

WALMER CASTLE AND GARDENS, 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

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 parking on site for cars and minibuses. The drop-off point is on the road 50m away.
- It is necessary to walk along and cross a busy road to reach the site entrance; there is a pavement but no crossing.
- There is shared use of the access road by pedestrians and cars.

The walking surfaces may be uneven and change in level; please use designated walkways wherever possible.

- All surfaces may be slippery when wet.
- Steps may be worn and uneven; single steps may pose a trip hazard.
- Be aware of animal holes in grassed areas.
- Wooden ramps and bridges on site may be slippery.
- In wet weather, pallets may be laid along flooded pathways.

The construction of the site provides numerous climbing hazards; climbing on walls or over/under barriers is not permitted.

- Walls are rough and may contain sharp stones.
- Guns on the bastions must not be climbed.

- Climbing any of the trees on site is strictly forbidden.
- The summerhouse in the Queen Mother's Garden has stone pillars decorated with low-level stone ledges

There are steep banks, high walls and sheer drops on site, some of which are unguarded.

- There is a low rail on the bridge across the dry moat.
- There are low hedges along the path with a sheer drop into the dry moat.
- The low walls on the bastions have a sheer drop into the dry moat.
- The Glen garden has steep sides.

Staircase treads may be worn and uneven; always use the handrail where provided.

- Steps may be slippery when wet or icy.
- There are steps between levels and in doorways.
- Visitors descend and ascend on the same staircases.

Windows and display cabinets throughout the castle and in the glasshouses do not contain safety glass.

- Glass doors lead onto the north-east and south-east bastions.
- There are low-level, glass-topped, cold frames in the glasshouses.

There are areas of low lighting in the castle; please take care when moving around.

- Roped off areas have motion-sensitive alarms.

There is unguarded access to deep water on the site; there is no life ring available.

- There is an unfenced pond in the Queen Mother's Garden.
- There is a gate and warning sign in the south-west corner of the garden.

The site can be very busy and some areas may become congested.

- The area around the till point is narrow.