

ETAL CASTLE, 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. 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 should be supervised by a responsible adult at all times whilst on site.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

In line with [NHS guidelines](#), people with [Covid-19 symptoms](#), or those who have recently tested positive, are asked not to visit.

We're carrying out extra cleaning and disinfecting and making hand sanitiser available for everyone to use.

You may still see some of our staff and volunteers continue to choose to wear a face covering in our busy areas and indoor spaces, and you may wish to do the same. Spaces will be as well ventilated as possible.

Please follow staff instructions and site signage.

Moving vehicles may pose a hazard upon arrival.

- There is a public car and coach park adjacent to the entrance to the castle.
- The car park is the main car park for the village and becomes busy during peak times.

The exhibition area and displays may pose possible hazards.

- There are low-level exhibits that encourage touching. Care should be taken when doing so. Some weapons and armour have loose parts.
- A chainmail curtain covers the outside of the door leading from the exhibition to the castle.

The ruinous nature of the castle presents many potential hazards.

- The ground surface around the castle is grassed and undulating stretches of it can be slippery during and after wet conditions.
- The floor surfaces are often uneven.
- Walls are rough and contain uneven and often sharp stones.
- There is low masonry around the site.
- Climbing on the walls is not permitted and poses a significant hazard.
- The wooden portcullis may also pose a climbing hazard.
- The Tower House is accessed by a short, steep sloping grassy bank, followed by two rough and uneven steps. Excess rainwater can collect at the bottom of the steps.
- The gatehouse has two small, dark chambers with low level light.

Etal Castle is home to a wide 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.

Asbestos has been identified on the site. This is common with older buildings and some historic artefacts and is being managed and monitored by English Heritage.

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