



School Visits Guide

So you're thinking of bringing your school to the Heights of Abraham? That's fantastic! We have put together this useful Teacher's Pack for you to ensure that you know everything that there is to know about making a visit to the Heights with your school.

If you have any further questions or queries, please feel free to email us at office@heightsofabraham.com or phone us on 01629 582365.



Familiarise Yourself

We can only begin to imagine the planning and co-ordination that goes into booking a school trip, and we want to make the process as easy as possible for you. Therefore, we offer a complimentary familiarisation ticket for you and one other teacher to scope out the site before you come so you can plan your day down to the last detail.

Please contact office@heightsofabraham.com to arrange.

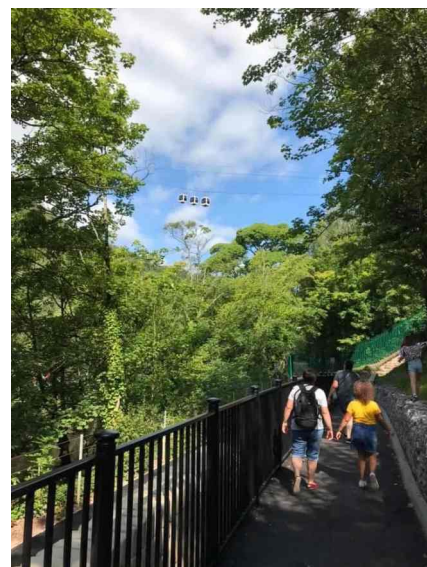
Booking Your Trip

We take bookings via our website, fill in the booking form on the page. Once this has been filled in, we will review your booking and input it into our system. We will then send you a confirmation email with your booking details attached. We only accept payment on the day unless you already have an account with us. This is just in case numbers change so no one is left out of pocket. If payment on the day is really not possible, you can phone us on 01629 582365 to set up an account.

Getting Here

Most schools tend to visit us by coach or minibus. There is coach and minibus parking in the Matlock Bath train station car park. The car park is run by the council so there is a cost of £5.50 per 3 hours of parking for coaches. There are nine coach bays.

Alternatively, if possible, your school could travel by train. It is a much cheaper way to travel compared to getting a coach and group rates are available on the train when you book in advance, meaning you could save up to 26% on train tickets. The trains run hourly with a direct line running from Nottingham, through Derby and the Amber Valley before arriving at Matlock Bath. We have a direct access walkway from Matlock Bath train station to the Heights cable car base station, which takes no more than 5 minutes to walk to from getting off the train.



Our new riverside walkway, directly from Matlock Bath Train Station.

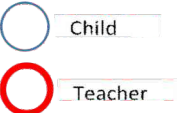
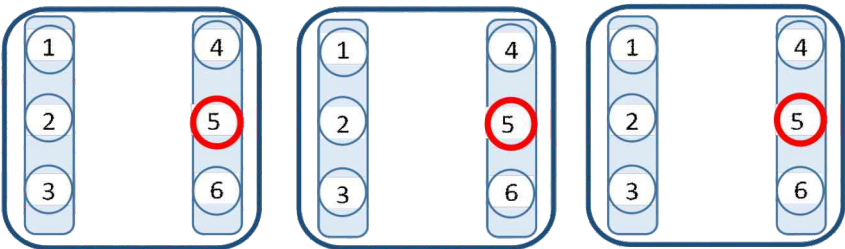
Boarding the Cable

Once you arrive, we kindly ask that the trip organiser or one member of staff make themselves known at the ticket office and ask the rest of the teachers/adults and children to make their way to the queuing pens where they will be met by a member of the cable car team. This is where you can organise yourselves into your pre-organised groups ready for loading into the cabins.

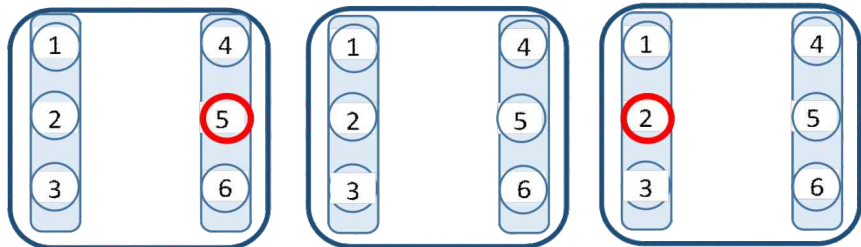
The trip organiser will hand the booking confirmation in at the ticket office where they will be asked to confirm numbers and finalise any payments.

There are 3 suggested options when organising children into groups, depending on the age of the children and your own risk assessment. These have been designed to get everyone to the top as quickly and as safely as possible and reducing the children's waiting time.

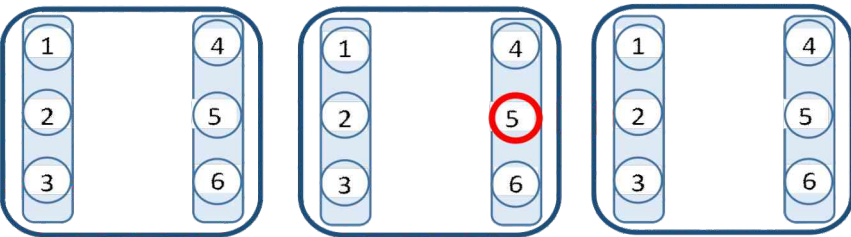
Option 1 (Pre-school and key stage 1)



Option 2 (recommended for key stage 2)



Option 3 (recommended for key stage 3 and above)

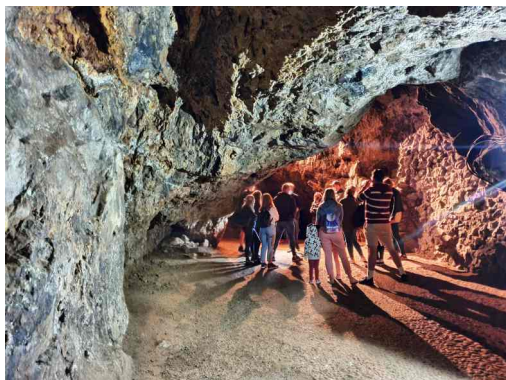


Timing Your Day

The cable cars take around 7 minutes to reach the summit from the base station. They come in four sets of three. There's never any longer than three minutes wait between each set. Depending on the size of your group, this could mean that it may take up to half an hour to get the whole group to the summit. For groups of 30 or less, it may only take around 15



The cable cars ascending Masson Hill



A guided tour in the Rutland Cavern

Cavern Timings

Once you arrive at the summit, there is a wealth of attractions to see. Most schools like taking their children on a guided cavern tour. In busy periods, these tours can run every 15 minutes. In quieter periods they run every half hour.

The Masson Cavern tour takes 30 minutes to complete so we suggest factoring this into your timings for the day. The Great Rutland Cavern tour is shorter and takes around 20 minutes to complete.

Other Activities

There are also two adventure playgrounds that you might like to allow the children some free time to play on- perhaps half an hour or so. We have three exhibitions on site: The Fossil Factory, The Long View and The Masson Pavilion. These would take between 5 and 15 minutes each to explore.

The Victoria Prospect Tower, built in 1844, is also a popular attraction to visit here. On a busy day, this tower can get full very quickly and may require queueing. Once at the top of the tower, you needn't spend any longer than 5 minutes up there.

All together, we suggest allowing 3-4 hours for a visit.



The Woodland Adventure Playground



The Victoria Prospect Tower



The Fossil Factory Exhibition

Two Guided Cavern Tours

Taking a trip underground is always an exciting prospect for children (and adults too!). Our two show caverns are often a highlight of a trip to the Heights.

We do try to take schools down on a separate tour to the general public, however this is subject to visitor numbers on the day. A duty manager will meet you at the summit and discuss timings with you and see if it is possible to take your school down on a separate tour. Tours can be adapted to different age groups and abilities and can be made to focus on certain elements such as fossils or lead on request.



A guided tour in the Great Masson Cavern, with the light show.

The Great Masson Cavern

Our Masson Cavern tour is the longer tour of the two and takes around 30 minutes to complete. These tours run every 20 minutes. There are 175 steps on this tour, so it's a good work out!

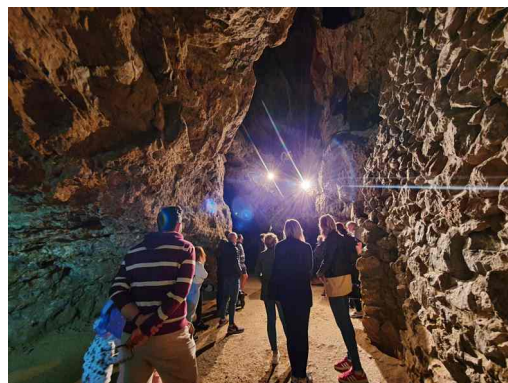
During the tour pupils will be informed about lead mining practices, fossilisation in the carboniferous period, the history of the lead mines and the formation of rocks and natural caverns. There are always a couple of jokes thrown in too!

The tour ends with a beautiful lighting display, telling the history of how the Victorians used to light the cave and how we have updated this for 21st Century visitors.

The Rutland Cavern

The Great Rutland Cavern tour is the shorter of the two tours and takes around 20 minutes. The cavern is located on the lower half of the site.

The difference in the tour to the Masson Cavern is that the Rutland tour goes into more detail about mining practices and mining families. These tours run every half an hour, or hourly depending on time of year.



A tour in the Great Rutland Cavern

Eating

Most schools bring a packed lunch with them, and we have many picnic sites across the estate. Some have benches and some do not. See our interactive map web page for the location of all picnic sites and shelters.

At the top of the site (by the exit of the Masson Cavern) is a wide, open area with rocks to sit on- which is often ideal for a larger group to take their packed lunches and eat with a lovely view. We kindly ask that any rubbish is collected and disposed of in our bins on the site.

We do have a café to purchase hot drinks and snacks (including cakes and sandwiches) for teachers and adults in the group. This café does get quite busy in peak periods, so we do advise that time is allowed for potential queueing.



One of our wide open areas, ideal for a picnic spot.



Children choosing a souvenir in the RockShop.

Souvenir

We have two gift shops that stock a range of pocket money souvenirs and toys that are attractive to children. One is a rock themed shop selling minerals, gemstones and different rock themed souvenirs. The other is a general gift shop selling stationery, keyrings, small toys and other typical souvenirs.

You may like to advise that your pupils bring a small amount of pocket money with them to purchase a memento of their day out.

Toilets and Facilities

We have three toilet blocks on site. One located at the summit by the Masson Cavern, one in the visitor centre next to the Café, and one located on the lower half of the site by the Rutland Cavern. The toilet blocks aren't huge, with each holding up to 4 toilets per male/female block and one disabled toilet per block. There is also a small portaloo toilet by the base station just in case anyone needs to use it before boarding the cable cars.

There is a water bottle filling station located just as you arrive at the summit which we encourage you to use instead of using the sinks in the toilets.

Health and Safety

We want your school to have a great and memorable day out with us, however we understand that teachers need to do a lot of pre-visit health and safety assessments. We have put together a risk assessment to help you with your plans.

The Heights of Abraham was built over 230 years ago for the enjoyment of Georgian tourists. When the show caverns opened up in the 1800s, the ex-miners didn't take into account the needs of 21st Century visitors. Some areas of the grounds are steep and uneven, so you may need to keep your class under close supervision to avoid any scrapes and scratches!

Accidents do happen no matter how hard you try to avoid them, so we have several trained first aiders on site to help you when an incident occurs. Our risk assessment can be downloaded from our website on the school visits page. This covers every aspect of the site including the cable cars, the caverns and the grounds.



One of our knee-operated hand washing stations located at the summit.

COVID-19 Safety

We are a VisitEngland certified 'Good To Go' attraction. We have installed several banks of outdoor handwashing stations to use when boarding and after exiting the cable cars, along with over 20 hand sanitising stations dotted around the site. The amount of people on each cavern tour has been halved, and our capacity has been limited to reduce any crowding.

Our cleaning schedules have been increased and we have employed a full-time cleaning team to ensure that the estate is as clean as possible. Our staff wear PPE to protect themselves and others around them, and we ask that face coverings are worn by anyone over the age of 11 in the cable cars, caverns and buildings.

Linking a Visit to the National Curriculum

A visit to the Heights can be linked to several subjects in the National Curriculum, including History, Geography, Geology, Technology and English.

We have been working alongside local teachers to produce some brand-new worksheets and learning resources which we encourage you to download from our website and use pre, during or post visit. These worksheets and resources all have learning objectives that are linked to the National Curriculum. Some of the worksheets are available for different abilities of student- either assisted learning, partially assisted or not assisted.

We look forward to welcoming your group to the Heights really soon. If you need any further information, our team are always happy to help so please get in touch by phone or email.

office@heightsofabraham.com

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