

Centre of the Cell: About your visit



This describes a standard visit to Centre of the Cell. If you would like to discuss variations on this structure, please contact us on kat@centrefthecell.org or 020 7882 2564.

For Teachers: Before the visit

Pre-visit activities will be available at www.centrefthecell.org/activities. These are arranged by key stage and aim to help you ensure that your pupils get the most from their visit.

Lunch

Unfortunately, we do not currently have a designated space for visiting groups to have their lunch in. We therefore request that you plan your visit such that pupils do not need to eat while they are here.

Note that food and drink are **not** permitted anywhere within the Blizard building or Centre of the Cell. This includes chewing gum.

Valuables

All coats and bags will be deposited in the cloakroom for the duration of the visit, for collection prior to entry to the shop at the end. The cloakroom will be locked, but please ask your students not to bring unnecessary valuables. Unfortunately we cannot take responsibility for any losses that occur during the visit.

Supervision / Behaviour

- All groups will be accompanied by two Centre of the Cell staff, who are fully briefed in all the emergency procedures. NB: A scientist will also be present who will know the evacuation procedures but who is *not* responsible for First Aid or Health & Safety during the visit.
- Visitors under 16 should be accompanied by one responsible adult for every fifteen children.
- Accompanying adults are responsible at all times for the behaviour of the minors they accompany.
- Those who disrupt the visit for others or whose behaviour puts themselves or others at risk will be asked to leave.
- Visitors may be asked to leave at any time at the discretion of Centre of the Cell staff.

Risk assessments and Health & Safety

We are unable to prepare risk assessments for every group that attends, but have produced a Health & Safety information sheet that teachers are welcome to download and use to meet their school or organisation's requirements. Teachers and group leaders are also welcome to visit the building prior to the trip in order to complete their own risk assessment. To organise this, please contact Kat on info@centreofthecell.org or 020 7882 2564.

Please note that human organs are on display during the exhibition, and that the exhibition contains bright lights that flash at low frequency.

Arrival

Groups should come to the reception of the Blizzard building. A map is available here: <http://www.centreofthecell.org/map.php>. Teachers should bring a list of all pupils present or, if this is unavailable, sign in all of their students on arrival. This is a requirement of our Health & Safety Officers, who need to know how many people are in the building at any one time. This list can be left with the facilitators.

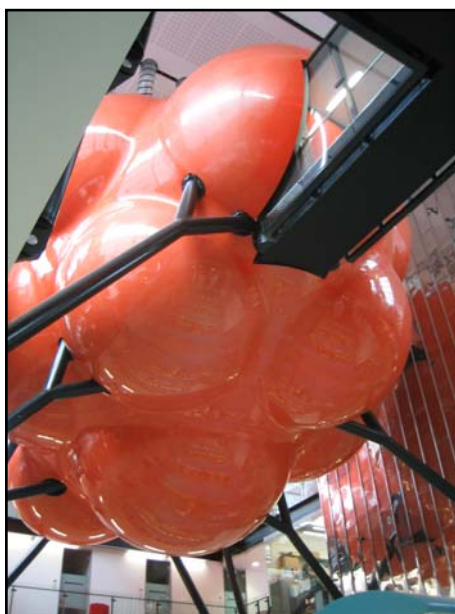
Toilets are available at reception, down the corridor to the left of the reception desk. Please ensure that students using the toilets are accompanied by an adult, and that those remaining in reception are also supervised.

At the stated time for your visit, you will be met by our Learning Facilitators and by one of our scientists, who will be a qualified STEM Ambassador. The Facilitators will greet everyone, introduce themselves, and welcome you to Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry (Barts and The London SMD), and to Centre of the Cell. They will let the students know what to expect of their visit, making sure that everyone is excited and eager to go!

Fire evacuation procedures and other behavioural expectations will also be given.

The group will then proceed to the cloakroom to drop off their coats and bags, and will then cross the bridge to Centre of the Cell.

*Centre of the Cell, aka "the Pod".
Designed to look like a sixteen-cell embryo,
it hangs above the laboratories and write-up
spaces of the four-hundred scientists in the
Blizzard Institute.*





The nucleus

What's inside?

Within the Pod, there are two 'banks' of games: fourteen touch-screens around the perimeter, and a central Nucleus that holds touch tables.

We also have two games using microscopes, where visitors can examine tissue slides to diagnose disease.

There are also screens on the ceiling, onto which will be projected the various films to be shown during the visit. During scene four (see below), some objects will be revealed, including human organ specimens kindly on loan from our Pathology Museum.

The show

On arrival, everyone will seat themselves around the perimeter ready for the show to begin.

The show is divided into five scenes:

Scene one: film introduction to cells

The Nucleus opens, perimeter screens turn on

Scene two: twenty minutes on the games relating to cells and cell biology

Nucleus closes, perimeter screens go blank

Scene three: film introduction to biomedical research, with footage of the Emergency Services helicopter and hospital staff

Nucleus opens in a new configuration, perimeter screens turn on and show different games

Scene four: twenty minutes on the games relating to medical research; objects from the Pathology Museum appear around the Pod

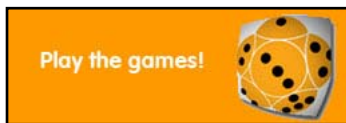
Nucleus closes, perimeter screens go blank

Scene five: film discussing future roles for scientists and citizens, and posing difficult questions about the ethics of biomedical science.

The games

All of the games are grounded in research happening at Barts and The London SMD. Many feature footage of scientists describing their work, and involve games based on that research. This helps to show the visitors that science is not something happening in some far-off place that isn't relevant to them, but is happening right now, in the building in which they are standing.

As well as games, the perimeter screens also hold discussions on ethical issues, and information on careers in biomedicine. The games on the perimeter screens can all be found on the web as well, so visitors can continue to try to best their high scores even when the visit is over. This also means visitors can be introduced to the games prior to the visit, ensuring there is something in the Pod with which they are familiar. This may help them to settle in quickly and get the best from their visit.



The Games button on the website:
<http://www.centreofthecell.org/games>

The games housed in the Nucleus, the films that show during the visit, and the microscope game are unique to Centre of the Cell and are not available anywhere else

STEM Ambassadors

Each school visit is joined by one of our science volunteers, officially known as STEM Ambassadors. These scientists are available to answer any questions the students may have about the life of a scientist and their own career choices. Having a working scientist in the Pod with them helps students to understand that science is something that real people do and something that people really enjoy doing.

We hope to be able to let you know two weeks in advance who your scientist will be, so that you can ask the students to start thinking of appropriate questions.

Ambassadors are trained by STEMNET and are CRB-checked. We ask for a week's notice of a booking in order to ensure a scientist will be available for your visit.

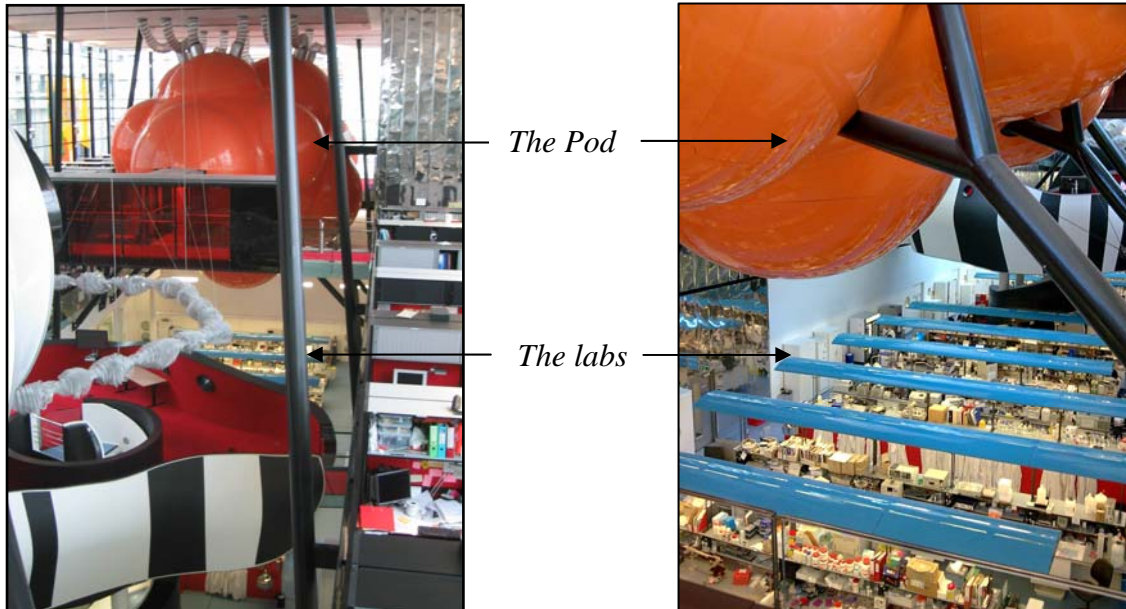
After the show

At the close of the show, groups are taken back to the cloakroom to retrieve their belongings, and to the shop, should they wish to purchase a memento of their visit. They are then led back to the main entrance.

Throughout the visit, the Facilitators and the STEM Ambassador are available to answer questions about science and the life of a scientist, as well as any other relevant queries visitors may have.

About the building

Centre of the Cell is located inside the Blizard Institute in Barts and The London SMD. As this photo shows, the Pod hangs above the labs and office space. The visitors can therefore view the labs on approach to the Pod, and on the way out after the visit.



This again helps to place the science in context: science is not something done by faceless strangers in inaccessible laboratories; it is something done by people they can see in a building they are standing in. Many visitors will not have seen fully-equipped biomedical laboratories before, and it will be interesting for them to compare these labs with their labs at school.

Please ensure your group do not bang on the glass and annoy the scientists!

The Blizard Building

The Blizard building was named for William Blizard, one of the first teaching surgeons and founder of the London Hospital Medical College, which is now part of Barts and The London SMD. The building was designed by architect Will Alsop. Although it looks like two separate buildings at street level, it is a single building, as there are underground laboratories linking the two upper columns.

Around four hundred scientists work in the building, studying in seven different research centres. These are:

- Cutaneous Research
- Diabetes and Metabolic Medicine
- Gastroenterology
- Haematology
- Infectious Disease
- Neuroscience
- Paediatrics
- Surgery

The building is deliberately designed to encourage collaboration between research groups and individual scientists. Both the office space and the labs are open-plan, and there are regular Institute-wide seminars where scientists learn about each others' research.

A virtual tour of the building is available on the Barts and The London, University of London website, here:

http://www.qmul.ac.uk/about/campus/whitechapel/virtual/med_tour.html