



Learning Policy

Name of museum: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery

Name of governing body: Hastings Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

Policy review procedure: This policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2027

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1. Introduction

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery is a community museum that aims to inspire people and connect communities. The museum aims to inform and inspire people's interest in the cultural and natural heritage of Hastings, and address relevant contemporary issues by:

- Collecting, preserving and interpreting material evidence of the past
- Enriching people's lives and creating a sense of place and identity
- Stimulating creativity, inspiration and enjoyment
- Engaging with the widest possible audience.

The museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its vision and aims. This policy outlines our commitment to increasing access to the collection and using the collection's learning potential to deliver high quality formal and informal learning.

2. Principles

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery inspires creativity and life-long learning through the innovative use of collections to create fun and thought provoking formal and informal learning opportunities. Our approach to learning is underpinned by the following principles:

- The museum is a centre for lifelong learning for the people of Hastings
- Our offer should be accessible to all sections of our community and visitors
- Local people and partnership working is key to the development and success of museum.

3. Learning Definition

The museum believes learning and education are core functions of the service. We use learning to describe both formal and informal education. Formal learning is planned activity designed for education providers from early years through to higher and further education. Informal learning¹ includes our events and activities programme together with our exhibitions. Our informal learning offer is aimed for all ages and includes adult learning.

4. Formal Learning

The museum's formal learning offer aims to increase the number of young people who visit and enjoy the collections. Our formal learning offer takes a hands-on, fun approach using an enquiry-based pedagogical approach.

As a local authority funded museum, our priority is to increase visits from schools from the borough with a higher than average percentage of students eligible for Pupil Premium funding and encourage visits from schools who have not visited before. We will encourage schools to repeat their visits year on year. We will also identify youth groups, home education networks and other groups of young people, such as those in pupil referral units, who may benefit from visiting the museum.

¹ We use informal learning to describe what could be termed both informal and non-formal learning.

4.1. Gallery-based learning

Learning in the museum is an immersive experience with workshops and object handling happening in our galleries. Current workshops include Dinosaurs, The Romans, and Museum Detectives. We will develop new workshops in line with the curriculum and demand from local schools. The museum is also committed to delivering Arts Awards linked to our collections.

4.2. Lego Innovation Studio

Combining the museum's collections with Lego Education means that we can offer a wide range of hands-on and digital resources that encourage students to think creatively and reason systematically. From exploring the life-cycle of a frog as part of our Natural History collection to inventing new devices like John Logie Baird, students will be able to develop their skills in Maths, science, technology and engineering as well as problem solving, collaboration and communication. These new workshops will be developed and trialled with local schools.

4.3. Outreach

The museum has a fantastic range of loan boxes to enhance learning. These are available to local schools and community groups. Topics covered include:

- Dinosaurs
- The Romans
- The Victorians
- World War I
- World War II
- Toys From the Past
- Seaside Holidays
- Fishing

We will review and refine our current handling collection and produce complementary resources. The museum will also develop or take part in learning and community engagement opportunities.

5. Informal Learning

Informal learning is embedded throughout the work of the museum.

5.1. On-gallery learning

Each Gallery includes hands-on activities for visitors to try, as well as environmental print, toys and books to encourage the development of Early Literacy. The museum trail guides visitors around the galleries.

5.2. Exhibitions & Permanent Displays

The museum's exhibitions and permanent displays have strong curriculum links. Topics covered include:

- Inventors
- Explorers

- Local History
- Dinosaurs
- The Romans
- Vikings and Anglo Saxons
- Pirates and Smugglers
- Native North Americans
- Victorians
- Fine Art
- Decorative Art
- Fishing
- The Seaside
- Costumes and Textiles
- Islamic Art

5.3. Activities & Events

Our activities programme is developed for summer and winter sessions. Our events and activities support audience development and meet our learning ambitious supporting the museum's business plan. The programme offers:

- For families, regular school holiday activities and early years activities
- For adults, talks, lectures, coffee mornings and activities linked to business plan priorities such as Healthy Hastings
- For all ages, Ask the Experts days, Museum @ Night and activities linked to business plan priorities such as inclusion
- Special events and activities related to our business plan

6. Partnerships

We will actively seek and develop partnerships with other museums, heritage institutions, local authorities, community groups, language schools and other bodies that are committed to and facilitate learning at a local and national level. Partnerships and sources of include:

- Arts Council England
- East Sussex County Council
- Hastings Opportunity Area
- East Sussex College Hastings
- Hastings-based museums, arts and cultural organisations
- Higher education institutions including the University of Sussex and University of Brighton
- Hastings and Rother Arts Education Network
- South East Museum Development
- Oxford University Museums
- Bexhill Museum
- Art Works
- Historic England
- Lego Education and Creative Hut

7. Access

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery is committed to increasing access to collections and the building. Our Access Policy is available to download from our website, as is our Access Guide.

8. Evaluation

After each formal and informal learning session, lead teachers, students and participants will be invited to provide feedback about their experience to help improve the programme for future visitors. The museum is committed to monitoring its education programme, including the number of students visiting the museum, the number of schools worked with, the amount of outreach done and the impact learning with the museum has had on those involved. Data will be collected from feedback and used in compliance with GDPR and Data Protection laws.