

DARTMOUTH CASTLE, DEVON

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 car and minibus car park is situated near the site entrance; there is also parking for cars along the access road.

- Coaches are not able to access the narrow approach road to the site.
- There is no footpath along the approach road.
- The approach road is shared by both pedestrians and cars.

The historic nature of the site presents many potential hazards.

- The walls are rough and may contain sharp stones.
- The site is exposed to the elements.
- There are many climbing hazards; climbing is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.

There are large areas of uneven surfaces around the property.

- Areas of the entrance way are cobbled.
- The ground surfaces are uneven throughout and can be slippery when wet.
- There are remaining stone foundations on the site.
- There are raised platforms in the gun deck recreation.

There are high walls and sheer drops around the site.

- The rooftop platform on the Old Castle gun tower has sheer drops onto rocks and the sea.
- There are drops into the sea from the gun platform battlements.
- There is a sheer drop onto a grass bank from the Upper Battery.
- The metal bridge to the Old Battery has sheer drops on each side of a dry moat; the bridge has a handrail.
- There are high stone walls and grass banks with drops down to the pathway around the Church.
- The bridge from the Old Castle gun platform has sheer drops onto rocks and the sea.

There are a number of steps and staircases on the site; these can be slippery when wet.

- There are three steps with no handrail, down to the site entrance and shop.
- There is a wooden staircase with open treads in the Old Castle gun tower; there is a handrail.
- The Old Gun Battery has a steep spiral stone staircase leading down from the Guardroom.
- There is a short flight of wooden steps with a handrail to the Old Castle turret.
- There is a very worn, steep and uneven spiral stone staircase leading to the rooftop of the Old Castle gun tower.

- Stone steps may be narrow and uneven.
- Single steps may pose a trip hazard.

There are some areas with restricted space.

- The Lighting Passage and Gunpowder Magazine have limited headroom and low light.
- Some doorways and ceilings on site have low headroom.
- Many rooms in the Old Battery, Gun Tower and Guardroom are very small and can only accommodate a few visitors at a time.

There are audio and visual effects in the battery and gun tower

- There are sounds of a cannon firing and the raising of a chain bridge; please advise your group of what to expect if they may find this alarming.

There is risk of collapse or falling material from an unstable wall adjacent to the site (not owned by English Heritage). This is being supported by scaffolding.

- An alternative entrance to parts of the site is in place for safety purposes. This requires visitors to walk through the car park and along part of the access road to a different path down to the medieval gun tower.

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.