

Furness Abbey, Cumbria

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.

- There is a public car and coach park adjacent to the entrance to the abbey. Other vehicles use this area.

The exhibition area may pose a possible hazard.

- The exhibition area houses a display of stone effigies and carvings, many of which are mounted at a low level posing a trip hazard.

The ruinous nature of the abbey presents many potential hazards.

- The floor surfaces are often uneven and can be slippery and muddy in wet conditions.
- Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- There is low masonry around the site.
- There are open stone chambers within the cemetery.
- Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- There is an open stone staircase beside the cemetery gate, this should not be climbed on.
- Unguarded streams and culverts flow across the site, including a large opening at the south end of the Infirmary Chapel, through which there is a fast-flowing water course.
- A tunnel runs under the remains of the Abbot's House, which is open at both ends. Close supervision is required in this area.
- A new flight of timber steps provides access to the night stairs, leading to a newly installed viewing platform on the 1st floor of the east range. The steps are steep and uneven in places. The top step is a little higher than the others. There is a handrail

both alongside the steps and around the viewing platform at the top. Access to the night stairs will be closed during periods of very windy weather.

There are 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.

Furness Abbey is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

- There are animals and birds on site and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard. Visitors are advised to wash hands prior to eating.
- Please take care around trees – they are inspected regularly but can drop limbs due to dry weather conditions or pest damage.

Asbestos has been identified on the site. This is common with older buildings and some historic artefacts and is being managed and monitored by English Heritage.

- These areas and objects are clearly marked with red 'a' stickers.
- No activities that may disturb the asbestos are permitted; please raise any concerns or accidental damage with the Site Manager immediately.