

Audley End House and Gardens, Essex

Hazard information sheet for educational groups

It is the responsibility of teachers and group leaders to complete a risk assessment prior to any site visit being made. This is a requirement of most local education authorities.

The following information is intended as a preparatory tool and does not replace a teacher's or group leader's own risk assessment.

Please be aware that conditions at historic sites may change rapidly, and that you will need to remain alert at all times during your visit.

General

- 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 and there may be potholes and various trip hazards around the site. Some cobbles and slabs may be slippery when wet.

Garden

- There are a number of water features, a river, lake, streams and ponds throughout the gardens. 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) containing water.
- The ha ha 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 and the Temple of Concorde.
- There are a number of trees throughout the gardens which may have low or loose branches. All the trees on our sites are inspected on an annual cycle; however, storm damage can sometimes affect the stability of apparently healthy trees and branches. Group leaders should be particularly aware of this when undertaking their own risk assessments prior to a visit.
- 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.

Stable Yard and Play Area

- 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 slides and swings and needs the normal supervision of adults while letting children use the facilities. The play area has been inspected by RoSPA and been given an overall risk rating of LOW.

House

- There are low lighting levels throughout the house to help conserve the fabric.
- Windows and display cabinets throughout the house do not contain safety glass.
- Steps, stairs and floors may all be uneven. There are approximately 80 steps on the education tour for schools.

Service Wing

- The floors in all rooms are uneven and worn.
- If the main fire in the kitchen is alight 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. One is historic and has been dismantled. The other is newer and should not be used in case fingers are caught. The mangle in the wet laundry is functioning and fingers can get caught if turned.
- The dry laundry has heavy flat irons.

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