



BLenheim PALACE

Advice for Education groups on making their risk assessment for a group visit to Blenheim Palace, Park, Gardens and Estate

It is the responsibility of the School/Company making the booking to carry out a risk assessment for their visit. These notes are designed to assist, but not to replace the group's own risk assessment. A staff pre-visit (free of charge) is strongly recommended for risk assessment.

General

- Students remain the responsibility of the group leaders in charge.
- Blenheim expects the group to provide appropriate and effective staff supervision at all times. Blenheim allocates free staff places on a ratio of 1:10. Groups which have needs beyond that ratio should discuss these with the Blenheim Education Team on 01993 810535.
- Blenheim anticipates that all group leaders will have been made aware of the programme for the day, their responsibilities, and the potential hazards.
- Blenheim has First Aid Kits but the administration of First Aid is the responsibility of the group leaders. For assistance with First Aid matters, please ask any member of Blenheim staff (including the Shop) or telephone the Operations Office on 01993 810530.
- The School/Company will be held responsible for any damage to the Estate property caused by students or group leaders.
- The three members of the Blenheim Education Team have all been DBS checked.

On arrival

Potential hazards are:-

- ★ **Traffic:** Movement and parking of vehicles (e.g. visitors' coaches and cars, commercial and Estate vehicles) means that students and group leaders should be alert to the dangers inherent in this at all times, especially when disembarking from, or embarking on their transport and when walking in the Park.
- ★ **Gravel & uneven surfaces:** There are various hard surfaces, including tarmac, gravel and cobbles. Due care should be taken: no running.

Actions:-

- ✓ All vehicles bringing Education groups must be parked in designated parking areas and come to a complete halt before the group disembarks.
- ✓ Students should be closely supervised by the group leaders when disembarking and crossing the parking area.
- ✓ Students should be warned about the various surfaces in and around Blenheim and there should be no running whilst on site.

A visit to the Park

Potential hazards are:-

- ★ **Traffic:** (Please see note above)
- ★ **Water:** The Lake in the Park and the pools etc. in the Gardens pose the risk inherent in any water situation.
- ★ **Grass:** It is not always a safe surface. On slopes, especially when wet, it contains risk, as do tussocks and uneven surfaces.
- ★ **Animals:** The actions of dogs on leads (note - some owners do not exercise this control) and of wildlife, e.g. water fowl, are unpredictable. Due care should be taken with any animal and no contact should be made. Also be aware of fouling by the geese.



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Actions:-

- ✓ Students should be made aware of these potential hazards and should be supervised by the group leaders at all times.
- ✓ Students should wear footwear that has a good, non-slip sole and clothing suitable for walking outside.

A visit to the Formal Gardens

Potential hazards are:-

- ★ **The Courtyard Terraces and Palace Colonnades:** These are elevated, with a drop below them. The surfaces are made up of cobbles, gravel and stone slabs which are uneven.
- ★ **In the Gardens:** There are steps, gravel, water and variations in height.
- ★ **In the Water Terraces:** There is a fall from height risk at three locations: - Where the steps descend into the Terraces from the South Lawn and on two sets of steps descending to the lower part of the Terraces. There is a wide platform at each location, but either a low or no parapet, so that there is an unprotected fall height of about 2.5 metres onto grass or hard standing. The surfaces of the platforms are generally even and the hazard is reasonably obvious.
- ★ **The Pleasure Gardens:** These contain climbing apparatus and a maze, both of which are popular with children. There are, of course, variations in height, steps, ropes and slides. The butterflies in the Butterfly House may land on the visitors; the zebra finches often take flight and may be of concern to anyone with a bird phobia. The Butterfly House can become very hot in warm weather.

Actions:-

- ✓ There must be proper supervision of students by the group leaders near any object which can pose risk e.g. statues, cannons, balls or hedges. Group leaders are asked to ensure that students do not climb or walk along the edges of the elevated sections.
- ✓ Students should be kept away from any work underway in the gardens or anywhere else at Blenheim.
- ✓ Group leaders are asked to supervise play at all times when students are in the Pleasure Gardens.

A visit to the Palace

Potential hazards are:-

- ★ **Walking up to the Palace:** There are steps at the entry and exit. Within the Palace, there are hard floors, walls, staircases and corners. There are marble busts which could topple if pushed or fallen against. Occasional traffic hazard when Family / Estate / delivery vehicles drive into the Great Courtyard.

Actions:-

- ✓ The students need to be supervised by the group leaders at all times in the Palace and they are asked to refrain from touching objects during the visit.
- ✓ Students must take care to avoid delivery vehicles if on site before 10.00 am and to walk up the steps slowly, no running up or down the steps.

All signs and notices are there for a purpose; danger can ensue if they are not obeyed. Particular care must be taken here, as everywhere, with children who have special educational needs.