

spec The Loft at SPEC

Booking information for Loft-led residential programmes

What age group can I bring?

We can run residential programmes for Years 4-9.

How to make your booking?

Please check availability using our online enquiry form (www.spec.org.uk/booking) or telephone or e-mail (spec@rcdow.org.uk) first to check whether there is for the dates you are interested in. Call either 01727 829228 to speak to the bookings administrator or 01727 829218 to speak to the director of The Loft.

It is possible to make provisional bookings by telephone, e-mail, letter or fax. A provisional booking will be held for three weeks after which it must be confirmed and a deposit made.

You will be sent a booking form, which should be returned with the appropriate deposit within three weeks of the provisional booking being made: this will confirm your booking. If a booking is not confirmed within three weeks, we may offer it to another client.

Numbers

The Loft can accommodate the following numbers:

Girls: 18	Boys: 18	Overflow (boys or girls): 5	Adults: 5
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Adults can be accommodated in two single rooms and one twin room on the first floor. In addition there is an en suite room on the ground floor for a disabled guest. It can also be used as a fourth room for an adult or shared by a child and an accompanying parent or used as a twin room for adults.

If your group will require the overflow or exceeds our capacity completely, please telephone to discuss your needs.

Adult/child ratios

We base the required visiting adult/child ratios on the advice given by Hertfordshire County Council in their document "Guidance for Organisers of Visits for Children". This guidance can be found on the HCC website (<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/healthandsafety/visits.shtml>). We strongly recommend that you consult these guidelines, or those of your own LEA, thoroughly as part of your planning. You might also want to consult the guidelines in the DfES good practice guide 'Health and safety of pupils on educational visits' available as a download from the publications section of the Teachernet website (<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>).

The Hertfordshire recommended ratio for residential activities for all ages above 7 is 1:10.

These are generic ratios which may need to be adapted depending on the risks presented by your particular group: if your group includes children with disabilities or behavioural or learning difficulties, you will need to take this into account in your risk assessment and consider adjusting the ratio of adults to children. Although our staff and volunteers supervise the children for most of the day, we are unable to act in *loco parentis* as this duty cannot be delegated. During the night there the supervision of the children rests solely on the visiting adults. You are advised to consult the advice provided by your own education authority regarding ratios.

Irrespective of the ratios and guidelines above, there must be at least **two** supervising adults for any group and there must be at least one female if there are females in the group.

Accommodation

Accommodation for students is in two dormitories fitted out with bunk beds. The only bedding provided is a pillow and pillow case: students need to bring their own sleeping bag.

Accommodation for staff is in two single and one twin room, the latter being en-suite. All bedding is provided in staff rooms. Towels are not provided.

Security

The Loft is the most secure building at SPEC. There is one entrance which can only be accessed by a key-pad lock. The remaining external doors can only be opened from the inside or by a person holding the relevant key. All external doors are alarmed so that staff can be alerted to a door being opened from the outside or the inside. The building complies with fire regulations and has 5 fire escapes on the ground floor and two on the first floor.

There is always a senior member of staff on duty and on-call in the event of problems or emergencies at night.

You will be asked to complete a room allocation list that will go on our fire-board for use in an emergency. This is available on our website and can be downloaded and completed in advance of your visit. Please include first name *and* surname.

Costs

The Loft is part-funded by Westminster Diocese. Consequently schools and parishes outside of the diocese will be charged more than those within the diocese. Please see our separate document for the pricing of programmes at The Loft. Prices are updated for each academic year and include:

- All activities on site.
- Resources: e.g. art and craft materials.
- All meals for the duration of your visit.

Please also see our document "*Policy for deposit, payment and cancellation*" for information on payment and cancellation liability.

As an educational organisation VAT does not apply provided educational input is part of the residential stay.

Cancellation

Please also see our document "*Policy for deposit, payment and cancellation*" for information on cancellation liability.

Meals

All meals are provided for the duration of your stay. A typical menu is given below.

Meal	Usual time	What to expect	
Breakfast	8.30	Typically cereals, toast and preserves, juice for children, tea/coffee for adults	
Lunch	12.30	Typically baked potatoes with fillings and salads <i>or</i> Pizza with salad <i>or</i> Baguettes with various fillings	Fresh fruit or yoghurt
Supper	5.00	A hot meal with a vegetarian option. Often there is a choice of main courses	

Biscuits and squash are provided at break times during the day and hot chocolate is usually provided in the evening.

We are able to adapt our menus for different dietary needs e.g. religious, allergies, intolerances etc. Please notify us of any specific dietary requirements at least two weeks in advance of your visit so that our catering team can make the appropriate arrangements.

What to bring

Please see our separate kit list (this is available on our website www.spec.org.uk/loft)

Supervision

Loft staff and volunteers will run and supervise all activities. However, we do ask that that school staff and parish leaders maintain a presence during activities and take responsibility for supervising the children/young people during free time (usually after meals, while the Loft team clear-up). Night-time supervision remains the responsibility of teachers and parish leaders, who are also *in loco parentis* throughout their group's stay.

Medical and First Aid

Please ensure that a member of your staff team is briefed and has the responsibility for looking after and administering and medications that your students bring with them. Our staff will not be able to administer and medications.

There is always a first-aider on site during working hours (9-4.30) and there are first-aid kits available in all buildings. Mobile first-aid kits are always taken on activities away from the main building. However, we recommend that your selection of staff includes a first-aider and that you bring your own first-aid kit.

Please notify us in advance if anyone in your group has a medical condition which will require specific support or may require specific emergency treatment (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, severe allergies).

Special educational needs

Our staff and volunteers can be better prepared to support your students if they are forewarned of any significant special education needs. We ask that you use your knowledge of your students and their needs to decide whether it will be appropriate to disclose their SEN to our staff. The best point of contact for discussing 'need to know' is with the director of The Loft, Jon Rogers, (01727 829218, jonrogers@rcdow.org.uk).

Emergency contact

The most effective way of providing emergency contact with your group is via a leader's mobile telephone (ideally with the phone on silent/vibrate during sessions). Alternatively, during working hours (9-4.30) a message can be left via our administrative office (01727 829228). There is a payphone in The Loft, which can be used for incoming calls. This number (01727 829303) can be used as your emergency contact number.

Correspondence address

Some groups encourage parents/guardians to write to their children, especially during longer stays. If you plan to encourage this, please be aware of the potential emotions and home-sickness that might be raised by getting letters from home. The address to use is as follows:

[child/young person's name]
[school]
c/o The Loft
SPEC
All Saints Pastoral Centre
Shenley Lane
London Colney
Herts AL2 1AG

Alcohol and smoking

We ask that no alcohol be brought into the centre: group leaders are asked to ensure that other adults in the group are aware of this rule. Smoking is not permitted in any buildings and may only take place – by those of legal age - in specific locations within the grounds.

Tuck shop

We have a tuck shop that will be open, usually in the evening after supper, if schools/groups request it. There is a maximum spend limit of 50p per student per day.

Expectations and rules

We have a few rules, most of which will be explained to students on arrival. Some are listed below to assist with expectation management:

- No chewing gum – for health and safety reasons as well as avoiding 'deposits'
- No mobile phones while sessions are taking place. We recommend – but do not insist – that students leave their mobile phones at home to avoid distraction and risk of loss.
- Usually there is no TV – although this can be arranged for special occasions.

Damage

Occasionally damage does occur to buildings or equipment. If this is due to the negligent behaviour of students then we reserve the right to bill the school or parish for reasonable costs for making good the damage.

The Loft does not take any responsibility for loss or damage to personal property.

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