

Witley Court and Gardens, Worcestershire

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 through the car park.
- It is necessary to cross an access road from the woodland path to the house ruins.

The historic nature of the site presents potential hazards.

- The walls are rough and may contain sharp stones.
- There are climbing hazards on walls and fences; climbing is not permitted in any area.
- The site is exposed to the elements, with limited areas of sheltered space.

There are areas of uneven surfaces around the property.

- Ground surfaces are uneven throughout the site and can be slippery when wet.
- There are remaining stone foundations in the house ruins.
- There are unpaved paths in the woodland and wilderness area.
- There may be concealed animal holes and dips in grassy areas.

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

- There are wide stone steps leading down to the fountain in the gardens.
- Stone steps may be narrow and uneven.
- Single steps may pose a trip hazard.

There are steep banks and inclines on the site.

- There are steep grassed banks in the woodland and wilderness area.
- There are grassed inclines around the house ruins.

There are high walls and sheer drops around the site.

- There are the remains of a low pool and water feature set in the floor of the conservatory.
- The Red Sitting Room, Red Room and Drawing Room within the house ruins have low unfenced windows with steep drops.

There is a footpath through the woodland and wilderness area.

- There may be exposed tree roots and natural hazards, including fallen branches and leaves on the path.

- There are mature trees on site that may drop branches in rare circumstances; care should be taken when passing under or near large trees.
- The path runs close to the stream and the pool in some places.
- There are some sections of the path which may be muddy.

There is open access to water on the site.

- A stream, with unprotected banks runs through the site. The water's edge may be concealed by foliage or aquatic plants.
- There is a small pond in the Wildlife Garden.
- The Perseus and Andromeda fountain is unfenced.
- The Front Pool is unfenced and very deep. The water's edge may be concealed by foliage or aquatic plants.

There is play area on site. Children must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

- There are high platforms and unguarded drops on some apparatus.
- There are short vertical ladders with no guards.
- There is some swinging and suspended apparatus with possible pinch points.
- The play equipment has an age limit of 12 years old.
- It is the responsibility of group leaders to supervise their groups when using the playground.
- Surfaces may become slippery in wet weather.
- The structures are made of wood which may crack or splinter.

There may be 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.