

Beeston Castle and Woodland Park, Cheshire

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 remain vigilant at all times. Please follow any staff instructions and be mindful of temporary barriers and signage. 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.

The large car and coach park is situated opposite the entrance to the castle site.

- Visitors should be aware of other vehicles in the car park.
- It is necessary to cross a narrow lane to the site entrance; hedges and a bend in the lane limit visibility and there are no pavements.
- The café is adjacent to the castle site and accessed via the lane.

There are a number of steps and staircases on the site.

- There are shallow steps on the path leading to the outer gatehouse.
- There are narrow, steep stone steps up to the outer bailey and leading to the Roundhouse.

There are steep banks and paths leading to the castle ruins and the Roundhouse from the Visitor Centre.

- Gravel paths may be uneven, and loose stone can be a skid hazard.
- Part of the path leading to the outer gatehouse is cobbled.
- Grassed and gravel inclines may be slippery when wet, the ground within the outer bailey is particularly steep.
- The modern bridge leading into the inner bailey is very steep with a handrail on both sides.
- The woodland paths can be muddy when wet; there are exposed tree roots and natural debris on the woodland floor.

The historic nature of the site presents potential hazards.

- There are many climbing hazards. Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- There are high walls with sheer drops around the site.
- The castle's walls are rough and may contain sharp stones.
- There are narrow windows and drainage chutes which are unguarded.
- The well in the inner bailey is covered by a grill; however, visitors should not climb on to or lean over the well walls.
- The well in the outer bailey is filled in but still has steep sides with a drop.
- The inner bailey ground is very uneven with exposed rock and foundation stones.

Beeston Castle is primarily outdoors and has very limited indoor or sheltered space.

- There is no indoor space for lunches or wet weather shelter.
- The inner bailey is on high ground and it can be very windy.
- There are mature trees on site that may drop branches in rare circumstances; care should be taken when passing under or near large trees.
- There is very little shade onsite when walking up to the inner bailey; please take precautions in hot weather.

There is a recreated Iron Age Roundhouse on site.

- The roundhouse has low doorways and low overhanging roof timbers and thatch.
- There is no artificial light inside the roundhouse, and the natural light is limited.
- On rare occasions a fire may be burning inside the roundhouse; this has a wooden guard rail. If the fire is burning smoke will be present in the roundhouse and air quality may be poor.
- The floor surface in and around the roundhouse is beaten earth which can be uneven.
- There are cultivated plants outside the roundhouse, some of which are toxic; plants should not be touched or eaten.

Beeston Castle is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna.

- There is evidence of rabbit and badger activity on site. Animals may bite or scratch, please do not approach them.
- The droppings of animals and birds can present a zoonotic hazard; visitors should wash their hands prior to eating.
- There may be concealed animal holes in grassy areas.
- Plant material and thorns may be toxic or poisonous.