Home of Charles Darwin – Down House, Kent

Risk Assessment for Discovery Visit Session

Activity: Darwin's Daring Discoveries Discovery Visit, Key Stages 2-3
Duration: 95 minutes
Created: 1 September 2026
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Prepared by: Learning & Participation Officer (South)

Description and Notes

This risk assessment covers the Darwin's Daring Discoveries Discovery Visit from when the group meets the facilitator, to the time when the session ends. It does not cover the walk from the coach/car park to the site or any aspect of your visit outside of the Discovery Visit. This information can be found in the Hazard Information on our Schools page.

Hazard	Who is at risk?	Control measures	Risk after controls C x L = R		
Pushing and collision with other visitors on stairs and in corridors, in the event of a fire alarm.	Leaders, students, EH staff and volunteers	Facilitators are made aware of the risks and are then able to inform education groups of potential hazards. The group will be advised of any test alarms happening on the day of their visit. The fire procedure will be confirmed along with the assembly point. Expected behaviour in the event of a fire will be explained. Groups will be asked to walk calmly to the assembly point.	2	1	2
Trips on carpet edges, rugs, rope barriers while walking around the house.	Leaders, students, EH staff and volunteers	Warnings will be given regarding the historic nature of the house. Students will be asked to walk calmly around the building in an orderly fashion, aware of their surroundings and other visitors.	2	2	4
Trips and falls on uneven surfaces while walking around the grounds.	Leaders, students, EH staff and volunteers	Extra warnings will be given regarding the nature of the grounds. Students will be asked to walk calmly around the grounds in an orderly fashion, aware of their surroundings and other visitors.	2	2	4
During the experiment activity - risk of pinching fingers or cutting hands with tools.	Leaders, students, EH staff and volunteers	Firm warnings are given about behaviour with tools and adult supervision for each group to ensure correct use. Gloves available for activity using pliers and nutcrackers.	3	2	6

During the experiment activity - injury by stray objects during the experiment activity.	Leaders, students, EH staff and volunteers	Safety goggles are handed out to those conducting experiments involving breaking of bamboo sticks and the cracking of aniseed balls. A verbal warning will also be given to students. Teachers and staff are to monitor these aspects of the activity.	2	3	6
Tripping on or knocking over benches used in Education space.	Leaders, students, EH staff and volunteers	Facilitators are made aware of the risks and are then able to inform education groups of potential hazards. Capacity for Discovery Visit sessions at Down House is limited to 33 learners.	2	2	4
Interaction with the general public.	Leaders, students	Students must be supervised by accompanying adults whilst on site and in all public areas accessible by other visitors, such as toilets.	2	1	2
Students getting lost/separated from the group.	Students	Appropriate supervision ratios are required at all times. Accompanying adults will be spread among the students, at least one leader to be at the rear of the group. There are clear site procedures in place for missing children.	3	1	3

Risk Assessments for Discovery Visits

Risk = consequence x likelihood in the context of a task i.e. when undertaking this task how bad could it be if it went wrong (almost regardless of whether it would) and what are the chances of it going wrong. They are both qualitative judgements based on objective data.

The Consequence Evaluation
The data you need to evaluate consequence (in the context of the task) are:

- Hazard - the thing with the potential to cause harm.

Consequence is graded on the three point scale where:

- 3 is death or life changing injuries
- 1 is first aid treatable injures
- 2 is everything else.

The Likelihood Evaluation
Local knowledge/information will help judge the chances of the accident happening. It will include things like:

- Frequency and duration
- Numbers of people, vulnerable people
- The environment the activity is carried out in e.g. inside/outside, time of day, weather, distractions

- Accident/incident history
- Controls/supervision
- The equipment involved and its level of maintenance
- Anything else relevant to the likelihood evaluation.

It is not necessary to try to collect every piece of data that might have an effect on the likelihood; we just need to collect the most important pieces of data.

Likelihood is graded on the English Heritage three point scale where:
- 3 is almost certain to occur
- 1 means we would be surprised if the accident happened
- 2 is everything else.

Risk
Risk is calculated by multiplying the consequence rating by the likelihood rating giving potential risk ratings of:
- High (6 and 9)
- Medium (3 and 4)
- Low (1 and 2).