

OLD WARDOUR CASTLE, WILTSHIRE

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 adjacent to the site.

- There is no designated footpath across the car park to the site entrance.

The historic nature of the castle presents many potential 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; it is mainly outdoors with limited indoor and sheltered areas.
- There are pits, flues and the well at ground level; these are covered by metal grilles.
- There are open, narrow floor trenches in the side rooms of the Banquet Hall.
- Many rooms in the castle have interlocking chambers with multiple exit points.

There are large areas of uneven surfaces.

- Ground surfaces are uneven throughout and can be slippery when wet.
- There are few defined paths on the property; most outdoor space is mown grass.
- There are remaining stone foundations around the property.
- Gravel surfaces may be uneven; loose stone can be a skid hazard.

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

- Access to the raised front entrance is via a short, stone staircase with no handrail.
- Stone steps around the site are worn and uneven.
- Single steps may pose a trip hazard.
- Some doorways off the spiral staircases do not have an adjacent landing.
- There are some ruined staircases with unguarded ends; do not climb the ruined staircases.
- Access to the toilets is down a steep, exterior flight of stairs, which has a high handrail. There is an accessible toilet in the Visitor Centre.

There are high walls and sheer drops around the site.

- There are low, boundary walls and high, unfenced windows in some parts of the site.
- There are drops from some points of the grotto.
- The tops of ruined staircases are unguarded with sheer drops.

There are some areas with low headroom.

- There are low doorways and there is limited headroom in some areas of the castle buildings.
- There are some enclosed spaces with low light levels.

There are steep banks and inclines on much of the site.

- There are steep banks near the grotto and in the woodland.
- The woodland paths may be muddy and have exposed tree roots and natural debris.

There is open access to water on site.

- There is a large, deep pond (Swan Pond) close to the site. This is fenced off with a life ring nearby.

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

- 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.

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.