

## DOWN HOUSE, KENT

### 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

- 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 a coach and use the same route as 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.
- The fire alarm is not tested during "public hours" at any of our sites, therefore if the alarm is activated, you are requested to follow the instructions from members of staff and make your way to the assembly point where a roll call will be made.
- There are no pavements leading to the site from the nearby village. Therefore if public transport is being used to travel to the site, road walking will be necessary.

### House

- The downstairs rooms are limited in size and some cannot accommodate more than 10 people at a time.
- There are low lighting levels throughout the house to help conserve the fabric.
- Windows and display cabinets do not contain safety glass.
- Steps, stairs and floors may all be uneven.
- 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.
- No photographs can be taken inside the house under any circumstances.
- If you wish to eat packed lunches at the site, prior arrangements will need to be made with the site directly.
- Pupils must be accompanied at all times.

## The Gardens

- 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.
- All the trees on our sites are inspected annually. 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 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.
- Sheep graze on the estate and must not be disturbed.
- No picnics are allowed within the grounds due to the site being a site of scientific importance.
- No ball games are allowed on site.

Ongoing conservation or maintenance work on site may cause additional temporary hazards. A member of staff will advise you of these when you make your planning visit.

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