

Tynemouth Priory and Castle, Tyne and Wear

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.

- Coaches will need to drop off at an appropriate point outside the site. This may mean that groups will need to cross a busy main road through the village.
- There is a small area outside the priory for a minibus to drop off. Access to the site is via a tarmac roadway which may be used by access vehicles.
- Grounds maintenance teams and other vehicles may access the grounds inside the castle.

The ruinous nature of the priory and the castle presents many potential hazards.

- The floor surfaces are often uneven, and there are old, uneven steps and staircases throughout.
- Gravel paths and grassed areas facilitate movement around the site, both of which can be slippery in wet conditions.
- Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- There is low masonry around the site.
- Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- Entrance to the castle gatehouse is via a steep, grassy slope with a low retaining wall.
- Access to the upper level viewing platforms in the castle is via a dimly lit, narrow, spiral staircase.
- Steep drops are guarded by railing which should not be leaned over or climbed on.
- The chapel interior in the priory is dimly lit and contains uneven steps.
- The southern part of the monastic precinct has slopes with unguarded drops onto grass or hard surfaces.
- There are several gravestones that are upstanding or laid flat around the priory site, some of which may be concealed due to the undulating ground.
- The Tudor gun platforms are accessed via grassy banks. There is also a parapet with steep drops.
- Wall walks, where accessible, are protected by parapet walls or fencing.

The gun battery may pose possible hazards.

- The gun battery is located near to the edge of the cliff.
- There are concrete, hard standing surfaces, exposed gun turrets, and platforms with steep drops some of which are unfenced.

- The magazines are accessed by concrete stairs. The interior of the restored '6 inch' magazine is via a single stairwell and entrance. There is low level lighting. Groups visiting this area should be in no more than 10-15 people at one time.

Tynemouth Priory and Castle are home to a wide variety of wildlife.

- There are animals and birds on site and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard; visitors should wash their hands prior to eating.

Asbestos has been identified on the site. This is common with older buildings and some historic artefacts and is being managed and monitored by English Heritage.

- These areas and objects are clearly marked with red 'a' stickers.
- No activities that may disturb the asbestos are permitted; please raise any concerns or accidental damage with the Site Manager immediately.

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.