



DURHAM
CATHEDRAL

Risk Assessment advice and guidance

For learning visits to Durham Cathedral



Guidance from the Department for Education suggests that a visit to Durham Cathedral, for most organisations, should be considered a trip that needs a risk assessment and extra planning.

Writing a risk assessment for a school trip to Durham Cathedral

The format of your risk assessment will be decided by your organisation. Your organisation is likely to use a different format and risk rating system, different policies and supporting documents to Durham Cathedral. It therefore must be written by you as the group leader in the format tailored to your organisation.

Your risk assessment should also contain all aspects of your school journey, including your travel arrangements.

There are many routine risks that your organisation should already have a risk assessment for, e.g. slips, trips, use of generic classroom materials. These will be similar in our spaces to yours. You should ask your organisation if they have approved risk assessments for similar visits that you can adapt.

There will also be some significant differences and additional hazards that a visit to our cathedral presents. To help you understand the hazards you might encounter, and what you can do to lower or avoid the risk, you can use the examples in this document.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
<p>Injury from slips, trips, collisions and falls</p>	<p>Durham Cathedral is a heritage site that is regularly used as a venue for events. Bulky audio-visual equipment may be present in walkways whilst being set up, narrowing the passage.</p> <p>Floors and steps are likely to be harder and more uneven than many modern sites.</p> <p>Many areas have low light levels.</p> <p>Doorways and escape routes are not all standardised.</p> <p>Trunking, matting and wires may be present on the floor.</p> <p>Visitors may not recognise/ understand emergency procedures.</p>	<p>Identify and communicate behavioural and physical needs of my group with the Durham Cathedral team to help them make informed choices on the visitor route.</p> <p>Ensure my staff, young people and volunteers understand they are to follow the instructions of the Durham Cathedral team in an emergency.</p> <p>Alert a member of the Durham Cathedral team if you notice a fault or defect you believe presents a hazard to your group or others.</p> <p>Support the Durham Cathedral team in maintaining the attention of the entire group (adults and children) when they are giving a safety briefing.</p>



As a heritage site, Durham Cathedral and its surroundings does not meet all modern building regulations.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
Injury from collision with a vehicle	<p>Vehicles operate on the Durham Cathedral site and throughout Durham Peninsula zone (from the Market Place), often in shared pedestrianised areas without clear boundaries.</p> <p>Coaches cannot navigate streets close to the cathedral. A short walk is necessary for most learning groups.</p>	<p>Warn your group that vehicles operate in the vicinity of Durham Cathedral, on Saddler Street, the Bailey and on Prebends bridge and to treat these areas like roads.</p> <p>Plan your route in advance to reduce the number of road crossings and amount of walking on roads as much as possible.</p>



Vehicles operate throughout the Durham peninsula on narrow streets and shared access paths.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
<p>Injury from severe weather and storms including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury from flying objects • Injury from trees/tree limbs falling • Increase to slip/fall likelihood • Verbal communication becoming less effective as a control method • Risk of injury from lightning • Risk of injury from overheating and/or sunburn 	<p>Using public and outdoor paths to get to the cathedral or during activities.</p> <p>Pupils or staff who have not dressed appropriately for the weather conditions, or have not prepared for a change in conditions.</p> <p>Walking on riverbanks paths or under tree canopies.</p> <p>Booking an outdoor activity.</p>	<p>Check the weather forecast before departure.</p> <p>Listen to the safety advice of Durham Cathedral team and discuss alternative plans.</p> <p>Ensure adults and young people are dressed appropriately before departure.</p> <p>Remain in sheltered spaces if wind speed is predicted to be over 40mph. Choose routes and stopping locations carefully in advance with a plan for shelter/escape.</p> <p>Immediately halt activity and return to safety if you feel you will imminently lose effective communication of instructions due to adverse weather.</p> <p>Ensure there is always a communication method with first aid support and emergency services.</p>



It is important to consider changeable weather when leading a learning visit that involves travel and outdoor elements.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
Injury from fire e.g. lit candles	<p>Not being aware of the lit candles in the Cathedral.</p> <p>Inappropriate behaviour including carelessness, elaborate gestures, rushing, running.</p> <p>Lack of adequate supervision.</p> <p>Wearing loose clothing.</p> <p>Visual impairment.</p>	<p>Support the Durham Cathedral team in maintaining the attention of the entire group (adults and children) when they are giving a safety briefing.</p> <p>Agree a plan and techniques for behavioural control with pupils and any other supervising adults before the visit.</p> <p>Communicate needs relating to participants with visual impairment with the Durham Cathedral team before your visit.</p> <p>Communicate examples of positive and respectful behaviour in a place of worship with young people before the visit.</p> <p>Do not leave any child unsupervised in the cathedral.</p> <p>Follow the instructions of Durham Cathedral fire wardens in event of fire.</p>



Fires and burns in the cathedral are rare but proper supervision lessens the risk of children hurting themselves or others.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
<p>Injury from handling religious artefacts</p>	<p>Sculptures and furnishings may be within reach on our site that might be heavy or fragile and could present a risk when moved or used inappropriately.</p> <p>N.B. Handling items used in our guided sessions are risk-assessed separately.</p>	<p>Check you have permission to handle or touch items with a member of the Durham Cathedral team.</p> <p>Don't presume a furnishing will hold your weight if you lean on it.</p> <p>Agree a plan and techniques for behavioural control with pupils and any other supervising adults before the visit.</p> <p>Communicate examples of positive and respectful behaviour in a place of worship with young people before the visit.</p> <p>Do not leave any child unsupervised in the cathedral.</p> <p>Identify and communicate behavioural needs with the Durham Cathedral team and supervising adults with your group. Make and follow plans for removing young people from danger. Communicate these plans with the Durham Cathedral team.</p>



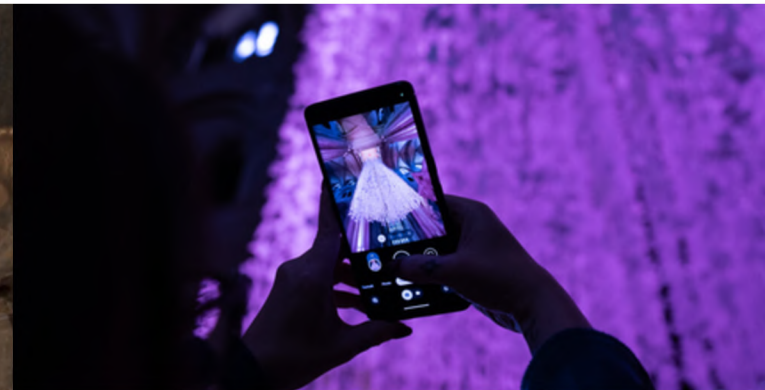
Our guides are trained to manage groups around furnishings that might be damaged or cause damage. If in doubt, please ask.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
<p>Injury as a result of exposure to excessive noise</p>	<p>Durham Cathedral regularly hosts events with audiovisual equipment or organ music/tuning. Unavoidable maintenance work can also involve machinery with a high noise level. High volumes of public visitors may also be noisy.</p> <p>Noise may interfere with normal communication methods.</p> <p>Volume and pitch of noises may cause discomfort. Extended periods of exposure to excessive noise can cause hearing damage.</p>	<p>Consider ways you can limit the noise of your group from affecting others.</p> <p>If there is excessive noise planned in the cathedral on your intended visit date, the Durham Cathedral team will communicate this. You should consider the suitability of your visit date and alternative mitigations.</p> <p>If the volume or pitch of noise causes discomfort, you should move away from the area immediately or take avoiding action. If the session is guided, tell your guide.</p> <p>Take breaks from areas of increased noise where possible. If there are individuals with existing hearing impairments, you should communicate this with the Durham Cathedral team and work with them to create a plan for communication during your visit.</p>



We often think of churches as quiet spaces, but visitors, events and even services can be unexpectedly loud.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
<p>Increased risk of injury to an at-risk person due to the public nature of the space and high likelihood of photography</p>	<p>Durham Cathedral is a public space and popular tourist destination. Photography is commonplace and many people may attempt to intentionally or unintentionally take photos of adults or young people in your group. This may lead to their image or location being disclosed in an uncontrolled way.</p>	<p>If an at-risk person is severely at risk of harm from being in a public space, create an additional risk assessment. You may need to consider the suitability of their participation in off-site visits.</p> <p>Durham Cathedral's photography policy does not permit photography of young people unless they are part of your party. Report abuses of this policy to a member of the Durham Cathedral team immediately.</p> <p>Do not allow members of your party to take photographs of children not in your group.</p>



Durham Cathedral is an amazing space and we expect people to take photos to help remember their visit.

Example hazards to consider	Example factors that increase risk likelihood and/or severity	Example mitigations we expect from visiting groups
<p>Assault or attack from member of the public or their pets</p>	<p>Durham Cathedral is an open site; it is possible for people to walk off site and/or be abducted.</p> <p>Places of worship may be considered targets by extremists.</p> <p>Toilets are shared with the general public. Durham Cathedral staff and volunteers are not permitted to supervise your young people in the toilets.</p> <p>Durham Cathedral is open to the general public and dogs are permitted in many areas parts of our site.</p> <p>Public spaces surrounding Durham Cathedral are commonly used for dog walking.</p>	<p>Do not leave any child unsupervised in the cathedral. Comply with Durham Cathedral’s safeguarding policy and pledge. Review your lost child procedure before a visit.</p> <p>Plan how you will supervise pupils in public toilets. Comply with school policy on supervision in toilets. Bring supervising adults who are comfortable to supervise in toilets if necessary.</p> <p>Communicate good practice for encountering animals with young people in advance. For example, advise them not to crowd animals in public spaces and never to touch a pet without its owner’s permission.</p> <p>Follow the instructions of the Durham Cathedral team in event of emergency. Report any incidents to a member of the Durham Cathedral team.</p> <p>Ensure supervising adults have a method to contact</p>



Extreme events are very unlikely, but you will need to consider the risks involved in visiting a nationally significant public space.

For guided sessions

If you book a guided visit, we are happy to send our risk assessments for the specific sessions you have booked if you request them. Review these before you visit. If you need to add further mitigations specific to the circumstances of your group, please let us know so we can help you fulfil these mitigations and/or discuss suitable alternatives. You can contact learning@durhamcathedral.co.uk to request risk assessments for sessions, arrange a call, or with any concerns or further questions.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of materials we use in our workshops. It does not include stationery materials such as pencils, felt tip pens, paper, booklets, clipboards, laminated sheets and stickers which are in common use in schools and our Explore sessions.

Topic	Discover session	Challenge session
Meet St Cuthbert	Costumes including prop walking sticks, long robes and prop axes	Skin safe mineral oil (baby oil), wet wipes
Durham Cathedral as a place of worship	Handling objects including: Bibles, robes, communion wafer, cross, incense, chalice, plate	Air drying clay, clay tools, wet wipes
St Cuthbert's life and legacy	Outdoor option only: Blindfolds, balancing, long tubes, balls, wooden planks, onions	Pipe cleaners, 6mm craft beads
Why do people come to Durham Cathedral?	Costumes, prop sword, coins, biscuit tin	Non-toxic paint sticks, shoes, wet wipes
How to build a cathedral	Foam blocks, wooden blocks, wooden frames, cushions, paper cups	Bar soap, wooden soap carving tool
Music at Durham Cathedral	Robes	Hand bells
Why is Durham Cathedral Significant?	Bibles	Magnets, magnetic whiteboard, voice recording equipment, battery powered switchboard, foam blocks, wooden frames
Monk Life: Normans to the Reformation	Costumes: Robes, prop medieval knives, scissors and leatherware	Feather quill, permanent ink, wet wipes
Christianity at Durham Cathedral	Bibles	
Norman England and Durham Cathedral	Costumes: Robes, blunt medieval knife replicas, scissors and leatherware	



The best way to identify and understand the hazards presented by visiting our site is to organise a planning visit with our team.

You can arrange a discussion with us in person, or by phone by writing to us with your availability via learning@durhamcathedral.co.uk