



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

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

### General

- Students remain the responsibility of the visiting teacher in charge and the accompanying staff from the school.
- Blenheim expects the school or college to provide appropriate and effective staff supervision at all times. Blenheim allocates free staff places on a ratio of 1:10 from K.S. 2 upwards and 1:5 below that. Schools and colleges which have needs beyond that should discuss these with the Blenheim Education Department.
- Blenheim anticipates that all the accompanying staff 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 school. For assistance with First Aid matters please ask any member of staff (including shop) or telephone 01993 810530.
- The school will be held responsible for any damage to the Estate property caused by pupils or staff
- The two members of the Education Department, Mrs Wiseman & Mrs Keaney have both been CRB checked.

### On arrival

#### Potential hazards are:

- **Traffic** Movement of vehicles (e.g. visitors' coaches and cars, commercial and estate vehicles) and parking means that children and their accompanying adults 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. All vehicles bringing Education groups must be parked in designated parking areas and come to a complete halt before the group disembarks.
- **Gravel & uneven surfaces** There are various hard surfaces, including tarmac, gravel and cobbles. Due care should be taken: no running.

#### Actions:

- ✓ Coaches and mini buses should be parked in the designated areas and the pupils should be closely supervised by the school staff when disembarking and crossing the parking area.
- ✓ Pupils should be warned about the various surfaces in and around Blenheim and there should be no running whilst on site.

**THE ESTATE OFFICE, BLENHEIM PALACE, WOODSTOCK, OXFORDSHIRE, OX20 1PP**

*email* [education@blenheimpalace.com](mailto:education@blenheimpalace.com) *or call* 01993 810535

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## 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** 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. No contact should be made.

### Actions:

- ✓ Pupils should be made aware of these potential hazards and always work supervised by a member of the school staff.
- ✓ Pupils should wear footwear that has a good, non-slip sole and clothing suitable for walking outside.

## A visit to the Formal Gardens

### The potential hazards are:

- **The Courtyard Terraces and Palace colonnades** 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. Students should be kept away from any work in hand in the gardens or anywhere else at Blenheim.
- **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** 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 children by the school staff near any object which can pose risk e.g. statues, cannons, balls or hedges. School staff are asked to ensure that pupils do not climb or walk along the edges of the elevated sections.
- ✓ Students should be kept away from any work in hand in the gardens or anywhere else at Blenheim.
- ✓ Staff are asked to supervise play at all times when pupils are in the Pleasure Gardens

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## A visit to the Palace and Education room

### The 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.
- **The Education Room** Access is via a staircase from the western courtyard arch, which is a traffic movement path. The steps up to the Education Room are steep and slightly worn.

### Actions:

- The pupils need to be supervised by staff at all times in the Palace and they are asked to refrain from touching objects during the visit.
- Pupils to 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.

**Signs and notices 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.**



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