

**Welcome to Mountfitchet Castle
and the House on the Hill Museum**

Stansted Essex CM24 8SP

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www.mountfitchetcastle.com

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An example itinerary of a school visit: Mountfitchet Castle.

Arrival. Most groups/parties arrive between 10.00am and 11.00am. The castle opens at 10am. There is a car park directly outside Mountfitchet Castle with coach parking spaces. This car park is operated by the Council, and the 2024 daily charge per coach is £6.00 (*Subject to change by the Council*).

Checking in and Payment. Person in charge of the group/party comes to our front desk to check in. Please have ready the actual number of children and adults that you have brought along with you on the day. Don't worry about working out the 1-15 free adult ratio – we'll do that for you. The invoice will be made out for you while you wait (or you can leave your figures with the member of staff on the gate and come back later in the day to settle up) Please make cheques payable to 'Mountfitchet Castle'

Entering the complex. Bring the group/party through the main gate and straight through into the picnic area to gather and organise and read out our guidelines to the group/party (enclosed).

Lunch. Most schools/groups like to have their lunch, after an initial look around the castle, anytime between 11.30am and 1.00pm. The lunch room and picnic area can only be booked upon arrival in the morning on a 'first come' basis for the younger children. The outdoor covered picnic area can accommodate up to 100 people at one sitting and can be used at anytime without booking – if it's free, go for it! We have a café which provides hot & cold beverages, freshly made sandwiches, toasted herb panini's and sandwiches with a filling of your choice, delicious home-made cakes, hot dogs, ice creams etc.

Souvenir Shop. Just before or after lunch is a popular time to souvenir shop and most school children bring about £5.00 to £10.00 to spend but we cater for all spending ranges. For the convenience of the party of large groups our advice is to come into the shop in groups of 10 – 15 children with a supervising adult.

Student activity booklets. We have designed activity booklets for you to use for your students (with a separate answer booklet) for KS1, 2 and 3 which can be found on our website free of charge. These are available for you to print in advance of your visit. They are fully editable so that they can be adapted to suit your curriculum needs or used exactly as they are.

Animal Food. Feeding of the animals is always very popular with the children and bags of animal food can be purchased from the shop for £2.00. Important – children must wash their hands thoroughly after contact with the animals and before they eat their lunches.

The Haunted Manor. If you have a combined visit (you are visiting both the castle and the House on the Hill Museum) we have a Haunted Manor in the museum which is very popular for students and it adds another exciting element to their visit. It is just £1 to enter and can be paid for either at the Toy Museum in cash or added onto your school's invoice.

Time to go? We are open until 5.00pm, but most schools tend to leave around 2.00pm to be back in school by 'home time'. All groups are welcome throughout the day but you must arrive by 3.00pm.

Combined Visit? If you are visiting both the Castle and the Museum there are several different ways in which you can organise your day, these will depend heavily upon the size of your group. Up to 30(ish) you could stay all together and visit one attraction in the morning and the other in the afternoon. For larger groups it is recommended that you split the group up and take it in turns to visit the Toy Museum (each group must be accompanied by a supervising adult) The Toy Museum can hold a capacity of about 35 children with accompanying adults comfortably.

NB: Dinosaurs. The dinosaurs live near the entrance to the Museum and can only be visited if your group are doing a combined visit or just the Museum. If you are visiting just the Castle and Norman Village then the dinosaurs are out of bounds.

An example itinerary of a school visit: House on the Hill Museum.

Arrival. Most groups/parties arrive between 10.00am and 11.00am. The castle opens at 10am. There is a car park directly outside Mountfitchet Castle with coach parking spaces. This car park is operated by the Council, and the 2024 daily charge per coach is £6.00(*Subject to change by the Council*).

Checking in and Payment. Person in charge of the group/party comes to our front desk to check in. Please have ready the actual number of children and adults that you have brought along with you on the day. Don't worry about working out the 1-15 free adult ratio – we'll do that for you. The invoice will be made out for you while you wait (or you can leave your figures with the member of staff on the gate and come back later in the day to settle up) Please make cheques payable to 'Mountfitchet Castle'

Finding the Museum entrance. Bring the group/party through the main gate and pass through the visitor centre to the doorway that takes you onto the pathway leading to the Museum. The dinosaurs are gathered near the entrance to the Museum, so don't worry, you won't miss them.

History of toys. For teachers wishing to give the children an educational talk on the history of toys, including the ever popular story of how the Teddy Bear got his name, we can provide a box full of labelled toys and a laminated 'talk' to read out to the children. Upon request this talk can be emailed in advance for teachers to preview and familiarise themselves with beforehand.

WWII & The Home Front. For teachers wishing to give the children an educational talk on the Blitz we can provide props and a laminated 'talk' to read out to the children. Upon request this talk can be emailed in advance for teachers to preview and familiarise themselves with beforehand.

Lunch. Most schools/groups like to have their lunch, after an initial look around the museum, anytime between 11.30am and 1.00pm. The lunch room can accommodate up to 30 at one sitting and can only be booked upon arrival in the morning on a 'first come' basis if there are more than one group visiting on that day. We have a café located in the visitor centre which provides hot & cold beverages, freshly made sandwiches, toasted panini's and sandwiches, delicious home-made cakes, hot dogs, ice creams etc.

Souvenir Shop. The Museum does not have its own souvenir shop, but the children can buy in the Castle visitor centre souvenir shop either before you leave or at intervals through out the day. Most school children bring about £5.00 to £10.00 to spend but we cater for all spending ranges. For the convenience of the party of large groups our advice is to come into the shop in groups of 10 – 15 children with a supervising adult.

The Haunted Manor. If you have a combined visit (you are visiting both the castle and the House on the Hill Toy Museum) we have a Haunted Manor in the toy museum which is very popular for students and it adds another exciting element to their visit. It is just £1 to enter and can be paid for either at the Toy Museum in cash or added onto your school's invoice.

Student Activity booklet. We have designed a student activity booklet for the Museum aimed at KS1, KS2 & KS3 students which can be found on our website free of charge. This is available for you to print in advance of your visit. It is fully editable so that it can be adapted to suit your curriculum needs or used exactly as it is.

Time to go? We are open until 5.00pm but most schools tend to leave around 2.00pm to be back in school by 'home time'. All groups are welcome throughout the day but you must arrive by 3.00pm.

Combined Visit? If you are visiting both the Castle and the Museum there are several different ways in which you can organise your day, these will depend heavily upon the size of your group. Up to 30(ish) you could stay all together and visit one attraction in the morning and the other in the afternoon. For larger groups it is recommended that you split the group up and take it in turns to visit the Museum (each group must be accompanied by a supervising adult) The Museum can hold a capacity of about 35 children with accompanying adults comfortably in one group.

Mountfitchet Castle & Norman Village Of 1066. Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. CM24 8SP

RISK ASSESSMENT Prepared January 2023

1. The Castle is an outdoor site, built on a steep slope, with some areas of the ground uneven and including some rabbit holes. The palisade fence and some of the buildings are constructed of rough sawn timbers and some areas are cobbled. In wet weather, the slopes and cobbles can become slippery, as can steps leading to some exhibits and look-out towers.
2. The complex includes two fenced ponds, which are approximately 18" (45 cm) deep.
3. There are low beams in the Grand Hall and in the doorways to some of the houses.
4. Open log fires are in operation (some behind barriers and one in the open) within the complex and all visitors must refrain from climbing over all safety barriers or approaching the log fire in the outer bailey.
5. A wide variety of animals and birds roam freely throughout the site. All visitors must wash their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with them. All visitors must not go beyond any barriers containing pens or chicken houses or come into contact with any animal bedding.
6. There are some exhibits on site with moving parts (e.g. head stocks, foot stocks and grindstones) and appropriate care must be taken with these artefacts.
7. There are some interactive exhibits on site including small catapult, crossbow, bow and arrow exhibits and siege tower. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times and follow the operating instructions carefully.
8. Generally, the Castle and its Village is an open site covering approximately ten acres; children must be made aware of these risks by group leaders, and schools and other visiting parties are asked to bring an adequate number of accompanying adults to supervise the children in their care.
9. The village is surrounded by a fence, which is topped in some parts by sharp security wire.
10. The designated coach park is situated approximately 150 metres from the Castle entrance and the pedestrian approach is via the perimeter of a pay-and-display Car Park. However, on the majority of occasions, coach drivers can stop to allow the children to alight directly outside the Castle.
11. There are several photo opportunity structures and users must use these structures with due care and only for the purpose they have been built. Care must be taken whilst inserting and withdrawing your head. All children must be supervised at all times.
12. The visitor centre at Mountfitchet Castle houses a café, some of the food products on offer will contain food allergens such as nuts. Also animal food is sold in small bags; these may also contain food allergens.
13. Within the Picnic area are two wooden play structures, a miniature castle and a part Viking boat. Children must be supervised at all times to ensure they do not try to jump off or otherwise misuse these structures.
14. The above are the risks assessed by us, but group leaders should make a pre-visit to the site to identify the risks for themselves and details can be obtained by ringing the Visitor Office on 01279 813237.

House On The Hill Toy Museum, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, CM24 8SP
RISK ASSESSMENT Prepared January 2023

1. Care must be taken with the graduated steps on the approach to, and departure from, the Toy Museum – especially in inclement weather.
2. Inside the Toy Museum, the majority of exhibits are housed in display cabinets constructed of thick plate glass, and it is obviously inadvisable to lean against or otherwise mistreat these cabinets.
3. The Museum is on two floors and care must be taken with the stairs at either end of the building which lead to the first floor, as well as a couple of steps on the Ground Floor.
4. The designated Coach Park is situated approximately 200 metres from the Toy Museum entrance and the pedestrian approach is via the perimeter of a pay-and-display Car Park. However, on the majority of occasions, coach drivers can stop to allow the children to alight directly outside the entrance to the Museum.
5. There are several photo opportunity structures and users must use these structures with due care and only for the purpose they have been built. Care must be taken whilst inserting and withdrawing your head. All children must be supervised at all times.
6. The above are the risks assessed by us, but group leaders should make a pre-visit to the site to identify the risks for themselves and details can be obtained by ringing the Visitor Office on 01279 813237.

For the attention of teachers and group organisers.

Please can you ensure children are well supervised and kept under control at all times. Do not allow children to eat outside of the picnic area.

Please read this important announcement to your group.

Welcome to Mountfitchet Castle.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for visiting us and to highlight a few points about your visit.

Mountfitchet Castle is a grade two listed historical monument and an open air museum. The castle is a unique visitor attraction and prides itself on the number of hands-on exhibits which adults and Children can enjoy. Whether it is meeting and feeding the many tame animals or climbing the watch towers or even being placed in the stocks!

Children must not forget that the castle and grounds are a living open air museum and not a playground for them to run wild.

You are asked to abide by our rules:

- No running – there are steep hills and flint paths
- No chasing the animals
- No dropping litter
- No throwing stones at all – especially at the exhibits or into the ponds
- And no going behind the safety barriers of the displays at all

Any of the above will not be tolerated.

Always wash your hands thoroughly before you eat and again before you leave for home. Hand washing facilities are located in the Picnic area and the toilets.

The ponds are deep and dangerous and the hills are steep, but most importantly the trust and respect of the friendly animals within the castle must not be spoilt for future visitors. Please treat them with kindness.

Toilets are now located at the end of the picnic area and hand washing facilities are available in the picnic area. There are also toilets available in the toy museum if this is part of your visit.

We hope that you enjoy your visit as you travel back in time to 1066 at Mountfitchet Castle. If you have any questions regarding your visit or any of the above points please do not hesitate to contact a member of our shop staff in the visitor centre or our grounds staff.

Examples from our Activity/Worksheets

Mountfitchet Castle & Norman Village

Activity Sheet 1 – suitable for Key Stage 1 children

- Q. What do you think the Norman villagers ate?
- Q. How do you think the Norman people kept warm in the cold weather?
- Q. Did Norman children go to school?

Activity Sheet 2 – suitable for Key Stage 2 children

- Q. Whose Army conquered this stronghold in 1066?
- Q. Parchment was the medieval equivalent of paper – what was it made from?
- Q. What foods can be found in the Kitchen?

Activity Sheet 3 – suitable for Key Stage 3 children

- Q. What material was the most important and most used around the castle?
- Q. Why did the villagers like to live inside the castle walls?
- Q. In the Brew House there were mainly two types of drink produced, what were they?
Why did people drink so little water?

The House on the Hill Museum

Activity Sheet geared to Key Stage 1

- Q. How do you think Matchbox Cars got their name?
- Q. The farmers are all very busy. How many tractors can you see?
- Q. How many spaceships are flying

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT CAN WE SEE WHILE WE'RE THERE?

Mountfitchet Castle is a Norman Motte and Bailey Castle and Village, re-constructed on its original ancient site, complete with many different buildings, siege weapons and animals roaming freely throughout the 10 acre site, providing a unique insight into community life in Domesday England. The Museum is the largest privately owned toy museum in the world, with at least 80,000 exhibits on display from late Victorian times up to the 1980's. The Museum also includes a fantastic display on the 1914-1918 and 1930-1945 World Wars, including the Blitz Years.

DO WE HAVE TO BOOK IN ADVANCE?

Yes, all parties must pre-book, initially by telephone and then by confirming in writing or by email. Your booking must be confirmed at least 4 weeks before the date of your visit. We expect that all visiting parties of children be adequately supervised. Once a booking has been made as above, we expect the party to honour that booking.

IMPORTANT: All confirmed bookings are binding. Cancellation of a confirmed booking will be subject to the full amount due as spaces are limited to a maximum of 250 per day for the comfort of all visitors. Once a day has been fully booked, any further bookings will be turned away. We do not normally ask for a booking deposit, but require a cheque, credit card or cash in full payment on the day of the visit or in advance by BACS. A VAT invoice will be issued in return. Please make cheques payable to 'Mountfitchet Castle'

IS IT SUITABLE FOR ALL AGE GROUPS?

Yes, both attractions are suitable for all age groups, from infants upwards.

DO WE NEED A GUIDED TOUR?

No, in the Castle all exhibits are clearly signed and as you enter each building, an informative commentary is activated by sensor. In the Museum, just follow the footsteps!

DO YOU HAVE ANY EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS?

We have designed student activity booklets (with separate answer booklets) for both attractions which can be found on our website free of charge. These are available for you to print in advance of your visit. They fully editable so that they can be adapted to suit your curriculum needs or used exactly as they are.

ARE THERE PARKING FACILITIES?

Yes, there is a large Car and Coach Park serving the Castle. This is operated by the Council, and the 2023 daily charge per coach is £6.00. Cars are charged at approximately £1.80 for a three hour stay.

DO YOU HAVE A SOUVENIR SHOP?

Yes, in the visitor centre we have a souvenir shop offering a wide variety of gifts and souvenirs starting from as little as 50p. How much spending money would you advise students bring with them? It is difficult to say an amount and it is entirely up to you on how much to recommend to students. There is a gift shop which is always popular with students as they can take away memorabilia of their visit. Snacks are available if students wish to purchase these. They also might like to have £2 available for animal food and a £1 available if they are visiting the Haunted Manor (The haunted manor can be found in the museum).

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO SEE EVERYTHING?

This depends on the age of the children and whether they are completing Activity Sheets or sketching exhibits etc, but a good average time is 2 hours at the Castle and slightly less at the Museum. Many schools combine a visit to both the Castle and the Museum on the same day.

TEACHERS' PRE-VISITS.

Teachers are welcome to visit the Castle and Museum prior to their school visit. We ask you to pay in the normal way, tell the reception staff you are a teacher and they will sign your ticket on the reverse. Then, on the day of the actual school visit, re-present the ticket and your money will be refunded in full.

Booking Form

All parties must pre-book, initially by telephone and then by confirming in writing, by email or by our school confirmation link under our contact tab. You can also use this form to confirm, simply fill in the required fields and post it to us. Confirmation of your booking must be made at least 4 weeks prior to your visit.

Mountfitchet Castle
Stansted
Essex
CM24 8SP
England
Tel: 01279 813237

Alternatively you can send an email with the relevant information on to:- info@mountfitchetcastle.com or under the **contact tab** on our website you will find a school **confirmation tab** – fill this in and it will be sent directly into the office.

Once your confirmation has been received, we will send a filled-in booking form and other important information back to you by email or letter for you to keep.

Booking For:	Castle		Museum		Both	
Children (State Number)		@ £8.00		@ £7.00		@ £9.50
Adults (State Number)		@ £9.50		@ £8.00		@ £11.50
OAP's (State Number)		@ £9.00		@ £7.50		@ £10.50

Please State the Age or Year of the Children

Contact	
School/Organisation	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
Email	
Date of Visit	
Time of Arrival	

Coach/Car Parking

The Coach and car park are on a 'Pay & Display' basis run by Uttlesford District Council.

The 2023 charge is £6.00 per day for coaches.

Mountfitchet Castle prides itself on its impeccable record in health and safety during the 30 years it has been open. We strive to make every groups trip here as safe and easy and hassle free as we possibly can.

Our animals have a wonderful life with in the castle grounds and have become very tame and trusting of humans and like nothing more than being hand fed their favourite food available from the gift shop.

For health and safety reasons everybody must wash their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with any of the animals so please use our hand washing facilities and wash your hands thoroughly in warm water and soap. There are two locations for hand washing facilities – one in the toilet block and another located in the picnic area. Please see map below. Please do not allow food or picnics to be consumed in any other area outside of the picnic area.



Hand washing facilities

We strive to keep our hygiene facilities full at all times but occasionally at peak times with high volume of visitors we can run low. If you do notice that we have run out of either paper hand towels or antibacterial hand gel we would really appreciate it if you could inform a member of staff so they can rectify it immediately.

Mountfitchet Castle & Norman Village
E.COLI 0157 – GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
TEACHERS AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS

Welcome to Mountfitchet Castle. Obviously, one of the highlights of a visit here is for children to meet the animals, so we would like to take this opportunity of pointing out some basic advice for you and the children to make your visit healthy and enjoyable:

1. Before you come into the castle grounds, check that all cuts and grazes are covered with waterproof dressing.
2. Do not allow anyone to kiss the animals.
3. Always wash hands thoroughly before eating after any contact with animals, and again before leaving the site. Hand washing facilities are located in the Picnic area and toilet block.
4. Eat only in the designated picnic area and do not eat food which has fallen to the ground.
5. Do not allow anyone to suck their fingers or put hands, pens or pencils into their mouths.
6. Approach all animals quietly and do not chase or frighten them.
7. Do make good use of the hand washing facilities that are available.

Please remember:

- The children are the responsibility of the accompanying adults throughout the visit.
- You must supervise the children throughout the visit and, in particular, during hand washing.

If anyone shows signs of illness after a visit (eg, sickness or diarrhoea), advise them or their parent/guardian to visit their doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

After your visit to the castle grounds please check footwear and wheels on buggies, wheelchairs etc for any animal residue that may be present, carefully remove and dispose of and thoroughly wash your hands afterwards – this is important.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Mountfitchet Castle - Covid-19
Our 'Visit Safely' guidelines for schools and groups.

Prepared January 2022

We're Good to Go!

By complying with all government guidelines, we have been granted the 'We're Good to Go' certificate from Visit England, the National Tourist for England for all visitors including schools and groups.

We do have some rules that we have to follow to be Covid Secure:-

1. There are many hand sanitisers dotted about the site, but we would also like to encourage group leaders to bring their own if possible for frequent use for their own group.
2. There are many signs throughout the site encouraging frequent hand washing. Hand washing facilities are available in the picnic area, the toilet block and within the Toy Museum. We use antibacterial hand soap in all our dispensers.
3. The toilet block is cleaned with an antibacterial product regularly throughout each day.
4. Contact surfaces are cleaned regularly throughout each day with approved antibacterial spray. These areas include door handles, handrails, buttons, counter surfaces, tables and benches, gate handles and inter-active items such as the helmets, stocks, swords etc. that children can handle.

If you have any further concerns or queries, please do call the office on 01279 813237 and we will help you to make your visit as safe, fun and educational as possible during these difficult times.