

Audley End House and Gardens, Essex

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 drop off outside the site entrance and pupils may have to cross a road.
- Cars drive into the site and across to the car park using the same route as pedestrians.
- Cars also exit the site using a road that is not segregated from pedestrians.

There are uneven surfaces throughout the house and gardens.

- Some areas have loose gravel surfaces.
- There may be potholes and various trip hazards around the site.
- Some cobbles and slabs may be slippery when wet.
- Steps, stairs and floors may all be uneven.

There are number of features within the grounds that may pose a hazard while on the site.

- There are a number of water features throughout the gardens, including a river, lake, streams and ponds. The edges of some of these are indeterminate and may be slippery or muddy. The water wheel is in a deep pit (more than 2m deep) containing water.
- The ha-has is a garden feature which is a ditch about 2 metres deep, designed to keep animals out of the formal gardens without being visible when looking across the gardens. There is a ha-ha around the parterre garden, another around the Temple of Concorde and one around the south west perimeter of the site.
- There are a number of trees throughout the gardens which may have low or loose branches. Mature trees may drop branches in rare circumstances; care should be taken when passing under or near large trees.
- The steps down to the Ice House are very uneven and slippery. There is an unprotected drop from the roof onto paving.
- The glass houses in the kitchen garden do not contain safety glass.
- Paths around the gardens can be slippery and muddy when wet and there may be trip hazards such as projecting roots.

There are number of hazards in the stable yard and play area, including horses and play equipment

- Although normally behind fences or inside stables, horses may be walked around the area of the stable yard.

- Horses will always be supervised by a staff member whilst in public areas.
- Hand washing facilities are situated in the cart yard.
- The play area is situated in the cart yard. The area has a slide and swing. Children must be supervised by group leaders if using these facilities.
- The play area has been inspected by RoSPA and been given an overall risk rating of LOW.

Features within the house may pose a risk when on site.

- There are low lighting levels throughout the house to help conserve the fabric, objects and paintings.
- Any bags must be carried or worn on the front to avoid accidental damage inside the house.
- Visitors must follow a particular route around the house as indicated by ropes and signage and must be in supervised groups.
- Windows and display cabinets throughout the house do not contain safety glass.
- Visitors must observe 'Do Not Touch' signs, especially on free-standing exhibits.
- Several areas are roped off to the general public both for their safety and the safety of the collection. Please ensure that you do not attempt to cross the rope barriers, or pull on the rope.
- Steps, stairs and floors may all be uneven.

Historic features in the Service Wing may pose a hazard.

- The floors in all rooms are uneven and worn.
- If the main fire in the kitchen is lit it will always be attended by a member of staff. When the fire is unlit it will be blocked off in case of falling debris from the chimney.
- The handling material on offer in all rooms includes some items which could cause injury if misused.
- The copper pans in the scullery are very heavy.
- Both box mangles in the dry laundry are not roped off. One is historic and has been dismantled; the other is newer and should not be used in case fingers are caught in the rollers. The mangle in the wet laundry is functioning, and fingers can get caught if it is turned.
- There are heavy flat irons on display in the dry laundry.

Dogs and wildlife may be present on site.

- Audley End is popular with dog walkers and dogs should be kept on leads.
- Visitors should be aware that animals may bite.
- The River Cam flows through the site and provides many nesting sites for birds. Bird droppings can present a zoonotic hazard. Visitors should wash their hands prior to eating.