

Educational Visits – Frequently Asked Questions

What does your visit involve?

Your visit to Emirates Spinnaker Tower starts on the ground floor with our animated film show. This 4 ½ minute film outlines the main stories and personalities that have made Portsmouth the City you see today including Admiral Lord Nelson, Queen Victoria, Isambard Kingdom Brunel & Charles Dickens. It may be necessary to split large groups for this show, we just ask that a teacher is with each group. From here your pupils will head into the lift to make the journey to the view decks. On average 20 pupils will be able to fit into the lift at one time, again we would ask an adult to be in the lift with the group.

Once up on the view deck your pupils will be able to explore the stunning 23 mile view over Portsmouth, The Solent & Isle of Wight, before taking time to enjoy the Sky Walk glass floor. Please can we ask that all bags and shoes are stored to the right of the bench out of the way of other visitors? On View Deck 1 your pupils will also be able to use the i-VIEW screens and view interpretation graphics to pinpoint points of interest within the view, have a go on the rib ride simulator (one person at a time) and travel up the stairs to the open air Sky Deck. There are 60 stairs between View Deck 1 and View Deck 3.

You will find free activity sheets as you leave the lift which you are welcome to give to your pupils to undertake during their visit or you can consider booking one of our free prop boxes or curriculum linked tours.

How long does a visit take?

An average self-led visit takes approximately 45 minutes and can be combined with some time in Gunwharf Quays or with one of our partner attractions – Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Laser Quest at Action Stations just 10 minutes' walk away, Harbour Tour – picked up on the waterfront of Gunwharf Quays or our treasure hunt or walking tour around the City.

All curriculum linked educational tours are 1 hour, please allow an additional half an hour to explore the rest of the Tower or to allow extra time for your pupils to complete some of the tasks. On average the prop boxes and activity sheets will also extend your time with us to at least one hour.

Where can we eat lunch?

Due to the design of the tower there is no space for lunch to be taken here. We do have an agreement to be able to book the educational space at the City Museum (10 minutes' walk away) at an additional charge of £16.50. This space is subject to availability, on a self-clean basis and is a great chance to explore this free museum at the same time. Floor one & two will be particularly relevant. Average visit time for the museum is one hour.

During the warmer months many of our visiting groups enjoy lunch out on the Waterfront of Gunwharf Quays,

Teacher ratio?

We are delighted to offer free adult places as part of our educational offer. One free adult for every 6 paying pupils for pupils aged 11 and under, or one free adult for every 10 paying pupils for pupils aged 12 – 18.

Storage of Bags?

Unfortunately we do not have any space within the Tower to store bags. From time to time it may be necessary to undertake a security check of bags being brought into the attraction. We ask that all bags are stored to the right hand side of the bench when up on View Deck 1.

Disabled Access?

In the unlikely event of the Tower being evacuated and the internal lift being unavailable, your pupils would have to descend using our emergency staircase of 560 stairs. Due to fire and safety procedures, visitors with mobility impairments who can use the staircase with some assistance, may be admitted to the Tower a maximum of 2 visitors at any one time. Those visitors who could not use the staircase are limited to one visitor at any time.

To facilitate their visit we have an Evac+Chair as well as a trained member of staff available. That visitor should be able to transfer themselves, or with the help of a carer, to the Evac+Chair and also not exceed 23 stone in weight Please highlight any pupils with mobility impairments when you book your visit.

Risk Assessment Visit?

We are delighted to welcome teachers on a pre-booked familiarisation/risk assessment visit at any time during our normal opening hours. Please email jchivers@spinnakertower.co.uk to book this. A generic risk assessment is available for you to download from our website.

Getting around?

The Emirates Spinnaker Tower is located on the waterfront of Gunwharf Quays just at the harbour entrance. The closest drop off point if travelling by coach or mini bus would be Gunwharf Quays turning circle, at the back of Marks & Spencer's. The drop off point is to the left. It is then a short 5 minute walk to the waterfront.

The closest train station is Portsmouth Harbour. This is located halfway between Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Gunwharf Quays – it is the last stop on the line. It is a 10 minute walk to the Tower from here via The Hard Interchange. The whole area is flat and disabled access through the area is good.

Curriculum Related Sessions?

Our staff will take your pupils through an hour long visit of the Tower using either its height, structure or view to enhance the pupils visit and learning outcomes. This must be pre-booked at least 10 days before you visit and is subject to availability. These educational tours relate to your chosen downloadable resource – Terrific Towers, Changing Coastlines or Head in the Clouds.

We advise that the corresponding pre-visit learning activities and discussions are undertaken before you visit. All props will be provided for you, we only ask that you pre-print the relevant worksheets and bring them with you (where required)



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Prop Boxes?

We also offer a number of prop boxes and corresponding worksheets that are available for you to use during your self-led visit. These must be pre-booked and will be available for you on arrival. You will need to print the corresponding worksheets and bring them with you on the day. Prop boxes include: - 'Through the Porthole' (Key Stage 1 & 2), Treasure Hunt (Key Stage 1 & 2) and Tourism in our City (Key Stage 2), these can add an interactive element to your self-led visit.

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