

Okehampton Castle, Devon

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 remain vigilant at all times. Please follow any staff instructions and be mindful of temporary barriers and signage. 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.

The car and coach park is situated 100 metres from the main site entrance.

- There is no designated path across the car park.
- Access to the site from the car park is along a minor road with no pavement.

The historic nature of the castle presents many potential hazards.

- There are many climbing hazards. Climbing is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- There are low doorways and limited headroom in some parts of the castle.
- The walls are rough and may contain sharp stones.
- The site is exposed to the elements and is mainly outdoors.

There are large areas of uneven surfaces.

- Ground surfaces are uneven throughout and can be slippery when wet.
- There are remaining stone foundations.
- Gravel surfaces may be uneven; loose stone can be a skid hazard.

There are steep banks and inclines on much of the site.

- There are steep, grass banks throughout the site.
- The motte has very steep banks leading down to the river.

There are a number of steps and staircases on the site.

- There are long, shallow steps up to the barbican and gatehouse.
- Stone steps around the site are worn and uneven.
- Single steps may pose a trip hazard.
- There is a steep set of steps with deep treads, leading up the motte to the keep.

There is access to open water on site.

- A stream with unprotected banks runs through the site; plants and algae may obscure the water's edge.
- There is a river running alongside the adjacent meadows.

There is a footpath through the adjacent woodland.

- There are exposed tree roots and natural hazards present on the path.

- The path runs close to the river in some places.
- There are steep sections of the path which may be muddy.
- There may be concealed animal holes on, and near the path.
- Plant material and thorns may be toxic or poisonous; always wash hands prior to eating meals.

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.

There is one unisex toilet.

- There is a wall-mounted radiator in the toilet which may be very hot to the touch, despite being set on low.

Covid-19 and flu.

- We follow government and [NHS guidelines](#) to reduce the risk of transmission. Please also follow their guidance and do not visit if you have flu or Covid-19 symptoms or have recently tested positive.