

Wrest Park, Bedfordshire

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 and while on the site.

- The driveway into the estate is a busy access route for vehicles with 20mph signs displayed. Group leaders should be aware of vehicles when walking with students from the coach drop off point along the driveway.

Surfaces may be uneven and change in level; please use paved pathways and designated walkways wherever possible.

- 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.
- Some paths and slabs may be slippery when wet.

The playground and congestion within the visitor centre may pose a hazard.

- School groups access the house and grounds through the Visitor Centre and café seating area upon arrival. As this area can become busy with other visitors and staff please plan your journey through any crowds with care.
- The playground outside the Visitor Centre contains apparatus for infants and older children. It is the responsibility of teachers and group leaders to decide on suitability of equipment for their groups.
- Education groups are welcome to use the playground. Please be aware that the children must be monitored by school staff at all times and that other visitors to Wrest Park and Gardens will also be using the space.
- Surfaces may become slippery in wet weather.

The historic mansion house may pose various hazards and the staircase treads may be worn and uneven.

- As the mansion is a working environment for many businesses, noise should be kept to a minimum and leaders should ensure that children enter the mansion in small groups.
- During your visit there may be hospitality events taking place in the mansion state rooms. If this is the case, extra care and consideration should be exercised.

- Please join us in protecting and conserving the objects and paintings in the house; instruct students to not touch any items in the house unless given permission by a guide. Please encourage a 'look only' policy.

The historic grounds and gardens of the estate may pose various hazards, including garden buildings, unguarded water features and on-going garden maintenance.

- There are several garden buildings, including the Orangery, Bowling Green House, Archer Pavilion and Bath House. The Archer Pavilion has very steep steps inside and the Bath House is near water. Windows in these buildings do not contain safety glass. Steps and terraces around the buildings can be slippery when wet.
- General garden maintenance work may be taking place during your visit.
- There are a number of water features and large bodies of water within the grounds; a river runs around the park, and there are various lakes, streams, ponds and fountains throughout the gardens. The edges of some of these are indeterminate and may be slippery or muddy.
- Paths around the gardens can be slippery and muddy when wet and there may be trip hazards such as projecting roots.
- Please join us in protecting and conserving the garden buildings, monuments and statues by encouraging a 'look only' policy in the gardens. Do not climb on the garden statues and monuments.
- Please do not pick any flowers and plants, or climb any trees.
- There may be slow moving vehicles in the gardens, including contractors, garden buggies and suppliers. Drivers should be driving at a low speed whilst watching for pedestrians.
- Steps in the garden slippery when wet

Trees onsite may pose a hazard.

- There are a number of trees throughout the gardens which may have low or loose branches. Trees identified as dangerous will be clearly roped or taped off.
- To ensure your safety and to protect and conserve the landscape please do not climb on any walls or trees.