

## Places of Worship, Information for School Visits

Name of Building      East London Central Synagogue

Religion or Belief      Judaism

Address      30-40 Nelson Street

London E1 2DE

Name (s) of contact (s)      Mr Leon Silver

Telephone No(s)      020 7790 3711

Email address      \_\_\_\_\_

Web site      \_\_\_\_\_

Suitable for age groups / key stages (please tick box as appropriate)

Ages 5 to 7 / Key Stage 1      x      Ages 11 to 13 / Key Stage 3      x

Ages 8 to 11 / Key Stage 2      x      Ages 14 to 16 / Key Stage 4      x

Ages 17 to 18 / Key Stage 5      x

Any special requirement e.g. dress code applicable to students (e.g. coverings, removal of shoes)

Male students to cover their heads (any kind of cap or hat – total cover not required)

Times available for visits      Most times by arrangement. Friday afternoons during the winter not convenient due to early on set of Sabbath

Typical Length of Visit      Approximately one hour if desired

Are the toilets available for visitors to use? YES/NO (delete as applicable)

Charge/Donation (if applicable)      \_\_\_\_\_

What facilities are available for disabled visitors? e.g wheelchair ramp, disabled toilets, inductive loop etc

Description of typical visit including any learning activities

(e.g. drawing, Q&A, self-guided trail, interview the host, hot-seat, presentation, meditation, etc)

When school groups visit the synagogue, I begin by explaining the basic structure of the synagogue; its origins and uses. Of course, the level of explanation depends on the age of the children.

I go on to explain basic Jewish beliefs and practices, with emphasis on the Torah and its commentaries and interpretations. When I feel that I have spoken enough, I then ask for questions.

The highlight of the visit is when I open the Ark and show the students the Torah Scrolls. If there is still time, I then remove a Sefer Torah; a scroll, onto the bimah; the raised platform from where it would be read using a yad; a hand shaped pointer and they come up in small groups for a closer look. I show how it is read and explain a little about the calligraphy. The visits usually end after this, although if the teachers allow it, there are usually lots more questions that the children have thought up.

Brief statement (less than 100 words of the history of the building):

**East London Central Synagogue** - was founded in 1923 and was the last to be built in the East End.

This synagogue follows the Sefardish tradition not to be confused with Sephardi. These are the customs and traditions which originated in the Iberian Peninsula (modern Spain and Portugal) before the expulsion of Jewish people from that area in the late 15th century and is the one followed by Chabad and other Chassidic traditions.

This Synagogue manages Sabbath and festivals thanks to a Lubavitch young man who walks from Stamford Hill to conduct services and reading from the Torah. The Aronson family was closely linked with this synagogue and a member of this family who was a skilled cabinet maker was responsible for all the pews, Bimah and other furniture in this synagogue.

In 1975 the synagogue was reconsecrated as the East London Central Synagogue and in 1982 the synagogue became the amalgamation of 18 synagogues. The following synagogues were amalgamated: Bels, Berdichover, Buroff St, Cannon St. Rd, Chevra Sass, Commercial Rd. Great, Grove St., Jubilee St, Mile End, New Rd, Philpot St. Great, Philpot St. Sefardish, Rumanian Sidney St., Sons of Brithchan.

This synagogue escaped serious damage during the Blitz of World War II but an incendiary bomb did come through and set the parochet (curtain) of the ark ablaze. Fortunately an apprentice butcher in a nearby shop salvaged all the Sefer Torah and the damage was repaired.

Please attach a maximum of 6 images of the building if possible. If not will you please give permission for our photographer to photograph the building?

