

Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight

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 park is situated at the end of an approach road and can be very busy.

- The approach road has some lower over-hanging branches which can be a hazard for double decker vehicles.
- There is a traffic light system in use owing to a blind corner.
- Visitors are required to cross the car park to reach the site entrance.
- The site is surrounded by a steep sided dry moat, with warning signs in place.

The inner areas of the site can only be accessed through the shop.

- There is a closed gate preventing access by any other means unless accompanied by a member of English Heritage staff.
- Vehicles will sometimes be moving around the site.
- Pedestrians and vehicles share the main entrance to the site.

The ruinous nature of the castle presents many potential hazards, including uneven and slippery surfaces.

- Walls are rough and contain uneven and sharp stones.
- Floor surfaces are uneven throughout and, where exposed to the elements, can be wet and slippery.
- Sensible footwear and outdoor clothing are necessary.
- Visitors should keep to the identified paths and steps. Visitors are not permitted to climb any walls or banks that are not part of the main route.

There are a number of cannons located around the site which present a potential climbing hazard.

- 'No climbing' signs are positioned in relevant areas, and these should be observed by all visitors. There should be no climbing on any cannon.

The gatehouse ranges over several floor levels and lighting is dim.

- There is a narrow metal spiral staircase leading to an entrance/exit on the ground floor, into the gatehouse entrance which is used by vehicular traffic.

To the right of the Gatehouse is St. Nicholas' Chapel which is still in occasional use.

- The steps down into St Nicholas' Chapel are old and worn.
- The floor is tiled and may be slippery.

Princess Beatrice's Garden, situated behind the chapel, is surrounded by steep grass banks.

- Climbing on the banks and stones presents a significant hazard and is not permitted.

Education visitors are only able to watch a donkey demonstration on the tread wheel in the Well House as part of a Discovery Visit booking, however there are generally two donkeys in the stable block who can be visited.

- As with all animals, there may be a risk of zoonotic infection. Student should wash their hands before eating.
- Visitors should be aware that animals may kick or bite.

The 71 steps leading to the Norman shell keep are very steep and uneven and the wall walk is high up with low boundary walls in places.

- On the steps leading to the keep there is a metal handrail on one side of the wide stone steps and a grab rope on the other.
- The castle's high situation means that the upper levels of the keep are exposed and can be windy. In very poor weather conditions, the wall and keep will be closed for safety reasons.
- The castle's outer walls vary greatly in height, and, in some parts, boundary walls are very low.
- There is a sheer drop from the upper levels.
- A metal guard rail runs around the inside of most of the wall walk.
- There is no set visitor route and congestion can sometimes occur in confined areas such as the battlement walk.

The Castle Museum building and its exhibits can present a hazard.

- The wooden staircase leading to the second floor is old and wide; visitors are likely to encounter others descending the stairs.
- There is an emergency exit via a winding staircase from the upper floor of the museum.
- 'Do not touch' signs inside the Castle Museum should be observed.

Trees onsite may pose a hazard.

- There are low overhanging tree branches over the main pathway to the ruins.
- There are mature trees on site that may drop branches in rare circumstances; care should be taken when passing under or near large trees.

Animal activity onsite may present a hazard.

- There are animals and birds on site, and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard. Visitors are reminded to wash their hands prior to eating.
- Concealed rabbit burrows and mole hills around the site may pose a trip hazard.