

Helpful Hints for planning a successful trip to St Machar's Cathedral

When you can visit

The cathedral is open every day.

Monday to Saturday 9.30-4.30 (April to October) and 10.00- 4.00 (November to March).

Sundays 2-5pm (April to October) and 2-4pm (November to March)

School and group visits can take place during these hours subject to availability.

Booking visits

Email the Education Officer with your potential dates or download an Enquiry Form and email back.

Once this has been received and a date and time arranged, they will confirm with a Booking Confirmation Form.

At present we have funding to help with transport to the cathedral. Please enquire when you book.

Please note that we can only have **one class** on site at a time. If you want to bring a class in the morning and another in the afternoon, ask about other activities in Old Aberdeen. Look on our website for further details.

Tours and Activities - Self-guided or Guided – you have a choice!

Self-guided - You can come when the cathedral is open and lead your group on a self-guided tour, using leaflets in the cathedral. We also have copies of our Quiz to solve. There is an Interactive Screen with timelines, information and children's puzzles and touch screen colouring activities to keep everyone happy.

Guided tours and Quiz – allow 1 ½ hours. If your class is larger than 20, we will divide it in half and rotate the activities spending about 35-45 mins on each activity.

Tour At present we take children on a tour of the cathedral telling them stories from its past, from the founder St Machar coming over from Ireland, Robert the Bruce's connections with Aberdeen to disasters under General Monck in the 17th century. Suitable for a wide age range. 3 years and upwards.

Shield Quiz We have an Animal Quiz that gets the children engaged with our Heraldic Ceiling, conserved in 2020 and now over 500 years old. We have Level 1 and Level 2 Quizzes and answers for the adults to check! A guide to The Heraldic Ceiling is available for supporting adults in case of questions.

Site visits

You are very welcome to come prior to your visit and look around during opening times. Please ask if you need further assistance with this.

Facilities

Toilets are available on site – a locked accessible toilet is in the Gatehouse by the main entrance to the Kirkyard. Key available from Education Officer and Cathedral Staff.

There is a small shop that sells items such as postcards, pencils, notelets and papers written about the cathedral.

No eating allowed in the cathedral. There are two **small** rooms in the West Gatehouse that could between them accommodate a class up to about 26 to have a snack.

Dunbar Hall (located a 5-8 min walk away on Dunbar Street) can be booked for lunch. In dry weather Seaton Park makes a great picnic venue. This is where we run our workshops too. There is a spacious main hall, kitchen, auxiliary room and toilets.

Safety

Our Risk Assessments are reviewed regularly and can be provided on request.

There are First Aid supplies in the cathedral but we cannot guarantee to provide a First Aider on site.

The cathedral is open to the public while you are there. There is a Beadle on duty to help with any enquiries. We will inform visitors not to take photographs while you are there. Please remind pupils to be respectful of others.

Graveyard Safety The kirkyard has many learning opportunities. If you take pupils on a self-guided activity in the graveyard, please remind them to **stay on paths** and **not to run or climb on any stonework**.

Resources

We have resources to help complement your trip. We have developed activities in the kirkyard too and a shield trail around Old Aberdeen. If you have a particular theme you would like covered, please ask. To explore further see our *School Visit Page* on our website **stmachar.com**

Enjoy your trip with us email education@stmachar.com

Katherine Williams

Education Officer