

Primary

Secondary

Essential Information for your visit

This pack has been prepared to provide lead teachers with all the information they will need to plan a successful trip to the Banqueting House.

Please read it carefully; completing and returning the school agreement forms in good time and sharing appropriate information with your accompanying adults and students where necessary.



Historic Royal Palaces
Banqueting House

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Essential information for your visit

Opening Times

Monday-Sunday: 10.00-17.00*

Last admission 16.30

*The Banqueting House is popular with commercial events and may close early or all day if there is a function happening in the evening. We would advise always checking the website for information on closures before visiting.

Address:

Banqueting House
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2ER



Essential information for your visit

Getting to the Banqueting House

The Banqueting House is on the corner of Horse Guards Avenue and Whitehall – immediately opposite Horse Guards Parade.



Westminster – turn right out of the station, first right into Whitehall and walk along until you come to the Banqueting House, which is approximately half way up on the right hand side (5 minute walk).

Embankment – go out of the Embankment Entrance, turn right, cross Northumberland Avenue, turn right into Horse Guards Avenue, walk past the Ministry of Defence and the Banqueting House is approx. 100 yards down on the corner of Horse Guards Avenue and Whitehall (5 minute walk).

Charing Cross – proceed as for the train.



Bus Routes – 3, 11, 12, 24, 53, 87, 88 and 159 all call at bus stops near to the Banqueting House.



Charing Cross – turn left out of the station's main entrance, towards Trafalgar Square. From there walk down Whitehall for about 5 minutes and the Banqueting House is on the left.



Banqueting House is situated in the Congestion Charging Zone. There is no onsite parking facility and parking in the surrounding area is limited.

Nearest car park: [Q-park Trafalgar](#) (6 minutes walk)

Coach

Metered coach bays can be found along the Victoria Embankment. Coaches may drop off/collect groups in Whitehall. Please let us know the following 24 hours in advance:

- The coach's registration number
- The driver's name

Essential information for your visit

Running late

Travel delays

We understand that you may experience delays when travelling to the Banqueting House.

If you have booked a session, we ask that your group arrive a few minutes before the start of your session. If you are more than 15 minutes late, it may not be possible for the full session to take place.

If you are going to be late, it is essential that you contact the Schools & Communities team on **020 3166 6646** to provide an estimated time of arrival. Your call will help our staff to provide you with the most appropriate material for the remaining time within your session.

On Arrival

If you have a booked session, please meet your session presenter at the main entrance to the **Banqueting House**.

If you are, making a self-led visit please enter the building and make yourself known to staff at the Welcome Desk

For both types of visit, we advise having your booking confirmation email printed out and ready to hand, this will detail your booking reservation number.

Bag searches

Each member of your group will be required to have a bag search on entry to the Banqueting House. Bag searches are necessary in order to ensure all our visitors are protected whilst they are on site. All searches are carried out by professionals trained to identify offending articles.

We ask that teachers undertake the following guidelines to make the process as smooth and quick as possible:

- Arrive in plenty of time.
- Be patient – the process can take time.
- Ask all students to take the process seriously.
- Follow all instructions given by Security staff.
- Brief students not to bring things such as scissors, compasses, metal cutlery or sharp metallic implements.
- Only bring what you need. If required, the Schools & Communities team will provide all necessary equipment such as clipboards, pencils and drawing materials.

Essential information for your visit

A brief history

The Banqueting House, formerly a part of the Palace of Whitehall, now destroyed, was built by famous architect Inigo Jones in 1619 to be the setting for royal masques – an elaborate form of court entertainment, which was a cross between a ball, a play and a fancy dress party.

The Banqueting House is perhaps most famous as the site of the execution of Charles I. King and Parliament had battled for years over the rule of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and, in 1649, the king lost. On 30th January at 1PM, the king was led to a specially built scaffold outside of the Banqueting House and it was here that he was beheaded and the monarchy abolished for eleven years.

After this, the Banqueting House was used as an ambassadorial reception room until 1689 when the royal family ceased to use Whitehall as a residence. In January 1698, the entire palace was burnt to the ground, all except the Banqueting House and the Holbein gates. The palace was never rebuilt and the Banqueting House was consequently used for various functions; a chapel for the Horse Guards during the 19th century and a museum in 1893.

Palace of Whitehall

The great Palace of Whitehall began as the medieval London home of the Archbishops of York, and was known as York Place. The once mighty Cardinal Wolsey, also Archbishop of York, fell foul of King Henry VIII, and his London home was taken from him.

Henry set about enlarging York Place, and transforming it into a magnificent royal palace, fit for himself and his Queen, Anne Boleyn. He called it Whitehall, and it became the principal setting for the passions, intrigues and ceremonies of the Tudor, and afterwards, the Stuart monarchies.

Early banqueting houses

The Banqueting House we see today had two predecessors. Elizabeth I was wooed by her noble suitors in the first building, meant to be temporary, which was made of bricks, timber and canvas, with a ceiling beautifully painted with vines and fruit – all symbols of the hoped-for fecundity of a marriage which never materialised.

Despite its flimsy construction, this old banqueting house was much in demand from Elizabeth's successor as a venue for masques. James I and his wife Anne of Denmark loved this form of extravagant performance. Eventually James commissioned a more substantial hall from architect Robert Stickells. However, the King was disappointed with the building. Although very ornate, a forest of columns supporting a gallery, blocked much of the audiences' view.

Inigo Jones's Banqueting House

James's new Surveyor of the Kings Works, Inigo Jones, was chosen to build the third, and final, Banqueting House. Son of a London carpenter, Jones was a skilled costume and scenery designer, as well as a gifted architect. Together with the playwright Ben Jonson, he had created wonderful masques for Queen Anne.

Essential information for your visit

Inigo Jones knew of the King's disappointment with his previous building, so he drew up plans for a completely different, classical building. Jones had travelled widely in France and Italy, where he made copious notes and drawings of the architecture of ancient Rome and the Renaissance. Inspired by the classical forms he encountered on his travels, he adapted elements of the buildings he had witnessed, and reinterpreted them in a new and unique way, to suit his royal patrons.

His spectacular Banqueting House building was completed in 1622, to the King's great delight and the astonishment of all who surveyed it.

Perfectly proportioned

Jones's Banqueting House has an enormous hall, with the dimensions of a double cube, resting on top of a vaulted Undercroft.

The spectacular carved and gilded ceiling now contains the nine paintings by Rubens, which were installed in 1636. The ceiling was painted a plain white before Rubens' paintings were installed, but was darkened with 'walnut-tree' colour and richly gilded after their installation.

Rubens and the Banqueting House

The crowning glory of the Banqueting House is its magnificent nine ceiling paintings by Peter Paul Rubens – one of Europe's most influential and important artists.

These vast oil-on-canvas paintings are unique, in that they remain in the very ceiling for which they were first painted – most of Rubens's paintings are in art galleries around the world.

James I began discussions with Rubens about a decorative scheme for the Banqueting House, but it was his son, Charles I who finally commissioned the paintings. Rubens presented Charles with working sketches, but painted the finished canvases in Antwerp.

They were installed in 1636, and Rubens was paid (rather belatedly) £3000 and given a gold chain for this.

The paintings glorify the achievements of his father, and depict James as a divine figure – the implication being that his Stuart heirs were too.

Execution site

Just 13 years after Rubens' canvas were installed Charles I viewed the ceiling for the last time, as a condemned man.

The irony of the divine right of kings cannot have been lost on him as he walked to his death under the magnificent canvases: commissioned as a tribute to his father. The King was executed on a specially built scaffold outside the Banqueting House on 30 January 1649. His death is commemorated in a special service held there every year on the anniversary.

Essential information for your visit

Chronology

1581	Queen Elizabeth I hosts entertainments at Whitehall Palace connected with her marriage negotiations. She creates a temporary banqueting house on this site.
1622	A stunning new banqueting house, designed by Inigo Jones is completed, giving James I a spectacular setting for hosting elaborate court masques. He hosts numerous performances, each more extravagant than the last.
1623	The Undercroft was opened as a “drinking den” for James I, it was partly decorated as a shell grotto by Isaac de Caus.
1629-30	Charles I commissioned Rubens to paint nine ceiling canvases, to be inserted into Inigo Jones’ carved architrave and cornice.
1636	The installation of Peter Paul Rubens’ ceiling paintings marked the end of the building as a venue for masques, with their requirement for brilliant, and highly damaging, illumination. ‘Seventy dozen torches and 60 flambeaux’ alone were ordered for a single performance of ‘The Triumph of Peace’ in February 1633.
1649	A defiant and dignified King Charles I found guilty of treason, is executed on a scaffold outside the Banqueting House before thousands of onlookers.
1689	King William III and Queen Mary II were offered and accept the Crown of England here in the presence of assembled Lords and commons.
1698	Whitehall Palace was destroyed by fire, apart from the Banqueting House.
1890	The Banqueting House was discontinued as a Chapel Royal.
1989	Banqueting House passed into the hands of Historic Royal Palaces.
1990	Queen Mother hosted a reception for her 90 th birthday in the Banqueting House.
1997	HM the Queen used the Banqueting House as a venue for her 50th wedding anniversary lunch.

Essential information for your visit

What to see and do

If undertaking a self-led visit we would recommend scheduling approximately 30 minutes for your visit.

- **Admire the architecture:** Admire the architecture of the Banqueting House, which was built and designed by the renowned 17th century architect, Inigo Jones. Whitehall was known as one of the first examples of Palladianism in British architecture.
- **Stand in the Banqueting Hall:** James I's great hall at is a superb venue for extravagant entertainment.
- **Rubens Ceiling Paintings:** Marvel at Sir Peter Paul Rubens' masterpiece in its original setting. This masterpiece ceiling is one of the most famous from a golden age. Four enormous canvasses measuring between 28x20ft and 40x10ft are a symbol of the divine right of James I and his son, Charles I.
- **Discover the story of Whitehall Palace**
- **Stand at the spot where Charles I's execution took place.** Walk in the footsteps of the condemned King and visit the place where a king was killed and Britain turned into a republic for eleven years.
- **Go down into the Undercroft,** the vaulted drinking den beneath the Banqueting House, used for entertaining friends by James I.
- **Discover our interactive activities:** We have family activities that are available to all visitors in the Main Hall. There are drawing pads based on the Masques and several costumes to try on based on the outfits worn during Masques.

To discover more about the Banqueting House during your visit, please feel free to ask any of the warding staff who will be happy to answer your questions.

Essential information for your visit

Facilities

Toilets

Groups can use the toilets in the Undercroft, located on the ground floor.

Lunchrooms

We are unable to offer our Schools & Communities groups a lunchroom. There are however several nearby parks which we would recommend for a picnic.

Bags

There are no locker or cloakroom facilities at the Banqueting House so all coats, bags and lunches must remain with your group at all times.

Shopping

There is one small shop in the Banqueting House near the main entrance. When visiting it we would advise going in pairs.



Essential information for your visit

Accessibility

Additional needs

Please let us know as soon as possible if any of your students have special educational needs and/or health or mobility difficulties. We can be contacted on **020 3166 6646** or banquetinghouselearning@hrp.org.uk. We will make arrangements to maximise their enjoyment of the day, for example, by providing free places for additional helpers or tailoring a resource to their needs.

Toilets

There is one accessible toilet available back of house, you will need to approach a member of staff to gain access to it. Please be aware the toilet is accessed down a short ramp with no handrail.

Lifts

The Main Hall of the Banqueting House is accessible to wheelchair users via a lift in an adjoining property. The lift is available from Monday – Friday only. The lift is small and may accommodate up to one standard sized push wheelchair at a time. As this lift is in a different building we will need to know in advance if your group needs access to it.

The dimensions of the lift are:

- Door width 27 inches
- Depth of lift 30 x 30 inches
- Weight limit 704 pounds

A ramp down to the Undercroft is available for wheelchair users.

Essential information for your visit

Further Information

Teacher Resources

Please see our website for further teacher resources. If you have booked a session, you will find your teacher notes for the session on our website. We have included direct links to all resources on your emailed booking confirmation.

Audio guides

Audio guides are not currently available for groups.

Our staff

Members of staff are here to help you and will be pleased to answer your questions, including any queries you may have about the history of the Banqueting House. Please treat our staff with courtesy and professional respect, remembering that they are responsible for ensuring a good experience for all our visitors.

Supervision

Your students must be supervised at all times. You are responsible for the health and safety of your students during your visit to the Banqueting House whether on a self-guided visit or taking part in a session. We interpret supervision to mean that accompanying adults will remain in the physical presence of the group of students for which they are responsible at all times. No students should be allowed to move around the site without an adult with them. This includes students engaged in worksheet exercises.

Your group will need a minimum of one accompanying adult per fifteen students aged 16 years plus, one accompanying adult per ten students aged 7-15 years and one adult per five children aged 0-6 years. We retain the right to refuse entry to groups without a sufficient number of accompanying adults.

By following these guidelines, you will help all other school groups and general visitors to have an enjoyable visit, and will assist staff to provide a better customer service experience for everyone.

Photography and filming

Visitors are welcome to take non-commercial photographs (without the use of flash) within the Banqueting House. Photographic equipment (such as tripods) and selfie sticks should not be used inside the building. Requests for filming or sketching should be made in advance.

Historic Royal Palaces is a safeguarding aware organisation and takes its responsibility to protect children and vulnerable people seriously. We may sometimes ask therefore that visitors refrain from filming or photographing other visitors. If you have concerns about photography of your group, please speak to a member of Front of House Staff.

Essential information for your visit

Eating & Drinking

Please do not eat or drink inside the Banqueting House.

Compliments & Complaints

We value any feedback you have about your visit. You can do this by calling the Schools & Communities Team on **020 3166 6646** or by emailing banquetinghouselearning@hrp.org.uk.

Unforeseen closures

At times, we may have to close the Banqueting House early at short notice, to prepare for a function in the evening. You will be informed as soon as possible if this will have a major impact on your visit, otherwise please check our website for the most up-to-date information.

Essential information for your visit

Terms & Conditions

Once your visit is booked, it is fully subject to these terms and conditions.

As the person making the booking, it is your responsibility to ensure that your finance team have received the invoice, and that it is paid on time in accordance with the payment terms. .

In the unlikely event that your invoice is not paid by your payment due date, we will contact you 42 days (6 weeks) prior to your visit date to organise immediate payment of the outstanding balance.

Your deadline for cancelling or amending your booking is 42 days (6 weeks) prior to your visit date. If you need to make any amendments to your booking, or need to cancel for any reason, you must let us know in writing before this date. If you inform us of a cancellation after this date you will still be charged for your visit as per your latest invoice and will not be refunded for any payment that has been made.

If you need to add extra students or adults please let us know before your amendment deadline date, as mentioned above. You may be charged the general group admission rate for any additions made after this date.

If you need to reduce the number of people on your booking, you must let us know prior to your 6-week amendment deadline. If you let us know after this deadline, you will still be charged for the full invoice as per the numbers you originally provided us with.

Pupils and students must be supervised at all times according to our supervision ratios. You are responsible for ensuring that all adults in your group are aware of the supervision requirements. Please refer to our Essential Information packs for more information.

Our staff reserve the right to refuse entry to groups who do not meet these ratios, with no possibility of a refund.

- Key Stage 1 = 1:5 (ages 4 -7)
- Key Stages 2, 3 & 4 = 1:10 (ages 7-15)
- Key Stage 5 and up = 1:15 (16 +)

If you are late on the day of your visit you must call us on **07815 721 540** to confirm your estimated time of arrival. We will then discuss your options with you.

If you have booked a session: Please be aware that if you are between 15 and 30 minutes late you will receive a shortened session. Groups who are more than 30 minutes late will forfeit their session.

If you are booked for a self led visit: You must arrive at the time you indicated when you made the booking. Unfortunately if you arrive after this time we cannot guarantee you entry to the site, and you may forfeit your tickets, without a refund.

Please note we cannot give refunds for late cancellations or non-arrivals

Essential information for your visit

Security Information

The safety and security of Historic Royal Palaces' staff and visitors is always of the utmost importance. As with many public venues Historic Royal Palaces uses a range security measures to help minimise the possibility of terrorist, or other criminal activity taking place, and these measures also include procedures to deal with incidents should they actually happen.

Security reviews

The security in place across our estate is subject to continuous review, and we are assisted in that task by the Metropolitan Police Service and the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

Our security team receive regular briefings from the police and security services and are in regular contact with a number of agencies who are able to provide advice and guidance about how we can enhance our security.

Our staff are regularly briefed on security matters.

Security procedures

Historic Royal Palaces' reserves the right to conduct bag searches as a 'condition of entry' to all of its sites. As a result, it would be helpful if the carriage of bags could be kept to a minimum, with only small bags being carried where necessary.

In the unlikely event that an incident should occur, it may be necessary to close, or evacuate, part, or all, of a site. If this occurs, you may be directed by staff to leave by certain routes, or prevented from leaving via certain routes, or from leaving the site entirely, if it is considered to be in your best interests.

Further information

Whilst we work hard to protect everybody who visits or works at Historic Royal Palaces, we are acutely aware that the measures we have in place can only help to mitigate against the likelihood of an attack rather than completely remove the threat.

The UK Government and security services have created a range of information material, including short videos, publicising their public advice to 'Run, Hide, Tell' in the event of a firearms or weapons attack. The following link, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7MzQwBCMi4o3b2wZXbxOEw> will take you to one of the 'Run, Hide' Tell' videos, and we would highly recommend it to you.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Our aim is to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built. This welcome to 'everyone' includes children, young people and vulnerable adults. We want their experience of engaging with our palaces and their stories to be meaningful, enjoyable and safe. Our full safeguarding policies and procedures are available under <https://www.hrp.org.uk/about-us/policies/safeguarding-policies-and-procedures/>

Reporting: If a safeguarding incident occurs while you are on site please report this immediately to a member of HRP staff.

Essential information for your visit

Health & Safety Information

We carry out risk assessments on all of our activities and we have assessed the risks associated with visiting the Banqueting House as very low but please remember the site is open to the public.

Supervision

Your students must be supervised at all times. We interpret supervision to mean that at all times accompanying adults will remain in the physical presence of the group of students for which they are responsible. No students should be allowed to move around the site without an adult with them. This includes when students are completing worksheets or other activities.

Your group will need a minimum of one accompanying adult per fifteen students aged 16 years plus, one accompanying adult per ten students aged 7-15 years and one adult per five children aged 0-6 years. **We retain the right to refuse entry to groups without a sufficient number of accompanying adults.**

Lost Children

If a student/s has strayed from their assigned adult please approach a member of staff as soon as you notice and they will be able to help you.

Equipment

Any equipment provided by Historic Royal Palaces has been risk assessed and is deemed to represent a very low risk of an accident occurring. Individuals are responsible for any equipment they bring into the Banqueting House. At the beginning of any taught activity, a member of staff from Historic Royal Palaces may issue instructions. It is important that the group leader/all accompanying adults listen to and follow these instructions.

Insurance

Historic Royal Palaces has public liability insurance. Details can be provided on request.

Accidents/First aid

If there is an accident or near accident during your visit, please find the nearest member of staff. First aid is always available and a record will be made of any accident that occurs.

In case of evacuation

Please respond to the directions given by our members of staff.

Essential information for your visit

Possible Risks and Hazards

Hazards	Controls
Fire	Emergency procedures in place. Alarm system in operation. Fire escapes kept clear. No smoking permitted inside the building or in the courtyard entrance. Exact number in the group known by the lead teacher. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults. Fire exits identified during preliminary visit made by the teacher.
Slips, trips or falls due to historic floor surfaces, changes of levels and defects.	Adequate lighting provided. Pre-opening checks by Front of House staff. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults. Group instructed to wear sensible shoes and walk at a reasonable pace. First aid and a defibrillator available onsite.
Student becoming unwell during their visit	A defibrillator and staff trained in first aid, always available on site during palace open hours. Emergency procedures in place. Adequate number of adults/teachers with the group to assist and accompany unwell student.
Trapping fingers in doors, e.g. toilet cubicle door or main entrance gates/doors.	Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults. First aid available onsite.
Falls from height.	Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults. Group briefed by teacher to take care when walking up and down the stairs. Balcony not accessible to any school groups. First aid available onsite.
Contact with work equipment or scaffolding whilst work is being undertaken by building contractors.	Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults. Work tools never left unattended. Unauthorised areas locked shut and well signposted. First aid and a defibrillator available onsite.
Student with physical disability on the upper floor during an emergency evacuation	Restriction on number of wheelchair users on upper floor at any one time. Staff trained in the use of an Evac Chair. Teacher notifies Banqueting House staff in advance that there will be a wheelchair user in the group.
Injuries from participation in planned education activities, events, sessions.	Risk assessment of activity, event or session carried out by Public Engagement staff. Introductory talk at the start of any presenter led activity. First aid and a defibrillator available onsite.

Essential information for your visit

School Agreement Form

Please complete this form and return it by email (see below for details) to the Schools & Communities team in advance of your visit.

Name of School:

Date of Visit:

Name of Lead Teacher:.....

Booking Reservation Number:.....

I, the undersigned, having capacity to sign on behalf of the visiting school, accept the following two clauses:

1. I have read, understood and agree with the information and conditions given in the “Essential information for your visit” information pack.
2. The visiting school/group has appropriate insurance to cover their visit to the Banqueting House.

Signature:.....

Date:

Print Name:.....

Position in School:.....

To find out more about how we collect and use personal data, please see Historic Royal Palaces' [Privacy policy](#)

Please return this form in advance of your visit email to:

Email: banquetinghouselearning@hrp.org.uk

Operations Team - Administration Office

Public Engagement

The Clore Learning Centre (based at) Hampton Court Palace

Surrey

KT8 9AU

Essential information for your visit

A Checklist for Teachers

Before your visit, please work through the checklist below, to ensure that everything is ready for your visit to the Banqueting House, Whitehall.

- Carefully plan your journey to the Banqueting House, allowing some extra time for travel delays and parking (if applicable).
- Read the Essential Information pack and Teacher Notes for your session (if applicable).
- Conduct a preliminary visit using the complementary voucher for two teachers at the bottom of your booking confirmation email. This will help you plan a timetable for the visit and ensure you are familiar with the site before coming with your group.
- Do a risk assessment for the visit. We have listed some possible risks and hazards in the Essential Information pack to assist you with this.
- Sign and return the School Agreement form in the Essential Information pack.
- Ensure you are bringing the right number of adults to fulfil our ratios.
- Inform the Schools and Communities team of any changes to your group numbers, this will ensure we are expecting the right amount of people.
- Tell the Schools and Communities team of any accessibility issues well in advance so we can accommodate them as much as possible.
- In the days before your visit, check the Historic Royal Palaces website for news of any last minute closures.
- Before leaving, make sure you have the telephone number, to call if you are running late on the day of the visit (020 3166 6646).

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