Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Garden, Warwickshire

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 coach park is situated opposite the main site entrance.

- Access to the site from the car park is across a minor road.
- There is no defined footpath from the car and coach park to the site entrance.
- Vehicles are sometimes in use around the site. There is a speed limit in place of 5 miles per hour.

The historic nature of the castle presents many potential hazards.

- There are many climbing hazards. Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- The walls are rough and may contain sharp stones.
- The site is exposed to the elements.
- The site is mainly outdoors with limited indoor and sheltered areas.

There are large areas of uneven surfaces.

- Ground surfaces are uneven throughout and can be slippery when wet.
- Gravel paths may have loose stone which can be a skid hazard.
- Some parts of the site can only be accessed across grassed areas.
- There are remaining stone foundations in the inner and the outer court.

There are steep banks and sheer drops around the site.

- There are steep, grassed banks throughout the site, including deep dips which may be concealed.
- The tiltyard has steep banks leading down to a stream.
- There are steep steps on the king's mound leading to the great hall. There is an alternative route around the castle.
- There are high walls and sheer drops around the site, some of which are unguarded. The outer curtain wall has a much longer drop to the outside relative to the inside.
- There are low, unfenced windows in the keep, curtain wall and castle towers.
- There are several narrow walkways and viewing platforms, often positioned over steep drops.
- The viewing platforms in Leicester's Building reach a height of 18 metres.

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

- There are worn stone spiral staircases which are unlit and may have uneven treads.

- There are some staircases with no handrails.
- Stone steps may be narrow and uneven. Single steps may pose a trip hazard.
- Wooden stairways are steep and can be slippery when wet.
- There is a steep set of steps with deep treads, leading up from the garden to the garden terrace.
- There is a lift in Leicester's Gatehouse; children should not use this unaccompanied.

There are various plants and wildlife in the garden.

- Plant material and thorns may be toxic or poisonous.
- Birds in the aviary may bite; please do not put fingers through the cage.
- Bird droppings may present a zoonotic hazard; always wash hands prior to eating meals.
- There are active beehives situated in the orchard. The area is fenced off and is clearly signposted.
- In an unlikely event the bees may swarm. If anyone comes across a swarm they are advised to stand still or walk away slowly. Swarms are most likely to occur in humid/stormy conditions.

The education room in the castle basement may be available for school groups.

- Access to the education room is through a lobby area used by staff and volunteers.
- There is a toilet and handwash sink adjacent to the lobby; learners should be monitored by group leaders while using these facilities.
- The lobby area is sometimes used to store equipment and materials; a safe route through the lobby will be maintained.
- Leaders and learners should not interfere with any equipment or materials stored in the education room, toilet or lobby area.