

Mobile Planetarium Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a mobile planetarium?

The Science Centre's mobile planetarium can bring the wonder of the universe to your school hall or similar large room in what looks a little like a giant igloo. The digital projector can recreate the night sky or any other scene across the full dome, giving an immersive and unforgettable experience.

2. How big is the mobile planetarium?

The mobile planetarium is 6m in diameter and just under 4m high. Up to 40 children, or 25 KS3 students / adults can fit inside the dome, fewer if chairs are required.

3. Can you use the mobile planetarium outdoors?

The planetarium cannot be used outdoors as it would be affected by wind and rain, but it can be used within a sturdy marquee. Please let us know if you are considering this option.

4. How long does it take to set-up & take down?

Please allow 1 hour to set up the mobile planetarium prior to any shows and 45 minutes to pack it down after the shows.

5. What does the venue need to provide?

- A room with clean, dust-free, solid floor, with a clear area of 8m x 8m.
- A minimum 4m clear headroom above this area. Please take into consideration any lights, microphones, or projectors suspended from the ceiling, also angled roofs. If you are unsure whether you have enough space, please contact us so we can help advise.
- An area protected both from the elements and from interference by passers-by.
- Power socket(s): at least one, preferably two.
- At least one member of venue staff to supervise audience at all times.
- The planetarium is not at all sound-proof, so a quiet space is strongly recommended.

Please ensure you read the Terms & Conditions and Risk Assessment for full details.

6. How far do you travel?

Staff normally expect to travel up to 60 miles from Winchester. Contact the Science Centre to discuss options if you are outside this area; anything is possible!

7. When is the mobile planetarium available?

To avoid disappointment, please try to book at least six weeks in advance if possible. However, do get in touch even if you are unable to give this much notice; we will always do our best to fit you in.

8. When do I need to pay?

You will be invoiced after the event, with 30 days to clear payment.

9. What if I needed to cancel the booking?

Cancellation charges apply on a sliding scale. Please refer to our Terms & Conditions.

10. Could the Science Centre cancel the booking?

It would be extremely unusual for the Science Centre to cancel any booking. However, this could occur for reasons such as extreme weather (eg if roads are closed), staff illness (if nobody was available to cover) or other unforeseen circumstances.

The Science Centre will make every effort to attend the booking (or arrange a replacement service), and would keep you informed of any potential problems by email and/or phone.

It is advised that all clients booking the planetarium provide an emergency mobile telephone number as well as the usual contact information in case of problems on the day.

11. Can the mobile planetarium be taken down for lunch?

We are aware that the only suitable location for the planetarium may be the lunch hall. Where possible, we recommend making alternative lunch arrangements. If there is no other option then we are able to take it down - but please be aware of the time this would take:

- To safely pack the mobile planetarium down prior to tables being set out requires 30-45 minutes (a large area is required during this process).
- To set the planetarium up after all students have left the area, the tables have been cleared, and the floor cleaned and dried, requires 30-45 minutes.

If a lunch period starts at 12.00pm, it is usual that the room would be required from 11.45am for setup of the lunch tables, meaning the mobile planetarium would need to start to pack away by 11.15am at the very latest.

If a lunch period ends at 1.00pm, the room and floor may well not be clean and dry until 1.15pm, meaning shows could start again no earlier than 1.45pm.

Please liaise with your lunch staff to be sure this option will work for you.