

Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire

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.

- Coaches should park in the visitor car park. From here a grassed path leads to a metal gate and to a drive leading to the entrance point and shop. The drive is used by pedestrians and occasional two-way vehicular traffic. Please supervise your group carefully.
- From the shop, access to the hall is via a gravelled path. There are often vehicles moving about the site.

The partially ruinous nature of Kirby Hall may present many potential hazards.

- The buildings of the east and west lodgings, the loggia and the kitchen area are in ruins and exposed to the elements. Walls in these areas present climbing hazards and the floor and ground surfaces are uneven and can be wet and slippery. Please walk at all times and groups should be supervised closely.
- Climbing walls is forbidden. Please discourage students from doing so.
- Worn iron window bars on the ruinous elements of the building are a potential hazard and should not be touched.
- At the south east corner of the inner courtyard there is a sunken light well protected by a wooden rail. Next to this is a sunken window opening. The loggia and east and west lodgings surrounding the inner courtyard contain partially enclosed rooms with low light levels.
- The kitchen area contains rooms on a number of levels, connected by uneven steps and sloping paths. The walls in this area are in places very low. Guarded wooden steps lead to the stair tower (closed to visitors). One room is roofed and has lowlight levels.
- Within the interior rooms, the Great Hall has an uneven paved surface. The first-floor rooms are accessed via wide flights of steps, which have a high-positioned hand-rail.

Kirby Hall is home to a variety of wildlife.

- There are animals and birds on site and their droppings can present a zoonotic hazard. Visitors should wash their hands prior to eating.
- There are numerous peacocks on site. Please warn students of their presence.

Visitors on site.

- The hall is open to the public so please be aware that there will be other visitors on site. Please be respectful.

- Students should stay with their group whilst looking around the hall.
- Please be aware that some visitors may bring dogs. These will be on a lead.

There are many potential hazards in the gardens.

- The Parterre Garden is bounded on the north and west sides by a raised grass bank. On the north side there is steep drop from the bank to the parterre.
- Within the garden there are a variety of plants, some of which, including yew, are poisonous if ingested. On the southern boundary of the garden a seasonal stream flows along a narrow ditch.
- There are many plants and bushes present which may cause allergic reactions if touched.
- Plants do attract bees and wasps so please be aware that these are around.
- Rabbit holes may present a trip hazard.
- Please take care around trees. Staff do check trees regularly, but they can drop branches due to pest damage or dry weather conditions at any time.