

Croydon SACRE Guidance On Visits and Visitors 2020

Croydon SACRE Guidelines for Visits and Visitors 2020

The Croydon Agreed syllabus for Religious Education has a requirement for schools to visit places of worship.

One of the most often asked questions is where can we get faith community visitors from to come into school?

Therefore, Croydon SACRE have put together some advice for schools on the topic of Visits and Visitors.

It is difficult for us to give a list of contacts for suitable places as the volunteers in the place of worship often change. At the end of this guidance is a list of some of the nearly 300 places of worship that we have in Croydon, many of these are churches and it is recommended that schools contact a church near them and use that as the Christian visit.

If, for whatever reason, a visit is impossible then a virtual visit can be used. RE online has a series of very useful short films which could be used, these could also be part of the preparation for your visit.

https://www.reonline.org.uk/specials/places-of-worship/introduction_video.htm

[also useful is the BBC iWonder series.](#)

Parental support and understanding are essential, and it often helps to make parents aware that visits are a statutory part of the RE syllabus. Sometimes children do have to be left at school if parents are opposed but it is worth discussing the visit and including the parent if possible. Parents should be assured that pupils;

- will not be taking part in any worship
- there will be no form of proselytising or evangelising
- any requirements such as head covering, or removal of shoes is an outward token of respect for other' beliefs and sensitivities.

Included below are some information about each type of place of worship, there is also information in the Croydon Agreed Syllabus 2024 on the main teaching points for each religion.

Visits to Places of Worship

Visits provide pupils with an invaluable first-hand experience and an opportunity to discover the unique atmosphere of a living, worshipping, faith community.

Visits can support both attainment targets, learning about religion and learning from religion and human experience.

Visits can take place as an introduction and stimulus, as a means of supporting the learning in progress or as a reinforcement or culmination of work that has been done.

Pupils can;

- Meet a representative of the faith community
- Experience the feel of a living, worshipping community and their spirituality
- Have a multi-sensory experience in their RE learning;
- See the special books and how they are used
- See how and where worship takes place
- See objects and symbols that relate to worship and learn their significance
- See what part the building and furniture take in the celebration and worship of the faith
- See what other uses are made of the building
- Be involved in drawing up suitable questions before the trip

Planning

Planning is very important and ensures that everyone is aware of what will take place.

To get the most out of the visit it is essential to have clear learning objectives and a clear idea of what the pupils will get out of the visit. It is better to focus on a couple of aspects than to 'just go and see'.

On arrival, it is a good idea to allow some time to sit and take in the atmosphere. Ask them to consider in silence what they can hear, see and smell and how the building makes them feel. This exercise helps them to calm down after a journey and to become focused and aware of what is around them. It is also an opportunity for spiritual awareness and development.

The whole visit could be based around a sensory approach for pupils in KS1.

Liaising with faith community: What information do I need to give the place of worship about what we are learning in RE?

It is helpful for those at the place of worship to know:

- What the pupils are studying or learning about.
- When they come on their visit is it at the beginning, middle or end of their learning?
- What are the key areas of focus for the pupils or the key concepts they are studying?
- What have the children learnt already about this religion?

- What do I not want the guide to talk about?
- Are there any special needs or additional considerations that the speaker needs to know about in advance?
- How long do I want them to speak for?
- Do I want the speaker to leave us as a group to talk together before we leave?
- Do we want to ask some questions ourselves of the faith representative?
- Do we need any facilities, such as a base room, refreshments, parking?

Starting with the outside of the building

If the weather is suitable and the activity can be well supervised, encourage the children to explore the outside of the premises. They could be encouraged to draw the building as a way of looking more closely at the architecture and style of the building. In discussion with them you might like to ask:

- Would they know it was a place of worship?
- How do they know?
- What can they find out about the building and its use from the notice boards, foundation stone or other clues?
- Is there anything they notice particularly?
- Is it accessible to all?

Some questions decided by you, the teacher, with input from the pupils will ensure that the visit is focused and that the pupils know what they are looking for.

Possible Questions when visiting a place of worship

When visiting a place of worship, we can help children to begin to understand what is meant by worship

How does it feel to sit still in this place of worship?

What is the atmosphere like?

What can you hear?

What can you smell?

Why might people come here during the week?

How might this place itself help people to worship?

What special books can you see, are they open or closed?

What is special about the furniture?

Does the place provide any clues about what might go on here?

What makes it a (Christian, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc.) place of worship?

Note down anything that particularly interests you

What can you learn about this worshipping community from the notices and any literature?

Teachers might like to make a question sheet for the pupils to fill in before, during and after the visit. For example;

What do I know already about this belief?

What I have seen to tell me about the beliefs of this faith?

Draw a picture of the important items in the building with a reason why this tells about the faith.

What I know now about this faith and the people who worship here

The most interesting thing I have seen was...

The most interesting thing I have heard about was ...

Follow up

As soon as possible arrange a session where children can discuss thoughts and feelings and directly question what they have seen.

Pupils can be allowed to respond through creative writing and art projects and should be encouraged to write a thank you note to the faith representative who talked to them.

Later work resulting from the visit could be made into a book, a display or used during collective worship. The faith representative could be invited to see the display made.

Visiting a Church.

There are many churches in our urban landscape, and everyone is different. There are many different denominations of church and this also makes a difference to the inside of the church. The inside of the Christian place of worship can be very plain or extremely ornate depending on the denomination.

Usually there will be symbols such as a cross or crucifix in the church and may be statues, paintings and icons.

Within the church the congregation sit on chairs, or pews, and families sit together. On view will be an altar or Communion table and near the entrance will be a font for baptism. In some denomination's baptism involves full immersion in which case there will be a pool. The font is found at the entrance as a symbol of entering the community of believers.

'The church' is not only the name of the building but also the name of the community of believers. Sunday is the special day for services although there are other services during the week. When visiting a church, children may not be invited to enter some areas, for instance the sanctuary.

Visiting a Hindu Temple

The Mandir or Temple - You may be asked to wash your hands before entering the Mandir. It is usual to remove shoes. Females might be asked to cover their heads - it is best to check local custom. Do not enter shrine areas. Do not point feet or fingers at shrines. Visitors may be offered prashad / parshad (a sweet paste) or sweets, sometimes on arrival, sometimes on exit. (This can be accepted, or politely declined on the grounds of conscience – it is good to talk to pupils about this in advance). Visitors may also be offered arti (a flame to pass your hands over). It is a symbol of the divine blessing. This can also be politely declined if it is not appropriate.

Visiting a Gurdwara

The Gurdwara is the Sikh place of worship, the name means the house of the Guru. A place is called a Gurdwara if there is a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy book and last Guru, installed. There are no fixed times for opening and closing and the Gurdwara acts as a centre for the community as well as a place of worship. There is no special day of worship although generally Sikhs will have their main worship to match that of the country they are in, therefore Sunday is the main worship day in this country although worship takes place before or after work on other days. The head is covered, shoes removed, and hands washed on entry. Outside the Gurdwara there is a flagpole with the Nishan Sahib flying from it to show that the building is a Gurdwara and has a langar.

Visiting a Mosque

It is important for pupils to know there are millions of Mosques in the world and they are not all the same. The Mosque or Masjid, which means place of prostration, is an important part of the worship of the Muslim community. The Mosque is also a community centre and often a place for children and adults to learn Arabic so they may read the Qur'an.

Generally, there will be a domed roof to represent the sky and a minaret for the muezzin to call the faithful to worship. There is often an open courtyard with a water supply. Inside there will be no decorations or paintings which represent living images but there are usually beautiful calligraphic quotations from the Qur'an, and other intricate geometric patterns. The main prayer hall will be carpeted, and everyone removes his or her shoes before entering and covers the head. This is to keep the prayer hall clean as a mark of respect to Allah. There are no seats because of the special movements made before and during prayer. There will also be an area somewhere in the Mosque for Wudu, washing in a special way before Salah.

The main prayer day is on Friday when boys over 15 and men are expected to attend the Mosque, men and women are separated and women are not required to attend in the way men are. In the prayer hall there will be a niche, the mihrab, in the wall which indicates the direction of Makkah, the qibla. All Muslims face in this direction when praying. There is a raised dais called the minbar, from which the Imam delivers the khutbah, his sermons and discussions.

Visiting a Synagogue

During services men normally wear a kippah (skull cap) to wear in the Synagogue and married females are asked to cover their heads. In reform Synagogues males and females will not be separated, but in Orthodox synagogues the sexes sit separately, normally only when a service is taking place. The Croydon Synagogue is an Orthodox community. The word "synagogue" comes from the Greek word for gathering together, and it can be a meeting place, a house of learning, and a house of prayer, so how people behave depends on what's happening there. Probably the most important feature of the sanctuary is the Ark, a cabinet or recession in the wall that holds the Torah scrolls, containing the five books of Moses. The Ark is generally placed in the front of the room; that is, on the side towards Jerusalem. The Ark has doors as well as an inner curtain called a Parokhet. This curtain is in imitation of the curtain in the Sanctuary in The Temple. During certain prayers, the doors and/or curtain of the Ark may be opened or closed. Opening or closing the doors or curtain is performed by a member of the congregation. All congregants stand when the Ark is open. In front of and slightly above the Ark, you will find the Ner Tamid, the Eternal Lamp. This lamp symbolizes the commandment to keep a light burning in the Tabernacle outside of the curtain surrounding the Ark of the Covenant. (Ex. 27:20-21). In the centre of the room you will find a raised platform containing a reading desk called a Bimah, services are conducted from the Bimah. The Torah scrolls are placed on the Bimah when they are read.

Visiting a Buddhist Vihara

Buddhists rather use the word devotion than worship. The place of devotion is the Vihara where there will be a shrine room. The shrine room is important with flowers, incense, light offerings, chanting, images of Buddha and a seat for the meditation teacher. At the temple or Vihara Buddhists pay homage to a Buddha image, the three refuges and the five precepts may be recited before offerings of food or flowers are made

The three jewels of Buddhism are The Buddha, The Dharma, meaning teaching- the four noble truths, and the Sangha which is the community

Going out of school - Arranging a Visit to a Place of Worship

1. Decide on a place of worship,
2. Do a preparatory visit and/or discuss with faith representative what aspects pupils will focus on, ask if you can take photographs.
3. Decide on who, when and why. Apply to Head teacher with who and why and day/timings, etc.
4. Check School Calendar and see the relevant senior member of staff to establish if staff can be covered while out of school
5. Work out costings (coach etc.) Is a minibus available/desirable/driver? London transport is free to children.
6. Confirm bookings for venue/transport etc.
7. Establish criteria/aims for the visit. Prepare worksheets, questions, etc. This can be done with the pupils. Decide how you will evaluate — do you want written work, verbal de-brief, photos with captions, letters of thanks, etc.
8. Post names on Staff Bulletin Board and inform relevant staff/support; assistants/Peripatetic's
9. Write letter to parents with tear-off slip: 'NO SLIP-NO TRIP'
If special requirements needed, e.g. clothing, packed lunch
10. Discuss with pupils the requirements —
 - clothing (especially for mosque)
 - behaviour (respect, quiet, sensible attitude)
 - relevant questions
11. Confirm travel arrangements.
12. On the day — have with you — spare money, mobile phone, tissues, at least 2 adults, list of pupils, clipboards and pencils (if needed), question sheets if required, inhalers or special requirements for any pupils, a camera
13. At school reception — leave a list of pupils and staff out of school, where you are going/'phone numbers if possible, the time you are expected back.
14. If you will be out during registration leave a list of pupils with class/form tutor so that registers can be correctly coded.
15. Make sure pupils thank personnel involved in visit before they leave and write afterwards to thank.
16. Establish evaluation criteria and format
17. Keep record of visit for future reference.

INVITING VISITORS into SCHOOL

Visiting speakers to schools give pupils the opportunity to;

- Appreciate that RE is about the experiences of real people;
- Meet people who are confident in their knowledge of their faith;
- Opportunities to reflect, question and to challenge respectfully;
- Get fresh ideas and insight.

If it is impossible to go on a visit, then having a member of a faith community has great value. This can also be linked in with visits in the preparation and follow up stages.

Having a visitor from a faith community can affirm pupils whose faith may be a minority one within the school or locality.

If the focus of learning is about figures of authority within a faith, visits by leaders have an obvious value. They will often bring vestments and artefacts that relate to their role.

It can also be valuable to have members of a faith group who might be mothers, grandparents, governors or pupils. For instance, an interview with someone on their view of arranged marriage or what it was like to be on Hajj will give the children a different perspective.

Sometimes people are nervous of giving a talk but may be happy to be interviewed by the children, particularly if the questions have been worked out by the class beforehand.

If the learning objective has been clearly identified, then the pupils will know the focus for questions. This avoids the risk of questioning becoming so wide ranging that the impact of the visit is watered down. Pupils need to have been taught something of the faith before receiving a visitor or making a visit to gain the most benefit. It is important that the school accepts the responsibility they have to every pupil, and therefore gains the agreement of all visitors. The school contact should be clear when explaining what you want them to do and get them to explain to you what they want to do.

Points to consider

- Correct title and means of addressing the visitor.
- Learning objectives clear to class and visitor.
- Should the visitor know the questions beforehand
- Does the visitor understand they are not to proselytize? Anything the visitor needs prepared or provided?
- Sensitivity shown towards any artefacts from the visitor's religion
- After the visit, as with visits to places of worship, a letter of thanks should be sent by the pupils and maybe some pieces of work related to the topic.
- You will need to give the visitor some guidelines – not just a printout of your curriculum plan. Remember they may not have experience of primary teaching, so you may need to be quite specific in your request. The simple rule is that the more you brief your visitor, the better the time everyone will have in the classroom.

- Best practice is to arrange a preliminary meeting with the visitor prior to their meeting with pupils (this would enable the school to review the activities and the appropriateness of the materials)
- Have the educational purposes of the visit by the person/group (including links with concepts that are important in RE, e.g. 'awareness', 'dialogue') been set out?
- Are you sure that the visitor/s is the right person to fulfil these educational purposes (e.g. background knowledge, capacity to communicate well with the pupil age-group, ability to keep to time, etc.)?
- Have all the school policy requirements for visits, including those for safeguarding pupils, been met?
- Is the visitor/visiting group aware of what these educational purposes and safeguarding procedures are?
- Will the visitor/s need any special equipment?
- How will the pupils be prepared for the visit (e.g. background knowledge, preparing questions/questioners, understanding appropriate boundaries and expectations)?
- What will be the format of the meeting between visitor/s and pupils (e.g. introduction, questions and answers, time for reflection, paired or group work)?
- When will you make a final check to make sure that the visitor/s is prepared for the meeting?
- How will you ensure that, for the visitor/s too, the meeting is an enjoyable learning experience?
- What will be the follow-up to the meeting (e.g. pupils' work, display, assembly and/or collective worship, school website, thanks to visitor/s)?
- How will the meeting with the visitor/s be reviewed so that possible improvements can be made in future?

Visitors will also need to know:

- Previous experiences and knowledge of the pupils;
- How their input fits in;
- The age and ability range of the pupils they will meet;
- How the work is to be followed up.
- When they arrive, where they arrive to and any other requirements you may wish to make.
- The content of the visitor's code of practice.
- That there will be a member of staff present **at all times**, the member of staff will be responsible for the discipline of the pupils at all times.

You might like to fill in the evaluation form on page 14 and email to penny.smith-orr@croydon.gov.uk for SACRE records

Appendix

Thames Buddhist Vihara <i>Theravada</i>	Address: 49 Dulverton Road Selsdon Surrey CR2 8PJ Tel: 020 8657 7120 thamesvihara@btinternet.com	Web site: www.thamesbuddhistvihara.org
Croydon Buddhist Centre <i>Triratna Buddhist Community</i>	The Buddhist Centre 98 High Street Croydon CR0 1ND Tel: 0208 688 8624 info@buddhistcentrecroydon.org	Website: www.buddhistcentrecroydon.org
Shree Shree Radha Krishna Cultural Centre, Sth Norwood <i>Dedicated to Lord Krishna</i>	Address: 42 Enmore Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 5NG Tel: 020 8656 4296	
Sivakantha Kiri Hindu Temple, Thornton Heath <i>Dedicated to Lord Murga</i>	Address: 13-15 Thornton Rd, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 6BD Tel: 020 8684 0747 / 0208 810 0835	
Sri Sakthy Ganapathy Temple, Thornton Heath <i>Dedicated to Lord Ganesh</i>	Address: 21 Brigstock Road Thornton Heath Croydon Surrey CR7 7JJ Tel: 0208 689 3466	
Jainism Oshwal Mahajanwadi, Croydon	Address: Oshwal House, 1 Campbell Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 2SQ Tel: 020 8683 0258 (2pm to 5pm weekdays only)	Website: http://www.oshwal.co.uk
Croydon & District Synagogue. <i>Orthodox.</i> <i>Rabbi Nathan Asmoucha</i>	Address: The Almonds, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey Tel: 020 8656 0575 / 07955 823648 Email: croydonshul@btinternet.com Barbara Rosen barbararosen@btinternet.com	Website: www.croydonsynagogue.org.uk
South London Liberal Synagogue <i>Liberal Movement.</i> <i>Rabbi Janet Darley</i>	Address: PO Box 14475, 1 Prentis Road, London SW16 1ZW Tel: 020 8769 4787 office@southlondon.org	Website: www.southlondon.org
Bismillah Cultural Centre	1370c London Road, Norbury, London, Greater London, SW16 4DE Tel: 020 8764 6274	

CROYDON SACRE GUIDANCE ON VISITS AND VISITORS

<i>Deobandi</i>		Management: Afghan
CICT – Croydon Islamic Community Trust	Address: 89 London Road Croydon CR0 2RF Tel: 0208 760 0552 E-mail: admin@croйдonict.com Or: imam@croйдonict.com	Website: http://www.croydonict.com
Croydon Mosque and Islamic Centre <i>Sunni</i>	Address: 525 London Road, Thornton Heath Surrey, CR7 6AR Tel/Fax 020 8684 8200 Emergency 24hr: 07949 176 786 Email: enquiries@croйдonmosque.com	Website: www.croydonmosque.com/
Croydon: South London Jamatkhana <i>Ismaili</i>	Address: 205-209 Addiscombe Rd East Croydon Surrey CR0 6SP	Website: http://ismaili.net
Norbury Islamic Academy Co-located with: Azhar Academy & Islamic Bookshop	Address: 1595-1597 London Road, Norbury, London, Greater London, SW16 4AA Tel: 07956 501066 Email: info@norbury.org	Website: http://www.norbury.org
Purley Islamic Community Centre (PICC)	Address: 158 Stafford Rd, Wallington, SM6 9BS Tel: 07931 654321 / 0203 582 9925 Email: info@purleyicc.com	Website: http://purleyicc.com
Shah Jalal Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre	Address: 170 Handcroft Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR0 3LE	Management: Bangladeshi
South Norwood Islamic Cultural and Community Centre, SNICC	Address: 3 Clifford Road, South Norwood, London, Greater London, SE25 5JJ Tel: 020 8656 4142 Imam Iqbal Zakiuddin Email: iqbal.zakiuddin@gmail.com	Website: http://www.snicc.org.uk
Thornton Heath Islamic Centre	Address: 150 Gillett Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 8SN Tel: 07828 929654 admin@thorntonheath.com Imam Ashraf 07828 929654 Imam Pijvi 07973 802925	Website: www.thorntonheathmosque.com

CROYDON SACRE GUIDANCE ON VISITS AND VISITORS

<p>Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Croydon</p>	<p>Address: St. James's Road, Croydon, Surrey. CR0 2BU Tel: 020 8688 8155</p>	<p>Website: www.croydongurdwara.co.uk</p>
<p>Baitus Subhan <i>Ahmadiyyan</i></p>	<p>Address : 59 St. James's Road, Croydon CR0 2US Tel:020 8689 2624 E-mail: info@ahmadiyya.org.uk</p>	<p>Website: http://www.ahmadiyya.org.uk</p>
<p>The Salvation Army Citadel</p>	<p>Address: Booth Rd, Croydon CR0 1XY Phone: 020 8680 9924</p>	<p>Website: https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/</p>

Evaluation sheet for Croydon SACRE

Visitor name and faith

THEME:

DATE:

AGE OF PUPILS:

ORGANISATION:

RESOURCES USED:

EVALUATION:

_____ **Excellent.** **Good** **Average** **Poor**

Atmosphere

Effectiveness

Engagement

Appropriate Content

Resources

Age appropriate

Any comments: