Helmsley Castle, Yorkshire

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 and while on the site.

- Parking is in the council owned coach park located just outside the castle. The castle can be accessed by paths around the side of the car park.

The ruinous nature of the castle site may present many potential hazards.

- There are high banks and ditches surrounding Helmsley Castle and visitors must not climb on the banks.
- There is an optional walk around the banks surrounding the castle, which has steep drops on either side. Students must be supervised when they access this area.
- The grass can be slippery, and all visitors must use caution.
- The ruinous nature of the castle presents many climbing hazards and there are low walls which can be tripped over. Running on site is prohibited and all students must be supervised by leaders at all times.
- The floor surfaces are uneven throughout and there many old, uneven steps and staircases. Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- There are some low stone foundations in the grounds, and these may be slippery when wet.
- The exterior wooden steps into the West Range can be slippery in wet or icy weather. Particular care should be taken with the stone steps at various places on the site including down to the basement of the West Tower, East Tower and the Buttery Cellar.
- In high winds, the castle may have to close at short notice, due to danger from the stonework of the tower.
- Some areas, at times, may be roped off for restoration work. Please respect these boundaries for your own safety.
- There are two underground areas which are quite dark when you enter.

Tudor House

- Running is not allowed in the house.
- Steps outside and inside are uneven and sometimes across a wall surface. Please encourage students to walk carefully and hold handrails.
- The wooden steps at the South end are uneven and can be slippery when wet. Please encourage students to hold handrails.
- There is ramp access to rooms on the ground floor which may present a trip hazard.

- Some wall surfaces are rough and uneven, and the plaster is fragile.

Helmsley Castle is home to a wide variety of plant and animal wildlife.

- There are animals and birds on site, and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard. Visitors should wash their hands prior to eating.
- There may be rabbit holes on site which may present a trip hazard.
- There may be ants on some parts of the site in dry weather.
- There may be nettles and other hazardous plants in the longer grass so please take care when exploring and stick to mown areas.
- There may be slow worms present on site.
- There are mature trees on site that may drop branches in rare circumstances; care should be taken when passing under or near large trees.

Helmsley Castle is open to the public

- The castle is open to the public so please be aware that there will be other visitors on site.
- Some visitors bring dogs, which should always be on a lead.

There are learning resources that can be used by groups on-site, including handling collections.

- There is a handling object box on site which can be borrowed and used during your visit.
- The objects in the handling collection may have rough edges, points or protrusions.
- Learners must be supervised at all times by Leaders while using the resources.
- The objects may have been handled by multiple groups; always wash hands after use.
- Some objects are breakable so please handle with care and supervise at all times.
- Please report any breakages to staff so that they can be removed safely.

Toilet facilities.

- Please be aware that the site only has one toilet so you may wish to use the public toilets in the car park before entering the castle.

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