

## AYDON CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

### Hazard Information for Education Visits

It is the responsibility of teachers and group leaders to complete a risk assessment prior to the site visit. The following information is intended as an aid and does not replace the group leader's own risk assessment. We recommend coming to the site on a free planning visit, to help you with your risk assessment. Please note: where possible, English Heritage staff at the site will be happy to assist you with your queries, but cannot check or sign any section of your risk assessment.

Environmental conditions at historic sites may change rapidly and you will need to remain alert at all times during your visit. Most accidents are the result of slips and trips so please make sure you wear appropriate footwear and dress sensibly for the site and weather. Please be aware that the site may close at short notice due to adverse weather. Where applicable, stonework and trees at our sites are inspected regularly; however, extreme weather conditions can sometimes affect stonework and trees so as well as following any staff instructions and being mindful of temporary barriers and signage, please remain vigilant at all times. On-going conservation work may pose a temporary hazard; a member of staff will advise you of any works when you visit. Dogs on leashes may be present on site.

All learners who are 16 years or younger must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times whilst on site.

#### Moving vehicles may pose a hazard upon arrival.

- There is a public car park a short walk from the castle entrance.
- The road to the castle is not suitable for coaches and students will need to be dropped off from the main road and walk along the road to the castle entrance. Minibuses can access the road.
- When walking to the entrance other vehicles and farm traffic may be encountered.
- Grounds maintenance teams may use vehicles throughout the grounds.

#### The ruinous nature of the castle presents many potential hazards.

- The floor surfaces are often uneven, and there are old, uneven steps and staircases throughout.
- Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- There is low masonry around the site.
- Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- The lighting levels vary from area to area. Groups should allow time for their eyes to adjust to the darker environment inside the main castle buildings.

#### The castle grounds and perimeter may pose a hazard when moving around site.

- Ground surfaces comprise of grass, gravel, paving and rough cobbles. Some areas are covered in moss.
- Surfaces can be slippery during and after rainfall.
- There is a steep bank on the south side that descends to Cor Burn; there is a low timber fence along this stretch of path.
- Close supervision of groups is needed.

#### Aydon Castle is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

- There are animals and birds on site and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard; visitors should wash their hands prior to eating.
- Bats roost in the castle at high level but occasionally fall from roosts and hang at low level. If a bat is discovered, do not touch it and inform site staff immediately.

#### Covid-19 and flu.

- We follow government and [NHS guidelines](#) to reduce the risk of transmission. Please also follow their guidance and do not visit if you have flu or Covid-19 symptoms or have recently tested positive.