

DUNSTANBURGH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

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. Make sure you wear sensible footwear and dress appropriately 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, storm damage can sometimes affect the stability of stonework and branches of apparently healthy trees. 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.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

We want to reassure you that we're following government guidance to make your trip as safe and enjoyable as possible.

We've introduced a range of new hygiene standards and social distancing measures. Our staff and facilitators have received guidance to help them safely run education visits at this time, and we've also created a general risk assessment for education visitors to help you with your individual risk assessments. You can find this and other information about what to expect on your visit at: english-heritage.org.uk/schools-what-to-expect

We've also detailed key changes on the individual site schools pages of our website, so please check before you visit. Once your booking is confirmed, we recommend booking a free planning visit to help you prepare for your trip and familiarise yourself with the site.

Moving vehicles may pose a hazard upon arrival.

- There is a public car park 1.3 miles from the entrance to the castle in Craster. Visitors walk along the main road into Craster and then onto the coastal pathway to the castle.
- There are roadside drop-off points to the north and west of the castle.

The route to the castle may pose possible hazards, including a rocky shoreline, livestock and uneven surfaces.

- The coastal path from Craster runs along a rocky shoreline where livestock often grazes.
- The route takes an undulating course over grass, which may be slippery and boggy during and after wet weather.
- The route from the north is either along the sandy shore or via a path through undulating sand dunes with rocky, uneven pathways.

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

- The perimeter of the castle is enclosed by a stone curtain wall, which is variable in height, with some metal fencing.
- The south curtain wall has an opening with a restraining bar beyond, which is a short drop to stony ground.
- The east wall has two narrow openings, leading to the rocky shoreline and a tidal inlet with sudden drops.
- The west wall has low-level walls and unfenced areas, with steep drops beyond.

- The north wall is enclosed by a metal fence about one metre high, with a sheer cliff face.
- The grounds around the castle are sloping and undulating.
- Paths are mown in to the grass to define a preferred route. Other surfaces are paved or gravelled, all of which can get wet and slippery.
- The ground floors of the gatehouse have dark passages, with low-level lighting.
- There are short, sudden drops from the window embrasures.
- The upper floors of the gatehouse are accessed by a spiral staircase, which has uneven steps. There is a short flight of steep, wooden and stone steps to the room above the gatehouse.
- The viewing platform at the top of the spiral staircase is accessible by very small groups only.
- Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.

Dunstanburgh Castle is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

- Livestock grazes in the fields on the approach to the castles. These animals can bite and kick and should not be approached.
- There are other animals and birds on site and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard.
- Children should be reminded to wash their hands prior to eating.