

School Visits to the National Portrait Gallery

General environment

The National Portrait Gallery aims to increase the understanding of the Australian people – their identity, history, creativity and culture – through portraiture.

The Gallery building, situated on King Edward Terrace, Parkes, Canberra, bounded by the High Court of Australia, Questcon and the National Gallery of Australia, displays some 400 portraits of people who have shaped, and continue to shape, Australia.

The most significant building to be constructed in the Parliamentary precinct for over twenty years, the Gallery opened to the public on the 4 December 2008 with a series of vibrant exhibitions, lectures, education programs and events.

Home to the nation's portrait collection, the Gallery comprises exhibition spaces for the collection and temporary exhibitions, public areas including a café, shop, function room, theatrette, education and school group areas.

The Gallery is open daily 10.00am to 5.00 pm. It is closed 25 December. Admission is free except for some special exhibitions where a charge may apply.

Visitor service and security staff, trained in first aid and other public safety requirements, are stationed throughout the Gallery. The Gallery has in place public liability insurance through the Australian Government's insurer, Comcover.

More information about the Gallery, its collections and portraiture in Australia and around the world can found at www.portrait.gov.au.

Services offered

The Gallery offers a wide range of educational programs designed for all levels of formal education from pre-school to tertiary. Drawing on the richness of the Gallery collection the programs acknowledge national curriculum and emphasise visual art, history, literacy, numeracy, civics and citizenship.

Drawing materials are supplied by Gallery staff for use in program activities.

Access to the Gallery

The Gallery is located on King Edward Terrace, Parkes, in the Parliamentary Precinct. All the exhibition spaces, cafe and shop are on ground level.

Wheelchairs are available, bookings are recommended. Companion assistance animals are welcome at the Gallery. Hearing loop facilities are provided in the Liangis

Theatre where public lectures and talks are presented regularly. Groups arriving in public cars have sheltered access from the public car park.

Special clothing or equipment required

No special clothing is required inside the Gallery as the temperature is regulated at 21+/-1 degrees Celsius. Stools and cushions are available for students to sit on. Shelter is not provided at the Gallery's bus drop off point. However, some shelter is available immediately outside the main entrance where teachers and students can gather prior to entry.

Security

All staff undergo a police check.

Risk assessment

While the Gallery building and its surrounds are generally safe, the table below (current as of February 2009) outlines some of the potential hazards and the likelihood the hazard occurring as a guide for teachers and carers of school groups visiting the Gallery.

The Gallery manages the hazards through a variety of means and systems and request schools observe an acceptable level of teacher/minder/carer: student ratio (1:15) to ensure adequate supervision and safety.

Risk rating table

| # | Hazard description | Likelihood |
|----------|--|-------------------|
| 1 | Student/s might climb and fall off the landscaping barriers/walls resulting in injury | Likely |
| 2 | Lack of rails in the Liangis Theatre stairs (code compliant) might result in a fall if someone tripped going up/down the stairs | Likely |
| 3 | Student/s might get separated/lost from main tour group | Possible |
| 4 | Student/s might fall/slip/trip on wet floors | Possible |
| 5 | Fold up stools and other furniture/equipment might cause injury to student/s due to misuse/abuse etc | Possible |
| 6 | Student/s might fall off studio balcony if furniture is left close to barrier/hand rail | Possible |
| 7 | Studio equipment and material used might pose risks to the health and safety of touring students | Possible |
| 8 | Student/s might become unwell if exposed to contaminated fumes/water vapour from the cooling tower exhaust which is in a restricted area | Rare |

Existing risk management procedures

The Gallery has done everything reasonable to minimise all risks associated with visiting its premises. The Gallery has few known hazards and/or obstacles to be negotiated by visitors.

Fire/emergency evacuation procedures are managed by trained staff and tested regularly. In the event of an emergency a siren will be heard. Students, teachers and carers should follow instructions from a PA system and/or clearly identifiable fire safety wardens located in the Gallery, and are to proceed to the designated evacuation area outside as directed.

Recommendations before your visit

Prior to the visit, teachers/carers should brief their students about appropriate behaviour in the Gallery environment (e.g. walking in the Gallery, listening to instructions, not touching works of art; taking care in the bus drop off area; and leaving bags, backpacks, drinks and food in the bus).

**Enquiries to Manager, Education and Visitor Services, National Portrait Gallery
02 6102 6070**