | Bumps and collisions  | * Students take turns to use interactive
 | Low  |
| Interactive (Locker stories) | Bumps and collisions Rough edges  | * Students take turns with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Interactive (Climb on battery loco) | Slips, trips and fallsFinger traps  | * Students take turns with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Interactive (pneumatics) | Slips, trips and falls  | * Students reminded to play respectfully (despite competitive element)
* Regular maintenance and safety checks
 | Low  |
| Interactive (freestanding people panels) | Cable from audio cup could get wrapped around a child’s neck  | * Students take turns with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Interactive (Travelling Post Office TPO carriage) | Slips, trips and falls on moving floor Loose parts | * Students to visit TPO carriage in small groups with an adult leader
* Regular maintenance and safety checks
 | Low  |
| Interactive (switch frame operator) | Static or electric shock from AV screen Slips, trips and falls from box Loose partsLevers | * Regular maintenance and safety checks
 | Low  |
| Interactive (electric trains) | Bumps and collisions Peering into transparent box Loose partsLevers | * Adults to remain vigilant for students peering through the transparent box
* Regular maintenance and safety checks
 | Low  |
| Mail Rail Network Explorer digital screen  | Static or electric shock from AV screen  | * Regular maintenance and safety checks

  | Low  |
| Interactive (time telescope) | Bumps to headStatic or electric shock from AV screen  | * Adjustable height for wheelchairs
* Regular maintenance and safety checks
 | Low  |

**Mail Rail ride**

Mail Rail is an immersive experience with sights, sounds and lights that some students may find overwhelming. Schools must consider this at the point of booking.

Teachers’ notes and a visual story to help students prepare for the Mail Rail ride is on our website postalmuseum.org/schools

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY/AREA**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES**  | **RISK LEVEL**  |
| Embarkation platform (queuing for the train) | Slips and trips | * Schools queue for train in small groups at allocated time with adult group leaders.
* Museum staff and volunteers on hand to support groups
 | Low  |
| Lockers (coat and bag storage) | Finger traps  | * Students use lockers with adult supervision
 | Low  |
| Boarding the train  | Slips and trips in the carriage  | * Museum staff to guide students into the train
* Teachers and adult helpers to sit throughout the train
* Clear instructions to remain seated in the train
 | Moderate  |
| Closing the train canopy overhead | Bumps to headFinger trapsCuts and abrasions  | * Museum staff to close the canopy
* Students instructed to keep arms clear of closing canopy
* Teachers and adult helpers to sit throughout the train
 | Moderate  |
| Train in motion  | Slipping in the carriage Impact on canopy  | * Students supervised by adults and remain seated throughout the ride
 | Moderate  |
| Emergency assistance buttons  | Pressing button and causing emergency alarm to sound | * Students supervised by adults and reminded not to press the button
 | Low  |
| Leaning on the doors  | Train may make an emergency stop | * Students supervised by adults and reminded not to lean on the doors
 | Low  |
| Low oxygen levels in tunnel  | Breathing problems  | * Daily checks carried out by engineers
 | Low  |
| Dust in tunnel  | Breathing problemsDust in eyes  | * Daily checks carried out by engineers
 | Low  |
| Disembarking from the train | Slips, trips and falls Impact and collision  | * Students supervised by adults
* Museum staff to open the canopy and provide assistance
 | Moderate  |
| Evacuation of train ride  | Fire or incident | * Train will stop and museum staff will lead group from the train to a safe muster point
 | Low  |

**Sorted! Specific risks**

Teachers and adult helpers are responsible for supervising students in Sorted!

SEND students may need to be supported by an adult on a one-to-one basis and some areas (e.g. the Sorting Office upper level) may not be accessible by children with disabilities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY/AREA**  | **HAZARD**  | **CONTROL MEASURES**  |
| Entrance to Sorted! (street level) | Slips, trips and fallsFinger traps  | * Students divided into small groups with an adult leader
* Museum staff to greet group and provide briefing
* Hinge guards on front door
 |
| Toilets | Students getting stuck in toilets Flood caused by leaving the tap runningSlips, trips and falls | * Children visit toilets in small groups with an adult leader
* Teachers to remind students about taps and check cubicles after use
* Toilets checked and cleaned regularly
 |
| Students moving around Sorted! | Slips, trips and fallsCollisions Bruises  | * Students move around Sorted! in small groups with an adult leader
* Students reminded to play safely and respectfully
* Daily inspections by Visitor Hosts
* Annual inspections of all safety equipment (e.g. RoSPA)
 |
| Loose items e.g. magnets, building blocks, wooden shapes, letters, parcels, hats, tabards and books | Physical injury, cuts and bruises | * Loose items checked daily and damaged items removed
* Teachers and adults to monitor use of loose items
* Hats, tabards and vests to be washed regularly
 |
| Heat | Overheating due to overcrowding | * Adults to stay vigilant and encourage students to slow down and have a drink of water
 |
| Electrical supply | Electric shock, burns, fire | * Electrical sockets safely located. All sockets have child-safety covers.
* Regular PAT testing
 |
| Floors | Slips, trips and falls Spillages | * Plastic edging on ventilation grills in floor
* Students supervised by adults and told not to run
* Water to be drunk in seating area
 |

**Sorted! Specific risks**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AREA/ACTIVITY** | **HAZARD** | **CONTROL MEASURES**  |
| RISKS IN SPECIFIC AREAS  |
| Seating area  | Bench seating Spillages  | * Students to be supervised by adults
* Drinks and snacks to be consumed with adult supervision
 |
| MINI NEIGHBOURHOOD |
| Climbing on Royal Mail van  | Falls, impact injuries  | * Adult supervision to monitor use of van and stop students climbing on top
 |
| Doors on houses | Finger traps | * Adult supervision to stop students slamming doors
 |
| SORTING OFFICE  |
| Slide  | Friction burns, falls, collisions, abrasions  | * Soft mat at bottom of slide and netting
* Vinyl surface to be inspected daily
* Students to use slide one at a time with adult supervision
 |
| Parcel chute and conveyor belt  | Entrapment, sharp edges, falls  | * Students use conveyor belt in groups with adult supervision
* Rubber trim on metal blades
 |
| Pulley | Climbing on rope Throwing letters and parcels  | * Students to use pulley in small groups with adult supervision
* Students encouraged to share and take turns
 |
| THE POST OFFICE  |
| Post Office counter  | Weights and measures Tabards and caps Overcrowding  | * Students use area in small groups with adult supervision
* Students encouraged to share and take turns
 |
| Sorting frame  | Loose letters Overcrowding  | * Students use area in small groups with adult supervision
* Students encouraged to share and take turns
 |
| BOOK CORNER  |
| Books  | Paper cuts | * Students use area in small groups with adult supervision
 |
| Cushions  | Slips and trips  | * Students use area in small groups with adult supervision
 |
| UNDER 3’S AREA  |
| Mini Post Office  | Loose letters and parcels Overcrowding  | * Students use area in small groups with adult supervision
 |
| Magnet wall and toy town  | Loose itemsRisk of choking  | * Students use area in small groups with adult supervision
 |