

## Big Pit National Coal Museum

### SAFETY INFORMATION TO HELP SCHOOLS PREPARE FOR SCHOOL VISITS TO AMGUEDDFA CYMRU MUSEUMS

This safety information is intended to help you prepare for a visit to Big Pit National Coal Museum. It does not replace the need for your own risk assessment specific to the needs of your group. We are unable to fill in, check or sign any sections of school risk assessments.

Our safety information outlines the control measures undertaken by the Museum to avoid or reduce risk, together with rules of conduct for visiting groups. Your risk assessment will take into account the age, ability and specific needs of your group, any risk associated with your transport or possible weather at the time of your visit, in addition to the Museum's safety information.

We recommend that teachers refer to the document 'Health and safety on educational visits' which is produced by the UK government and is available from - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

At the end of the document we have attached extracts from the Museum's Child Protection Policy.

#### SAFETY STATEMENT

Big Pit National Coal Museum fully accepts its responsibilities under Health and Safety Legislation. A Health and Safety Policy is in place together with written risk assessments undertaken in respect of our legal duties relating to visitors coming onto our site and using our facilities.

Please be assured that the health and safety of visitors whilst on site is of our utmost concern. We have worked closely with the local authority regarding health and safety matters and want to ensure that your visit is a fun, enjoyable and learning experience.

We operate a policy for staff recruitment, training and assessment, which ensures that all staff with a responsibility for the safety and welfare of visitors/participants are qualified to undertake the duties they are assigned.

Teachers and other school staff are kindly requested to work in partnership with Big Pit National Coal Museum by actively supervising children within their care whilst on site.

Pupils remain the responsibility of the school throughout the visit, including lunch times.

We strongly recommend that group leaders conduct a preview visit in order to assess any potential risks for your group.

#### BACKGROUND

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Experience                 | Big Pit ceased production as a working colliery in 1980, and opened as a museum in 1983. The venue has been open to the public for 40 years.   |
| Venue / Attraction Details | <p>Visitors can descend the 90 metres into the mine and see where generations of Welsh miners worked. The underground tour is guided by a Miner Guide and lasts around 50 minutes.</p> <p>On the surface, visitors can visit ‘King Coal: The Mining Experience’, where a modern coalface is brought to life with light and sound. This AV presentation begins with a short film and lasts for 20 minutes.</p> <p>The Pithead Baths building houses four exhibition spaces and uses objects and images to tell the story of coal mining in Wales. Themes include children in the mines, health, home life and the mining communities. Learn about the Geology and Uses of Coal, Mining Disasters and Rescue, discover the role and impact of Trade Unions and Nationalisation, and get a closer look at some mining memorabilia.</p> <p>Visitors can also see the original colliery buildings around the site, including the fan house, winding engine house, blacksmith’s forge and stables.</p> <p>A typical school visit lasts around 4 hours.</p> |
| Visitor Numbers            | Annually we receive approximately 120,000 visitors. More than 50,000 of these are part of formal education groups.   |
| Contact Information        | <p>To book a visit, discuss the details of your visit or arrange a preview visit please ring 029 2057 3650. A member of the Museum staff will answer any queries you have about facilities and arrangements.</p> <p>If after your visit you have any concerns or experienced any problems regarding the management of the venue or safety and health of members of your party, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you.</p>   |

| <b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>                            |  |
|---|--|
| Animals/<br>Animals Fouling in<br>Public Access Areas | <p>Dogs are allowed on site, but not underground or in any of the buildings or exhibition areas. Assistance dogs accompanying visitors who are deaf or blind are most welcome, but cannot be taken underground.</p> <p>Owners are expected to clean up after their dogs.</p> |
| Communication Systems                                 | <p>Please note that hearing aid users should switch the setting to “T” to access the sound within the displays.</p> <p>Please let us know if you need the facilitator of a book-able session to wear a loop.</p>   |

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
|                             | <p>All departments of the museum have access to two-way radio systems. There is a Direct Audio Communication system (DAC) which allows communication between various points underground, and between the underground and the surface.</p>  |
| <p>DBS</p>                  | <p>Every member of staff has a minimum Basic DBS check upon.</p> <p>Learning staff and external facilitators who have regular and/or unsupervised access to children are subject to enhanced DBS checks.</p>   |
| <p>Emergency Evacuation</p> | <p>Emergency evacuation procedures are in place. Museum staff are familiar with these and practise these regularly. There is an alternative exit underground for emergency evacuation.</p> <p>Fire Safety Instructions are located in each department. These give details of the procedures which should be followed if the alarm is raised, and indicate the Fire Assembly Point locations.</p> <p>In case of evacuation, an alarm will sound and you should leave by the nearest safe exit. Museum staff will direct you to an assembly point.</p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Facilities for Visitors with Special Needs</p> | <p>Big Pit tries to accommodate the requirements of visitors with special needs. Please contact us in advance to clarify what provision can be made for visitors with special needs.</p> <p>Schools and group leaders must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place in order that appropriate supervision and assistance is available to pupils with special needs.</p> <p>Our Access Guide is available on our website <a href="https://museum.wales/bigpit/visit/access/">https://museum.wales/bigpit/visit/access/</a> or by calling 029 2057 3650.</p> <p><u>Physical Impairment</u><br/>Most areas of the site are accessible to all visitors, but due to the steep nature of some areas we recommend that wheelchair users and those with mobility problems are accompanied by an adult helper. There are uneven and gravelled surfaces in places. It is only possible for 4 visitors in wheelchairs to be underground at any one time.</p> <p><u>Visual Impairment</u><br/>King Coal: The Mining Experience includes an AV presentation with various light levels and colours. Museum staff are happy to allow visitors the opportunity to handle and touch a range of exhibits.</p> <p><u>Hearing Impairment</u><br/>AV presentations can be seen throughout the museum. Induction loops are installed in the exhibition areas.</p> |
| <p>First Aid</p>                                  | <p>If First Aid is needed please contact a member of Museum staff, who will then summon a trained first aider.</p>  |
| <p>Guided Tours / Facilitator led sessions</p>    | <p>The underground tour is guided by a Miner Guide.</p> <p>The Museum will have assessed the risks involved in a particular activity and will verbally advise you of these and the control measures adopted.</p>  |
| <p>Height Restrictions</p>                        | <p>Children need to be at least 1 metre tall to take the underground tour.</p>  |
| <p>Insurance / Public Liability</p>               | <p>The Museum has commercial insurance in place for public liability – a copy can be viewed on the Museum’s website - <a href="https://museum.wales/accountability/liability_insurance/">https://museum.wales/accountability/liability_insurance/</a></p>   |
| <p>Lost children</p>                              | <p>Please advise children separated from their group to inform a member of Museum staff if they are lost. The children will be kept in a safe area until collected by their group. Should a group leader become aware that one of their group is missing, they should inform a member of Museum staff who will take appropriate action.</p>   |
| <p>Maximum Group Sizes / Supervision</p>          | <p>Please ensure that your pupils are supervised <b>at all times</b>.</p> <p>We suggest the following ratio :</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages up to 8yrs: 1 adult / 6 children</li> <li>• Ages 8–11yrs: 1 adult / 10 children</li> <li>• Ages 11–16yrs: 1 adult / 14 children</li> </ul> <p>The above are based upon the ratios suggested by the DfES and necessary requirements for the underground tour. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their group.</p> <p>There is a group limit of 90 persons allowed on site at any time. Large groups like this will be asked to split up and visit different areas of the museum at different times.</p> <p>There is a limit of 15 persons per Guide for the underground tour.</p> <p>Group leaders should however assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their group.</p> |
| Medical Needs                                | <p>The Museum should be told if any pupil is known to have any specific need or serious medical condition. We will need to consider and discuss emergency arrangements with you.</p> <p>Where it is safe to do so, we will aim to fully include pupils with specific or serious medical conditions within activities offered.</p>   |
| Required Visitor Conduct                     | <p>Visitors must not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter areas which are not open to the public</li> <li>• behave in an unruly manner</li> <li>• touch any working machinery</li> <li>• climb on any machinery within the site</li> </ul> <p>The Museum reserves the right to ask groups or individuals behaving in an offensive or unreasonable manner to leave the site.</p> <p>All groups of students under the age of 16 <b>must</b> be supervised at all times and remain the responsibility of party leaders or supervising adults throughout their visit.</p> <p>Unsupervised groups may find that they are denied entry.</p>   |
| Pre-visit Information and Site Map           | <p>A pre-visit information booklet, visit itinerary and site map will be provide before your visit. This will provide essential information regarding your visit. It is important to familiarise yourself with this information.</p>  |
| Site Inspections of Venue Facilities / Areas | <p>Museum staff conduct regular inspections of the facilities, which are recorded.</p>  |
| Site Staff Identification                    | <p>All Museum staff wear identification badges and can be approached if you have any worries or concerns. They will be able to help you or direct you to the appropriate place</p>  |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
|                                      | for help.   |
| Vehicle Traffic                      | A Visitor Coach Park is available for use. It is located adjacent to the drop-off point at the main visitor entrance.   |
| Weather Protection / Sun Safety      | <p>No specialist clothing is required for the underground tours, but we advise wearing suitable warm clothing and appropriate footwear.</p> <p>Big Pit is an outdoor industrial site, so protective clothing is needed in case of bad weather. Sturdy shoes are recommended for the underground tour. Sun protection is advised during hot weather.</p>   |
| Welfare Facilities                   | <p><u>First Aid Room</u><br/>There is a first aid room at the Pit Top area.</p> <p><u>Toilets</u><br/>Toilets, including disabled toilets, are located on all 3 levels of the Big Pit site.</p> <p><u>Lunch Facilities</u><br/>The Coity Room, located in the Pithead Baths, is a lunch/break room which can accommodate 70 people. Please note that this room is used on a first come, first served basis. Bins and refuse bags are provided to enable groups to leave the room in a clean and tidy condition.</p> |
| Museum Building (Areas of High Risk) | <p><u>Blacksmith's Shop</u><br/>Open fire in forge at times. Do not allow children to pass beyond the barrier.</p> <p><u>King Coal: The Mining Experience</u><br/>Dark areas, loud noises, and varying levels of light in parts of the presentation.</p> <p><u>Winding Engine House</u><br/>Warn children not to distract the driver when the engine is in motion. Children must not pass beyond the barrier.</p>   |
| Machinery                            | Original machinery is on display in the Blacksmith's yard, Conservation Workshop and near the Pithead Baths building. Children should be warned to take care near machinery.  |
| Safety Equipment / Clothing          | <p>The <b>self-rescuers</b> carried during the underground tour contain hopcalite. This is harmful if ingested or inhaled without control. Children should not attempt to open these without being instructed to do so by the Miner Guide.</p> <p>The <b>batteries</b> carried during the underground tour may leak if damaged. In this event, the Guide should be informed and skin and clothing should be washed immediately.</p>   |
| Underground Activities               | <p>Children should remain with the group at all times underground.</p> <p>All visitors will be provided with hard hats for the</p>  |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
|                          | <p>underground visit.</p> <p>Although Big Pit no longer produces coal, it is still subject to the Coal Mines Act safety legislation. It is against the law to take smoking materials or incendiary substances underground. These include cigarettes, e-cigarettes, matches and lighters, mobile phones, watches and key fobs, calculators, radios, electronic devices and all photographic equipment. This 'contraband' will be collected by our guides before the underground tour and will be kept securely locked away on the surface until the tour ends.</p> |
| Slate chippings / Gravel | These cover the ground in some areas. Children should be warned not to throw or play with these.  |
| Steep banking            | There is a steep bank outside the Canteen at the Pithead Baths. It is not a part of the main visitor route. Children should be warned not to walk, run or roll down this slope.   |
| Security                 | Please note that in the interest of security, large bags and rucksacks cannot be taken underground. Any bags brought onto site may be subject to a search by museum staff.  |
| Review                   | This document and related safety information is updated regularly.  |

## **Child Protection Policy**

**Our Child Protection Policy appears on our website**

[https://museum.wales/about/policy/child\\_protection\\_policy/](https://museum.wales/about/policy/child_protection_policy/)

**Please read the extracts below before your visit.**

### **Leaders/Teachers Responsibilities while visiting the Museum**

We wish to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from harm while visiting our museums. In addition to our responsibilities, we ask that leaders/teachers of groups exercise their own responsibilities.

In particular all leaders/teachers should:

- book workshop activities and visits in advance of their visit
- ensure they supervise the children/young people in their care at all times
- in the case of an accident, contact a member of staff who will follow our Staff Emergency Procedures
- in the case of a lost child, contact a member of staff who will follow procedures
- not have in their possession, or consume, alcoholic beverages, or use illegal drugs or smoke on our premises
- not verbally or physically abuse a child/young person
- ensure adequate insurance cover for the group and leader
- inform their group re expected behaviour while at our museums
- be considerate of other visitors and groups visiting the museums
- observe our Fire Precaution Procedures.

**We wish to remind all leaders/teachers that the primary responsibility for the welfare of the children in their care rests with them at all times.**

**We will communicate concerns to the leader/teacher (unless this person is the source of concern) and follow this up with the school/organization.**

**Concerns about the conduct of the leader/teacher will be reported directly to the school/organization and possibly the police.**

**Due to the size and nature of each site, we have recommended adult-to-child ratios for each which should be adhered to for health and safety reasons.**

### **Group conduct while in the Museum**

We wish all visitors to have an enjoyable visit. We therefore expect all visitors to display courtesy and respect for others and for our property at all times during their visit.

Group leaders should therefore not allow members of their group to:

- use threatening, abusive or violent behaviour
- bully (verbally or physically)
- make any sexist, racist or other offensive remarks toward any person or other group
- vandalise property or displays
- leave litter on our premises
- feed, touch, scare or hurt any animals present
- enter areas that are cordoned off
- use bad language
- smoke
- consume alcohol outside designated areas (e.g. restaurant and picnic areas) or use illegal drugs
- eat or drink apart from in cafes, restaurants and places set aside for school parties to eat their own refreshments

In the event that any of the above are not followed we reserve the right to refuse admission and/or ask the group to leave.