

Whitby Abbey, North Yorkshire

Risk Assessment for Discovery Visit session

Activity: The Whitby Abbey Story: Monks, Monasteries and Medieval Life, Key Stages 2-3
 Duration: 75 minutes
 Created: 1 September 2026
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 Prepared by: Learning and Participation Officer (Yorkshire and North Midlands)

Description and Notes

This risk assessment covers the Monks, Monasteries and Medieval Life 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](#).

The visit takes place outside in and around the abbey (there is no cover) and involves object handling, wearing hoods and role play.

Hazard	Who is at risk?	Control measures	Risk after controls $C \times L = R$		
Delivery and collection vehicles arriving on site near Visitor Centre.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Students are warned of the dangers of vehicle movement and will be directed away from the potential hazard area. Leader to watch out for vehicles.	3	1	3
Trips, slips and falls on grass banks, uneven paths, low stone foundations and ramp edges.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Students are supervised at all times and instructed regarding this hazard condition. Extra care to be taken in wet and/or windy weather. Verbal warnings are given to groups before the beginning of the session. Facilitators will have had the necessary training to identify risks and inform groups of potential hazards.	1	1	1
Steep drops between the Abbey site and Visitor Centre Courtyard.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Students are supervised at all times and warned of the potential hazard. The Discovery Visit session itself does not go near the edge so it is only on access to the site that students will be here.	2	2	4
Trips, slips and falls on worn stone steps throughout the site.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Students are supervised at all times and instructed regarding this hazard condition and affecting weather conditions.	1	1	1
Cuts, nips from handling items.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Students to be instructed on how to handle items and always under adult supervision. Objects to be checked by EH staff	1	2	2

		for damage and potential hazards prior to the workshop.			
Allergies to materials used in costumes.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Allergy to wool from hoods. Students are given choice to wear hoods or not and material explained. Choice given to wear full outfit or not.	2	2	4
Insect stings.	Leaders, students, EH staff	Students to be warned of outdoor nature of site and flowers in long grass areas so be vigilant. Accompanying adults will carry necessary medication for any students with allergies. Discovery Visit is away from the long grassed areas.	2	2	4

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 injuries
- 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).