Whitby Abbey, North 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 and slippery surfaces may pose a hazard upon arrival.

- Current renovation work on the museum building means there is traffic moving between the kiosk entrance (not the car park entrance) and the shop and Youth hostel entrance. All moving traffic is supervised by building staff.
- The vehicle access point is shared with the Youth Hostel Association and may be used by guests and delivery vehicles.
- The cobbled courtyard garden and cobbled roadway outside the visitor centre has an uneven surface and can be slippery when wet.
- May be moving vehicles on the site itself.

The ruinous nature of the abbey may present many hazards.

- The floor surfaces are uneven throughout and there are old, uneven steps and staircases throughout.
- Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones. Sensible footwear and outdoor clothing are necessary.
- There are some areas with long drops so running on site is not permitted for your own safety and that of other visitors.
- The pond is deep, and students must be carefully supervised at this point.
- Areas of the site can be very wet and there is a clearly marked path between the main entrance and the abbey entrance.
- Some areas are grass covered, with a low wall which is difficult to see so running on site is not permitted. Please stay on the mown areas and do not walk through the long grass. This is a Conservation area and should not be entered.
- Grass verges and slopes which are steep in places and can be slippery when wet.
- Disabled access ramps can present a trip hazard from the side – please make sure students walk rather than run.

Whitby Abbey is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna.

- There are potentially harmful plants on site, including some with thorns that can irritate the skin.
- There are animals and birds on site and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard. Visitors should be reminded to wash their hands prior to eating.
- The plants on site do attract bees and wasps.

- There may be rabbit holes which might pose a trip hazard.

Visitors on site.

- The abbey is open to the public so please be aware that there will be other visitors on site. Please be respectful.
- Students should stay with their group whilst looking around the abbey.

The English Heritage / Taskmaster Education bookable Tasking Backpack may cause potential hazards for groups using it.

- Leaders should choose a large, safe, flat place to do the tasks, taking advice from site staff where necessary.
- Leaders should supervise students / groups whilst doing the tasks – there are some small resources and some that could cause injury through being handled incorrectly.
- Leaders should make site staff aware if any resources are broken.
- Participants should wash their hands after completing the tasks and before eating.