



HEVER CASTLE  
& GARDENS

# School And College Visit Information

## What is in this booklet?

The guidelines in this booklet are designed to ensure that every school or college group visiting Hever Castle and Gardens has as much opportunity as possible to enjoy and learn from the historic surroundings. We appreciate your assistance in achieving this objective.

Please look through this booklet carefully and share the information with your students and adults accompanying your visit.

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## Before Your Visit

We strongly recommend that you take advantage of a complimentary visit to Hever Castle and Gardens before the day of your visit. It will help when planning your day. Please contact our Group Visits Co-ordinator on 01732 861701 to arrange a day to visit, and two complimentary tickets will be left for you at the main ticket office.

We encourage all students to look around the Castle in small accompanied groups and not to stay together as a class. Please bear this in mind when planning your visit, and ensure that the adults accompanying your group have all of the information that they need.

Invoicing can be arranged on receipt of a formal request on a school letterhead before the date of your visit. Cheques can be made payable to Hever Castle Ltd.

### Changing a booking

Please inform the Group Visits Co-ordinator on 01732 861701 at least two weeks in advance of your visit should you wish to cancel or bring any additional students or adults.

If you have booked a private guided tour, Time Travellers workshop or our Roman workshop we regret that refunds will not be given for cancellations made less than two weeks in advance of your visit. If a cancellation has to be made due to exceptional circumstances we will make every effort to reschedule your visit.

### Special needs

Please let us know if any of your students have any special needs or mobility difficulties and we will make every effort to help them get the most out of their day. A free adult place is offered for children needing one to one support. For further information about access at Hever Castle and Gardens please visit: [hevercastle.co.uk/visit/location-accessibility/](http://hevercastle.co.uk/visit/location-accessibility/)

### Resources

A range of resources for teachers and pupils to use before, during, and after visiting the Castle and Gardens are available to download at [hevercastle.co.uk/visit/fun/](http://hevercastle.co.uk/visit/fun/)

# On The Day of Your Visit

## Travel and parking

If you have pre-booked a private guided tour, Time Travellers workshop or our Roman workshop and are delayed please contact the Group Visits Co-ordinator on 01732 861701.

Coach parking is plentiful and free of charge. It is advisable that coach drivers check their route as there are a number of low bridges in the area. Your coach driver will be admitted free of charge and given a meal voucher which can be exchanged for refreshments at either of the two restaurants.

A member of staff will be available to direct your coach to a suitable parking area before escorting your group to the main ticket office.

For further information about how to get to Hever Castle and Gardens please visit: [hevercastle.co.uk/visit/opening-times-directions/](http://hevercastle.co.uk/visit/opening-times-directions/)

## When you arrive

Please register your group at the main ticket office on arrival. Payment can be taken at this time.

You will be issued a time for your group to visit the Castle. Please adhere to the time as closely as possible as this may affect the visiting times for other groups.

It is important that everyone in your group keeps their ticket throughout your visit.

## If you have pre-booked a Time Travellers or Roman Workshop

Please ensure that your whole group knows the time and meeting place for the session to ensure a prompt start.

Please advise all the adults accompanying your visit that they must remain with the group during the session, and help in the session is much appreciated.

### During your visit

We require that all students are supervised by accompanying adults at all times whilst on site. This includes during any educational sessions, at lunchtimes, in the gift shops and in the gardens and mazes.

Groups should contain a minimum of one adult per ten students aged 8-19 years old, and one adult per six students aged 7 and under. We encourage all students to look around the Castle in small accompanied groups and not to stay together as a class. We recommend allowing 1 hour for your Castle visit (20 minutes per floor).

A member of staff will greet each student group on arrival at the Castle and admit each group individually.

It is recommended that student groups visit the Castle before they go around the mazes.

The *Water Maze* is open from April until October. All visitors entering the *Water Maze* do so at their own risk and must be prepared to get wet! Please ensure that all accompanying adults read all signs and explain the rules to your groups. Suitable footwear must be worn at all times.

The *Yew Maze* is open from April until October. It is over 100 years old and we respectfully ask that visitors treat it with care. It is recommended that students wear suitable footwear as the ground can remain wet and muddy for long periods.

### Unforeseen closures

Occasionally parts of the Castle and Gardens may need to be closed temporarily for maintenance work. We make every effort to minimise disruption. Should any temporary access routes be in operation staff will advise and assist on the day.

# Facilities

## Toilets

There are two on-site toilet blocks within the grounds. Both have an accessible toilet. The nearest toilet block to the Castle is located behind the *Hever Shop* near the main ticket office. The *Lavender Loos* are located next to the *Guthrie Pavilion Restaurant*.

## Bags and coats

Unfortunately we have no cloakroom facilities. All coats, bags, lunches and other personal belongings must remain with the group at all times.

## Lunch and drinking water

We regret that we are unable to accommodate student groups in the restaurants for packed lunches. If the weather is cold or wet, packed lunches can be eaten under cover on the *Loggia* by the lake.

There is a drinking fountain in the toilet block near to the main ticket office, but please ensure that you bring plenty of drinking water.

Your group is welcome to picnic in allocated areas within the Gardens. These include *Half Moon Lawn*, the *Lake Walk*, the lawns opposite the *Hever Shop*, the lawns around the *Water Maze* and *Anne Boleyn's Walk*. Please ensure that litter is disposed of in the bins provided.

## Shopping

There are two on-site shops. The nearest shop to the Castle is the *Hever Shop*. The *Courtyard Shop* is located next to the *Guthrie Pavilion Restaurant*.

The *Hever Shop* contains low-priced products suitable for children. We ask that students do not enter the shop without supervision, no more than two groups at a time. Bags must be left at the entrance to the shop at the owners' risk. Members of staff will be happy to assist.

## Lost property

Lost property is handed in to the *Information Centre*. Please ask for directions there if an item is discovered missing on the day. If a loss is noticed afterwards, please call the Group Visits Co-ordinator on 01732 861701.

## Health and safety

The risks associated with visiting Hever Castle and Gardens have been assessed as low.

If there is an accident during your visit please inform any member of staff. A record will be made of any accident that occurs.

First aiders are available if required.

Should the Castle need to be evacuated, a continuous or intermittent siren will sound. Please follow the directions of the Visitor Experience Assistants or Guides.

Should the *Hever Shop*, *Courtyard Shop* or restaurants need to be evacuated, a continuous siren will sound. Please follow the directions of the retail or restaurant staff.

# Caring For the Castle and Gardens

## The Castle

The Castle and the objects it contains are valuable and irreplaceable. Please note the following ways you can help us to look after the Castle:

- Please do not touch the objects on display in each room.
- Please do not eat or drink anywhere inside the Castle. This includes chewing gum.
- If your students are completing work inside the Castle, please use pencils and not pens. It is recommended that students use clipboards to lean on when writing or drawing.
- If your students are bringing packed lunches, do encourage them to use suitable containers to minimize the chance of leaks and spills.
- We politely request that professional photography and filming are not permitted inside the Castle
- We encourage all students to look around the Castle in small accompanied groups and not to stay together as a class.

Teachers and group leaders are requested not to give guided tours or talks to their students inside the Castle as it contains some small and narrow areas that can sometimes become quite busy. The *Castle Forecourt* may be used for talks before or after your visit to the Castle.

## The Gardens

The gardens at Hever Castle date back to 1903 and our experienced gardening team work hard to look after them.

We ask that all groups treat the gardens with care by respecting the plant and animal life and ensuring any litter is disposed of in the bins provided.



# Health and Safety

The risks associated with visiting Hever Castle and Gardens have been assessed as low. However, please remember that the Castle and Gardens are open to the public and there are potential hazards from vehicles, water, plants, and animals. A summary of the main risks can be found on the next page.

## Supervision

We require that all students are supervised by accompanying adults at all times whilst on site. Groups should contain a minimum of one adult per ten students aged 8-19 years old, and one adult per six students aged 7 and under. We reserve the right to refuse admission to groups with inadequate numbers of adults. Please ensure that all adults accompanying your visit understand that they are responsible for the behaviour of the students in their care.

## Objects and equipment

Any equipment provided by Hever Castle has been risk assessed and is deemed to represent a low risk of an accident happening. Individuals are responsible for any equipment they bring into the Castle and Gardens.

If you have pre-booked a private guided tour or a *Tudor Time Travellers* session your Guide may issue safety instructions. It is important that all students and adults listen and follow these instructions.

## Clothing

Please ensure that all members of your group are suitably dressed for their visit. A large part of your visit to Hever Castle and Gardens is spent outside or in rooms with no heating. We strongly recommend that you bring a spare set of clothes in case of illness or if your group are visiting the *Water Maze*.

## Insurance

Hever Castle and Gardens has public liability insurance for £10 million. Details are available upon request.

## Health and safety agreement

Please complete the health and safety agreement on the following page and return it by post or fax to the Group Visits Co-ordinator in advance of your visit.

# Health and Safety Agreement

Please complete this form and return it by post or email (see below for details) to the Group Visits Co-ordinator in advance of your visit.

Name of school:

Date of visit:

Name of group leader:

I, the undersigned, having capacity to sign on behalf of the visiting school/college, accept the following two clauses:

I have read, understood and agree with the information and conditions given in the booklet entitled 'School and College Visit Information'.

The visiting school / college has appropriate insurance to cover the visit to Hever Castle and Gardens.

Signature:

Date:

Print name:

Position in school:

Please return this form in advance of your visit by post or email to:

Group Visits Co-ordinator  
Hever Castle Ltd Nr. Edenbridge Kent  
TN87NG

[groups@hevercastle.co.uk](mailto:groups@hevercastle.co.uk)

## Main Risks

The suggestions of risks given below in no way replace your own risk assessment which you should make in advance of your visit.

Hazards	Controls
Slips, trips and falls whilst walking on uneven surfaces and on historic steps within the Castle and Gardens.	Wear sensible shoes. Walk at a reasonable pace. Avoid running on historic surfaces. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Falls from height, for example stretching over the drawbridge at the Castle entrance, climbing on trees, playing in the adventure playground.	Provision of edge protection where appropriate. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Drowning in water-containing features, for example the Millennium Fountain, Golden Stairs Cascade, Tritons Lawn Fountain, Loggia Fountain and Water Maze.	Presence of life throws where appropriate. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Drowning in large bodies of water, for example the Golden Stairs Cascade Pond, Inner Moat, Outer Moat, Half Moon Pond, Sunday Walk Garden, Two Sisters Pond, Rose Garden Pond, 16 Acre Island, Lake, and Sunken Garden Pond.	Presence of life throws where appropriate. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Burns from touching hot surfaces, for example light bulbs, open fire in the Dining Hall, Inner Hall or Long Gallery inside the Castle or outside in the Gardens in December.	Guards provided where necessary. Staff present to oversee activity. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Diseases from touching dog, duck or swan faeces within the Castle grounds and estate.	Washroom facilities provided. Wash hands prior to eating. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Collision with vehicles within grounds. Particular attention is required adjacent to the Moat Restaurant.	Speed limits in place. Hazard warning signs in place. Speed ramps in place. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Contact with work equipment, especially mowers, strimmers, chainsaws, etc.	Keys not left in mobile equipment. Tools not left unattended. Unauthorised areas locked shut. Adequate supervision of group by responsible adults.
Injuries from planned educational sessions.	Risk assessment of activity carried out by Hever Castle Ltd. Introductory talk at start of activity.

## Brief History of Hever Castle

The oldest part of Hever Castle was built in about 1270 and consisted of a massive gatehouse and enclosure, surrounded by a moat and approached by a wooden drawbridge. Two centuries later the Boleyn family added a Tudor dwelling house inside the protective wall.

Sir Thomas Boleyn inherited the property from his father in 1505. Of his three children, Mary became Henry VIII's mistress. Anne, who married the king, failed to produce a male heir to the throne of England and was eventually found guilty of High Treason for adultery and beheaded by an expert executioner brought especially from France on Tower Green in 1536. George, her brother, was beheaded three days before her, accused of having had an incestuous relationship with his sister.

After Anne's execution her father, now shunned by the court and avoided by his neighbours, continued to live at Hever until his death in 1539. The Castle had been transferred to the name of Anne Boleyn, perhaps as part of her dowry, and therefore became the property of her husband Henry VIII. In 1540 Henry VIII granted the Castle to Anne of Cleves, his recently divorced fourth wife, in whose possession it remained until her death in 1557.

In 1557 Hever Castle was bought by the Waldegraves and prospered with the fortunes of that family for 160 years. In 1689 the seventh generation, James Waldegrave, decided to take the Oath of Supremacy and renunciation and took his seat in the House of Lords. He was appointed Ambassador to France and granted the title of earl. The Castle eventually became too small for them and was sold in the early 1700s.

From then until the end of the nineteenth century Hever Castle gradually declined, passing through the ownership of various families of whom the longest freeholders were the Meade-Waldos. By this time the Castle was in a sad state, and in another generation Hever Castle would have become an unoccupied ruin. However, in 1903 the property was purchased by William Waldorf Astor, who had recently emigrated from the United States and had become a British subject. In 1916 he was created Baron, before becoming the first Viscount of Hever in 1917.

Mr Astor, with the help of his architect F.L Pearson, decided to build a Tudor-style 'village', the intention being to enlarge the premises without detracting from the Castle. This included guest rooms, staff quarters and other accommodation, linked by an interior passageway and connected to the Castle by a bridge across the moat.

Under the direction of Joseph Chea[, large amounts of earth and rocks were moved in order to change the landscape and to allow for the planting of a wide variety of trees and shrubs. To the east of the Castle you can see a paved courtyard, rose gardens, and yew trees which were grown to create the maze and the chess pieces. These are surrounded by the outer moat.

The 35 acre lake, with a central depth of 10 feet, through which the River Eden flows, took two years to excavate from meadows and marshland. From this spot a covered walk, bordered by columns, makes its way through an Italian garden where fountains, cascades and grottoes were formed to provide a setting for the numerous figures of statuary and sculpture which Mr Astor had collected during his service as American Ambassador in Italy.

The property was inherited in 1919 by William Waldorf Astor's younger son, John Jacob, who in 1956 was himself elevated to the peerage as 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Astor of Hever. Gavin, the eldest of his three children, succeeded him in 1971. In 1983, after 80 years in residence, the Astor family left Hever. In 1981 the Astors and their trustees decided to sell Hever Castle and its surrounding estate of about 3500 acres. The majority of the property was bought in 1983 by Broadland Properties Limited, a Yorkshire-based company.