

HOUSESTEADS ROMAN FORT, 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 and while on the site.

- There is a public car and coach park adjacent to the entrance to the site. The car park can get very busy at peak times and cars travel through via a one-way system.
- Authorised vehicles may use the farm tracks up to the museum and fort.

The natural landscape of the site may pose possible hazards.

- Access to the fort is via a steep path over land owned by the National Trust. The surface is rough with loose stones and can be muddy and slippery, especially on descent.
- The area becomes more exposed the further you ascend towards the fort. Where possible, groups should stick to the gravel pathways.
- The sloping, grassy nature of the site means that pathways may become slippery.
- There are occasional potholes and animal burrows underfoot.

The ruinous nature of the fort presents many potential hazards.

- There is low masonry throughout the site. Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- There are unfenced drops in many places, including along the fort wall, inside the latrine block and by the north gate.
- The ground within the fort is grassed and often slippery during and after wet conditions.
- The wooden decking and steps used to access parts of the fort can be slippery in wet conditions.

The museum and exhibition space may pose possible hazards to large groups.

- There are a range of low-level display cases, as well as larger display cases, in the museum.
- Space around the exhibit is limited and is best visited in groups of up to 15 at a time.

Housesteads Roman Fort is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

- Livestock grazes in the fields and grounds around the fort. 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.

Asbestos has been identified on the site this is being managed and monitored by English Heritage.

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