

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS AND THE CLASSROOM: RISK ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN FOR TEACHERS

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Introduction

Carrying out archaeological fieldwork is a stimulating way to engage children with the past. However there are certain health and safety issues which need to be considered thoroughly before such work can be undertaken. This document will help you with this. It is **not**, however, intended to replace your LEAs risk assessment procedures, merely to help inform your decisions.

Every effort has been made to make this list comprehensive. However, if you identify anything which is missing from the *Risk Assessment Action Plan* please contact us, and we will update the risk assessment accordingly.

Hazard Identified	Action required	By whom and when
Poor supervision	<p>Teachers, parents and supervisory staff should be made aware of the need to maintain adequate levels of supervision over the children/young people involved in the project. This applies both in respect of children working in a public places and to activities carried out as part of the project.</p> <p>For excavation work we recommend a maximum adult to pupil ratio of 1:5. Further members of staff may be needed to deal with children who need extra care.</p>	<p>Project leader as necessary before and during the project.</p>

If the behaviour of individuals is causing distress, or making it likely that an accident will happen, or putting the welfare of others at risk, the project leader has the right to curtail the activity. This needs to be stated clearly.

Underground services

Service maps should be checked, if available. If no map is available and the probability of services being present is high (e.g. near buildings) a cable detector should be used.

By project leader
Before excavation commences

Lack of access to emergency services

Project leader to have access to mobile phone. At least one member of the supervisory staff should have an up to date First Aid qualification. A First Aid Kit, appropriate to the size of the group, should be provided for use on site in an emergency.

Project leader

Tetanus

All participants to be warned of the dangers of tetanus and to be advised of the need for up-to-date injections. Children who have had the normal programmes of vaccination should already be protected. If in doubt a doctor should be consulted.

By all participating organisations
Before the excavation

Condition of tools

To be checked each morning to see that handles are not working loose etc. Any tools noted to be in a dangerous condition to be removed from site.

Supervisory staff before each session

Misuse of tools

Before each activity the supervisor should demonstrate the safe use of the tools and reminders to be given as appropriate.

On site tool talk to be given by project leader

Supervisory staff should ensure that smaller children have the physical strength to use tools safely. Use of heavy tools should be rotated so that individuals do not strain themselves.

Supervisory staff should ensure that children/young people work at a safe distances from one another.

No tools should be lifted above the shoulder. Tools should be carried with their heads down at a person's side.

Tools should be put down in a safe manner to avoid creating a trip hazard.

Weather/need for appropriate clothing

Attention should be drawn to the need for proper clothing. Waterproofs and warm clothing in bad weather. Sun hats, keeping covered, and sun blocks in warmer weather. Participants should be discouraged from digging in shorts, crop tops etc. as such garments expose vulnerable areas to sun burn. Participants should wear boots or strong shoes if available, trainers or wellies if not. Working in sandals or bare feet is not acceptable.

If weather conditions become too extreme for the activity to be carried out safely, participants will be taken indoors where an appropriate alternative activity will be provided.

Food poisoning

To minimize the risk of infection by bacteria or viral agents in the soil, children should only be allowed to eat

Other staff to reinforce and monitor

By all participating organisations
Before the excavation

Project leader

in designated areas away from the site. Remind them not to put things in their mouth including their fingers. Hands should be washed before consuming food.

Dehydration

Drinks are not being provided as part of the programme. Participants should be notified of the need to bring a bottle of water or juice (not pop).

By participating organisations
Before excavations

**Disabilities/allergies
other special needs**

All such conditions should be notified to the project leader (e.g. allergies, hay fever etc.). Make sure that young people who need an inhaler have it available.

All participating organisations
and individuals before the
activity

**Wandering off/
getting lost**

Children should work in pairs/small groups under the supervision of an adult. No child should be left on their own.

On site by all adults

Estranged parents

Parents need to be made aware that images from excavations may be used on the internet or in other forms of publicity. This can attract the attention of estranged husbands/wives. If photographs are to be taken parents/guardians should therefore be asked specifically for permission to take pictures of their children at work and consent obtained in writing from the school. In normal circumstances all slides and images stored on computer will be destroyed after two years to comply with the Data Protection Act. However, images incorporated into websites, display boards etc. may remain in circulation for a longer period.

Participating schools before the
activity.

Abuse/abduction

No children or young people should be left on their own at any time.

Participating schools before
activity

Discourage access to the activity by members of the public. If anyone does try to involve themselves they should politely be asked to leave.

Teachers and supervisory staff during activity

Be proactive in heading off unsuitable interest from members of the public.

Staff routinely working with children should have a valid Criminal Records Bureau Certificate. The project leader should monitor the behaviour of other adults working on site. To avoid false accusations being made about their conduct all adults should avoid one to one situations with children/young people especially in areas remote from the main activity.

Tripping

When not in use tools should be put down at a distance from the site to avoid creating a tripping hazard.

On site Tool talk by project leader

Spades should be placed face down to avoid the handle swinging up if the blade is trodden upon.

Other staff to reinforce and monitor

Participants should be asked to walk around the site and not to run.

Where the bottom of the excavation is uneven participants must be warned of the potential trip hazard.

Lifting

Instructions on lifting buckets should be given as part of the initial tool talk. Constant monitoring will be necessary to ensure that children do not risk a strain injury by over filling buckets.

Tool talk by leader at start of activity.

Deep holes	All trenches will be kept shallow.	On site
Glass, sharp objects	Children should be discouraged from handling sharp objects directly. Fragments of broken glass can be lifted into a finds tray on the blade of a trowel. Participants will be encouraged either to use a kneeler or to crouch to avoid puncture wounds in the knees.	By supervisor before excavation.
General hygiene	Participants should be reminded to wash hands before eating food etc	By supervisor before participants leave site.
Vehicles	Children to be kept away from areas in which there is likely to be moving traffic.	By all staff on site