

SHERBORNE OLD CASTLE, DORSET

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 park is adjacent to the site.

- The car park is not suitable for coaches. Coach passengers should alight before Castleton Road.
- There is no designated footpath across the car park.
- Access to the site from the car park is via a 300 metre walk along a lane, shared by both pedestrians and cars.
- There are no toilet facilities on site

The ruinous 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 sheltered areas.

There are large areas of uneven surfaces.

- Ground surfaces are uneven throughout and can be slippery when wet.
- There are remaining stone foundations.
- There are few defined paths on the property; most outdoor space is mown grass.
- There may be concealed dips and animal holes in grassy areas.

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

- There are steep grassed banks surrounding the site; please keep to the mown grass areas.
- The dry moat is a graded slope.

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

- There are long, shallow steps up to the castle entrance.
- There are steep, stone steps leading down from the North Gate.
- Stone steps around the site are worn and uneven.
- Single steps may pose a trip hazard.

There are high walls and sheer drops around the site.

- There is a high curtain wall with sheer drops surrounding the site.
- The wooden access bridge has sheer drops into the dry moat on either side.
- There are high walls on the North Gate staircase.

There is native wildlife on site.

- Snakes (adders) may be present around grassy areas; please do not approach them.

The wooden access bridge has a limited weight capacity.

- Teachers and other leaders are required to marshal pupils in and out of the castle in groups of no more than 20 to reduce stress on the bridge.
- Visitors are not to dwell on the bridge or around the gatehouse during the course of their visit.

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.