Manx National Heritage
Eiraght Ashoonagh Vannin

Access Guide for the Old Grammar School

Manx National Heritage recognises that historic properties can present difficulties for people with disabilities. We have prepared an access guide for the Old Grammar School to help you plan your visit. This access guide does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our visitors.

Introduction

Built around 1200AD St Mary's Chapel, or the Old Grammar School as it is now known, was the first church for the settlement that grew up around Castle Rushen. It is the oldest roofed structure still standing on the Isle of Man today and is also one of the Island's oldest school buildings. Since the 1500's St Mary's Chapel was also commonly known as 'the scholehouse' and was used for educating the town's people as well as being the main church. With the establishment of a new town church on the Parade in 1701 the former St Mary's Chapel became a free Grammar School for boys and continued in this capacity until 1930.

The Old Grammar School today is dressed as a Victorian school room. It also operates as a visitor information centre for Castletown and our friendly staff will be happy to help with your enquires about exploring more of the Island.

The Old Grammar School is open for events and pre-booked groups by special request. Please see our website for up-to-date information (www.manxnationalheritage.im).

The Old Grammar School is inaccessible to visitors using wheelchairs. There are three large steps at the entrance. There are no alternative means of access.

There are no public toilets on site.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require assistance please email enquiries@mnh.im.

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Eiraght Ashoonagh Vannin

Contents

1 Getting to the Old Grammar School

2 Entrance Area

3 Access for Disabled Visitors

a. Visitors who use Wheelchairs or have Limited Mobility
b. Visitors who are Blind, Partially Blind or have Sight Loss
c. Visitors who are Deaf or have Hearing Loss
d. Visitors who have Learning or Sensory Difficulties

4 Visitors with Young Children

5 Toilets

6 Future Plans

1 Getting to the Old Grammar School

The Old Grammar School is located in Castletown in the South of the Island. It was built around 1200AD as St Mary's Chapel to serve the Castle Rushen settlement.

The Old Grammar School, Castletown

Map showing Old Grammar School location

By car:

The Old Grammar School is situated next to a free-of-charge car park. There are no dedicated disabled bays in the car park.

Visitors should note that Castletown operates a parking disc zone, which means free parking for an allotted time. Disabled badge holders can park in the disc zone for double the allotted time, a parking disc must be displayed. Parking discs can be collected from any IOM Post Office (there is one in Castletown town centre), the Isle of Man Airport and the Welcome Centre at the Sea Terminal in Douglas. Please check the information signs when you park.

There are double yellow lines in a number of places around Castle Rushen, please note that on the Isle of Man disabled badge holders are not permitted to park on these lines.

There is a drop off point immediately in front of the Old Grammar School.

On foot:

The Old Grammar School is a 1-2 minute walk from Castletown Market Square and is on level ground. There are pedestrian pavements leading to the main entrance and there are dropped curbs.

Please note that Castletown is the ancient capital of the Isle of Man and is thus historic in nature. Many of the streets and pavements are uneven. The pavements of Castletown are narrow in places and paved with textured slabs. In addition the slabs can become slippery when wet.

By bus:

There is a bus stop in the main square. Journey time from Douglas takes approximately 25 minutes.

By coach:

Coach visitors can be dropped off in the Market Square. There is a coach park on Farrant's Way (to the rear of the Market Square).

2 Entrance Area

Access to the Old Grammar School is along a paved path and through a single door. The door width is 76cm. The door is open when the site is open.

The Old Grammar School entrance

There are three large stone steps down to access the building. There is no alternative level access. There is single handrail.

Showing entrance and steps

Close up detailing the steps

The main entrance has a medium height counter and is well lit. There is an induction hearing loop fitted. When the site is open the reception desk is staffed at all time, and our team is happy to help.

Entrance counter

Assistance dogs are welcome and a water bowl is available, please ask.

Cloak Room Facilities

There are no cloak room facilities at the Old Grammar School, but bag/coats can be left at reception if space allows.

3 Access for Disabled Visitors

The Old Grammar School offers a warm welcome to all.

Visitors with specific needs are welcome to contact Manx National Heritage in advance of their visit and descriptive guided tours can be arranged. To discuss your requirements please email enquiries@mnh.im.

Assistance dogs are welcome and a water bowl is available, please ask.

Visitors who use Wheelchairs or have Limited Mobility

Level Changes (The Old Grammar School)

Ground Floor

The Old Grammar School is single-storey. There are three large stone steps down to access the building. There is no alternative level access. There is a single handrail.

Showing entrance and steps

Close up detailing the steps

The floor coverings are rush-work matting, wooden floor boards and stone.

The Old Grammar School has information boards about the history of the building and a reconstructed school room. The schoolroom is accessed by two wooden steps. There is no hand rail.

Steps leading to and from schoolroom

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Visitors who are Blind, Partially Blind or have Sight Loss

The Old Grammar School is an historic building. It is accessed by three large stone steps with a single hand rail. The floor coverings are uneven and are rush-work matting and wooden floor boards.

Our staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have and can offer descriptive assistance.

Assistance dogs are welcome and a water bowl is available, please ask.

Visitors who are Deaf or have Hearing Loss

There is written interpretation on site.

There is a hearing loop at the entrance counter.

Assistance dogs are welcome and a water bowl is available, please ask.

Visitors who have Learning or Sensory Difficulties

The Old Grammar School is dressed as a Victorian schoolroom and visitors are able to sit on the school benches and learn about Victorian teaching methods. It is a quiet and peaceful place to visit, with lovely sea views.

We also have a range of traditional toys and games that can be played with

4 Young Children

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We also have a range of traditional toys and games that can be played with.

We have a grassed area to the rear of the building, which is perfect for picnics.

5 Toilets

There are no public toilets at the Old Grammar School. The nearest accessible public toilet is at the Castletown Civic Centre (5-10 minute walk). It is operated by a radar key, which can be borrowed from the Civic Centre staff.

There is also a male and female accessible toilet at Castle Rushen, which can be used by MNH visitors.

There is also an accessible toilet at the Costa coffee shop outside the main entrance of Castle Rushen.

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Eiraght Ashoonagh Vannin

6 Future Plans

The Old Grammar School staff receive customer service and equality awareness training and are always happy to help. We work with a range of partners across the Island to ensure our sites and collections are accessible, engaging and inspiring to a broad range of users. We are always seeking to improve our services for visitors and appreciate your feedback.

Manx National Heritage is committed to improving access to heritage assets for everybody; and is working to embed an inclusive 'access for all' philosophy across the organisation and in everything we do.

If you would like to discuss access and inclusion in more detail please contact Access & Inclusion Champions Katie King on 01624 648023, Katie.king@mnh.im, or Suzie Walker on 01624 648091, Suzanne.walker@mnh.im.

Contact Information

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Opening hours:	*Please see our website for up-to-date opening hours*