

Visiting the Scottish Parliament with groups:

Safety guidance for visiting teaching staff, supervisors and group leaders.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

1. General information

The following guidance highlights potential safety issues to consider before your visit and helps to inform your own risk assessment for the visit.

If you have any questions prior to or during the visit, please contact visit@parliament.scot or ask a member of the Visitor Services team on the day.

If your visit is booked with Education Services, please contact: education.services@parliament.scot

We are unable to write Risk Assessments for your group.

The Scottish Parliament building is normally open Monday to Saturday. Opening hours differ depending on whether it is a Parliamentary sitting day or not.

During our opening hours visitors can explore the public areas of the building. This includes the Main Hall where you will find an exhibition about the Parliament, our café and our shop. There is no need to book for self-guided visits and there are maps available on arrival to help you find your way around the public areas. If the primary reason for your visit is to explore the public areas of the building, non-sitting days give the opportunity to enter more areas than on sitting days.

More information on what visitors can do can be found on the [Scottish Parliament's website](https://www.parliament.scot).



2. Recommendations to group leaders

It is strongly recommended that you make a preliminary visit to the Scottish Parliament and **carry out your own risk assessment** before bringing your group.

If a pre-visit is not possible, this guidance sheet provides a general outline of potential risks and control measures.

You can also find out more about [Visiting the Parliament](#) and [Security](#) on the 'Plan your Visit' page of our website.



3. Supervision

It is essential that you ensure children are continually supervised during their visit and in all areas of the Parliament. **A ratio of 1 adult to 10 children is recommended.**

It is the responsibility of group leaders and accompanying adults to ensure the behaviour and conduct of their group is safe and appropriate.



4. Fire

If fire is detected in the building, a voice alarm will be broadcast on the public address system. **All visitors must follow the voice alarm instructions and any instructions from Security and other Parliament staff.**

Fire escape routes and fire exits are clearly marked. The voice alarm may instruct you to go to another part of the building or leave the building. In this event you should follow the instructions of Security or other staff.



5. First aid

There are facilities for providing first aid to visitors which you can access during your visit if required. It is recommended that you assess the first aid needs of your group and come equipped with suitable supplies and trained staff, particularly if there are pupils with specific needs.

Scottish Parliament trained first aiders can provide support where required.

If you are concerned that anyone in your group is seriously unwell, you should speak to your host or a member of Scottish Parliament staff immediately.

Hazards, risks and controls

Hazard/Risk	Control	Additional information
Additional access requirements.	Scottish Parliament staff require all groups to give prior information about any special requirements at the booking stage. Groups must provide this information to ensure the safety of visitors.	Further information about Accessibility can be found on the 'Plan your Visit' page of our website.
Additional access requirements.	Where visitors require assistance to evacuate the building in a fire, a VEEP (Visitor Emergency Evacuation Plan) can be prepared by staff where necessary.	Please let Visitor Services or the Education Team know in advance of your visit if a member of your group will require assistance in the event of a fire evacuation.
Supervision of school/youth groups.	A ratio of 1 adult to 10 children or young people is recommended. Groups should move around the building in a suitable way and be considerate of other visitors and building users when doing so.	Further information about the Visitor Behaviour Policy can be found on the 'Plan your Visit' page of our website.

Hazard/Risk	Control	Additional information
Size of groups.	The maximum number of visitors in each public guided tour group is 20. Visiting groups must bring an adequate number of accompanying adults.	Information about Guided Tours for groups is available on our website. Information on visiting options, including a map of the surrounding area and our Building Visitor Maps in a number of formats (including BSL) is available on our website.
Noise and long queues at the public entrance, especially on business days and before FMQs on a Thursday.	All visitors to the Parliament are required to pass through an airport style security check at the public entrance.	Groups should arrive in plenty of time before the start of their visit to clear through Security. This can be a busy and noisy area at certain times. Further information about our Security Procedure can be found on our website.
Busy and noisy areas inside the building, including around the Visitor Information Desk, Main Hall and on the stairs to the Chamber Public Gallery.	Noise levels in the public areas and traffic on the public staircase can vary significantly throughout the day.	Please let Visitor Services or the Education Team know in advance of your visit if a member of your group has any additional needs or access requirements.

Hazard/Risk	Control	Additional information
Public areas: Automatic doors, slip hazards, trip hazards. Parliament exhibition, Parliament Shop, Parliament Cafe, public lockers. Guided tour routes involve some stairs (lifts are available as an accessible alternative) and accessing rooms of different sizes, often furnished.	Adequate supervision is required. Groups should move around the building in a suitable way and be considerate of other building users when doing so. Group leaders must ensure manageable numbers use toilets at any one time. The toilets are checked regularly by our cleaning team.	Further information about the Visitor Behaviour Policy can be found on the 'Plan Your Visit' page of our website.
Toilets: Trapping hands / fingers between cubicle doors and door frames, slip hazards.	Adequate supervision is required where appropriate. Ensure manageable numbers use toilets at any one time.	
External: Ponds outside in landscaped areas – risk of falling in water.	Adequate supervision is required. Be aware if assembling the group near a pond.	

Hazard/Risk	Control	Additional information
External: Holyrood Road – involves crossing road at Dynamic Earth turning circle and Holyrood Road via a pedestrian crossing.	Adequate supervision is required. Use pedestrian crossing.	Coaches are permitted to use the turning circle outside Dynamic Earth as a drop off point. Disabled parking is located directly opposite Parliament on Horse Wynd.
External: Canongate and Royal Mile – busy road, noisy at times.	Adequate supervision is required. Use pedestrian crossing.	Pedestrian crossings are located on Horse Wynd, Queen’s Drive and Abbeyhill.
External: Retaining wall to west of landscape area – risk of children/visitors climbing and falling from height.	Climbing is not allowed. Adequate supervision is required.	Safety signage is in position.
Covid-19.	There are no COVID-19 rules or restrictions in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament recognises and supports the Distance Aware Scheme .	Further guidance on Covid-19 safety in Scotland can be found on the Gov UK website.