

Kingston upon Thames Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Planning school visits to places of worship

The Kingston SACRE has prepared a databank of places of worship, currently within the Royal Borough, to assist Schools in planning visits as part of their studies. A copy of the databank is attached. It is also available on the Council's website. The web address is :

<http://www.kingston.gov.uk/education/churchvisits.htm>

The databank will continually be updated and it is strongly recommended that you refer to the information on the web, rather than rely on the hard copy to ensure that you access the most up to date information.

It is the intention that future editions of the Databank will include information about other places of worship that are outside the borough. This will provide you with an opportunity to visit those faith communities that do not have a place of worship in the Borough. Other developments being considered are to put photographs and sound onto the web page to provide added enjoyment and benefit to you.

How to use the Databank

The Databank has been prepared to provide you with practical information about how to visit local places of worship and details of distinctive features of the places of worship, to help you to decide which ones to visit.

The Databank provides you with the location, who to contact and the details of facilities available at each place of worship together with how to arrange for someone to come and visit your school.

Visiting Places of Worship

It is hoped that schools will visit places of worship and these notes are intended to help teachers prepare their class. This is a sensitive issue for families and visits with pupils of varied religious belief need particular careful preparation with the class and the faith community leader or member who is receiving you (your host).

The contact This should normally be first through a letter or phone call requesting permission to visit by the teacher well before the planned outing.

Object of the visit This needs to be clarified for all concerned. Is it to have experience of seeing a place and type of worship either as an introduction to it or as part of a study of that religion or for a specialist visit, eg art, architecture, local history etc.?

Make sure the faith community leader understands and approves of your purpose.

Arrangements for visiting the place of worship

The following must be made clear:

1. Date, time of arrival, acceptable length of visit.
2. Age and number of pupils acceptable and number of accompanying adults.
3. Exact purposes of the visit and how this fits in with the programme of study. This will help your host to communicate more directly with the class.
4. **Plan:** what your host is asked to do
what the teacher will do
what the pupils will do
5. Requirements for **dress** (shoes, head covering etc) and for **behaviour** (quiet, respect for the tradition of the place).

These must be conveyed to the class before the day of the visit and insisted upon!

6. If required, discover possibilities for a space other than the place of worship itself where the party might discuss/write/eat/visit toilets etc.
7. Transport (the time this will take, parking facilities etc.)

The day before check and confirm the arrangements

The day after send a thank-you letter

Feedback

Please do let the SACRE know what you think of this initiative, we would welcome your feedback. Please let the Mr Chris Phelan, Clerk to Kingston SACRE, Guildhall, Kingston KT1 1EU know your views. Or telephone Chris on 020 8547 5023 or email: chris.phelan@rbk.kingston.gov.uk