

## HOME OF CHARLES DARWIN - DOWN HOUSE, KENT

### 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'll 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](https://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.

#### There is a one way system operating at Down House.

- Please be aware of the one way system operating on site and stick to this route to avoid congestion and to maintain social distancing with other visitors.

#### Moving vehicles may pose a hazard upon arrival and while on the site.

- Please be aware of moving vehicles in the car park. There is only one coach parking bay and this must be booked in advance directly with the site. Cars will be in the same car park as coaches and use the same route as pedestrians.
- There are no pavements leading to the site from the nearby village. If public transport is being used to travel to the site, road walking will be necessary. Please be aware of fast moving cars along the roads. Walking along this route is not advised for school groups.

#### There are uneven surfaces which may change in level throughout the house and gardens.

- Some areas have loose gravel surfaces and there may be potholes and various trip hazards around the site; please use paved pathways and designated walkways wherever possible.

There may be conservation-related hazards within the house that could pose a risk.

- There are low lighting levels throughout the house to help conserve the collection.
- Windows and display cabinets do not contain safety glass.
- Several areas are roped off to the general public for the safety of the collection. Please ensure that you do not attempt to cross the rope barriers or pull on the rope which will sound the alarm system.

Staircase treads may be worn and uneven in the house

- Some stairs are narrow, please take care and use the hand rail.

The house can become busy and congested.

- Follow the suggested flow through the house to limit congestion.
- The downstairs rooms are limited in size and some cannot accommodate more than 10 people at a time.

Trees onsite may pose a hazard

- There are low overhanging tree branches in the garden and estate. Climbing on the trees is not permitted for the safety of visitors and for the conservation of the trees.

There are various hazards within the restored garden and estate, including wildlife and allergy risks.

- The gardens have been restored to how they were in Darwin's time; therefore, it is very important that visitors keep to the designated paths while walking around the grounds. In wet weather the paths can become muddy and slippery.
- Please do not pick the flowers or any other plants and close all gates.
- Hazard to those with allergies. The garden attracts many bees and insects. There is an observation beehive in the laboratory from April – September.
- There may be deer and other wildlife in and around the Sand Walk. Please do not approach wild animals.

Livestock may pose a hazard within the estate

- Sheep graze on the estate and must not be disturbed.
- All animals may bite and/or kick.
- There may be a risk of zoonotic infection; ensure hands are washed after contact with animals.