Exploring the Discovery Centre
Guidance for writing your own risk assessment

The following document is relevant to all visiting education groups.

As part of your visit, your group will be able to freely explore the grounds and exhibitions of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre in a self-guided manner. Trip organisers should therefore complete their own risk assessments of the various areas.

This guidance document has been provided to assist in the identification of some of the risks associated with visiting the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre. This list is not exhaustive. The hazards, controls and residual risk levels will depend on the nature of the visit and on the age as well as the physical and psychological capabilities of the individuals attending.

Please remember teachers can visit the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre free of charge for a planning visit to conduct their own risk assessment.

To successfully evaluate the risks involved in a school trip, the guidance given by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) should be followed. Information can be found on the following webpage: http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.htm.

Areas and suggested things to consider

1. Phone free zone
   - Mobile phones cannot be used to send or receive calls/messages/internet at Jodrell Bank for any reason. Mobile phones must be switched to flight mode, or switched off whilst on site. This is a condition of visiting Jodrell Bank. Mobile phone signals interfere with the workings of the radio telescopes on site; interrupting our scientific research.
   - If for any reason you need to use a telephone, please speak to a member of staff and we will direct you to one of our landlines, which you will be welcome to use.
   - Please give anyone who may need to contact you the telephone number for the Discovery Centre (01477 571 766). Our staff will relay any messages to your group.
   - Phones can be used to take pictures, etc., provided they are set to flight mode.

2. Entire Discovery Centre
   - The Discovery Centre is open to the public from 10am to 5pm.
   - Each building contains toilet facilities, which are also open to public visitors. Children should be accompanied by a member of school staff.
   - The flooring in our buildings is concrete with a resin or painted finish, these areas may become slippery during inclement weather. A carpet or mat is in place by each door so individuals can wipe their feet thoroughly before entering.
   - All electrical items used for exhibitions have been PAT tested, checked for electrical safety and have suitable RCDs fitted.
   - Fire extinguishers are located throughout the buildings. These are regularly inspected.
   - Fire alarms are checked weekly and this is documented.
   - First aiders are on site during opening hours.
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- All first aid incidents, accidents or near misses must be reported to a member of Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre staff.

3. Main driveway (see guidance photos: figure 1)
   - Narrow in places and overhung by trees.
   - May be slippery during inclement weather.

4. Car Park (see guidance photos: figure 2)
   - Large car park with a lot of vehicle movement during busy periods.

5. Site traffic (see guidance photos: figure 3)
   - A road to the observatory buildings passes through the Discovery Centre site, between the Planet Pavilion and Star Pavilion buildings.
   - Volume of traffic on this road is very low during opening hours: access is highly restricted, controlled by a coded gate.
   - Speed restrictions, a pedestrian crossing and rumble strips are also in place, but care should be taken when crossing.

6. Planet Pavilion
   Includes exhibition area (see guidance photos: figure 4), reception, gift shop and cafeteria
   - Planet Pavilion exhibition includes a clockwork model of the Solar System, set into the ceiling. The model is checked and maintained in accordance with designer’s specifications. The planet models are made of lightweight, hollow material.
   - The shop is a small area which may get overcrowded. Some stock is shelved at heights small children will not be able to reach. Area is staffed.
   - The cafeteria contains many chairs and tables. Exhibit images around the room stick out from wall at an approximate height of 1m. Caution should be taken to ensure children don’t play in the cafeteria. School groups do not generally enter the cafeteria.
   - This building contains a defibrillator, located at reception.
   - The reception/gift shop area is always staffed during opening hours.
   - The Planet Pavilion exhibition is usually staffed.

7. Space Pavilion
   Includes exhibition area (see guidance photos: figure 5), as well as two teaching spaces: the Classroom and Events Space
   - ‘Gravity well’ exhibit requires individuals to crouch down to collect balls.
   - ‘Big Bang cone’ exhibit requires individuals to crouch down to enter and exit. Caution should be taken when doing this to ensure individuals don’t bang their heads.
   - The ‘Film Pod’ exhibit holds a maximum of 15 people, but can be warm and dark during the shows and has the potential to make individuals feel claustrophobic (see guidance photos: figure 6).
   - Other exhibits contain moving parts, which could be hazardous if misused. Exhibits and exhibit tables should not be climbed on.
   - Space Pavilion exhibition is always staffed during opening hours.
8. Star Pavilion

Includes the Wolfson auditorium teaching area and an indoor lunch space for two groups (please check your itinerary to see which teaching areas and lunch space you have been assigned to)

- Teaching area and lunch spaces are separated by floor to ceiling curtains, though these do not trail across the ground.
- Lights automatically switch off after a period of no movement and must be switched on at panel near entrance.
- Doors leading into the auditorium are safety glass. These are generally opened inwards, towards the auditorium.
- All glass doors and windows are fitted with safety stickers to make them more visible.

9. Comet lodge

An indoor lunch space large enough for one group (please check your itinerary to see which lunch space you have been assigned to) *(see guidance photos: figures 7 and 8)*

- The Comet lodge is heated in winter by a wood burner, or an electric heater. Both are contained behind a locked metal guard.
- The Comet lodge is unstaffed.
- There is a slight lip to the door frame, please take care when entering/exiting.

10. Outside areas

- There are three outdoor interactive exhibits, constructed of metal.
- One outdoor exhibit makes use of a football *(see guidance photos: figure 9)*.
- Two ‘whispering dishes’ are located on a grassy area surrounded by paving. These areas can become slippery during inclement weather *(see guidance photos: figure 10)*.
- Area along the Telescope Path (semi-circular path around base of telescope), contains three tiered stone steps which are approximately 1m above ground level.

11. Gardens *(see guidance photos: figure 11)*

- The gardens encompass a 35 acre area, housing around 2000 species of trees and over 150 species of fungi. Children must not touch or eat any of these species as some may be poisonous.
- The gardens contain uneven surfaces and slip hazards throughout as you would expect with woodland areas. Signage and fencing is in place noting the worst affected areas, however the area will change over time.
- There are open ponds. These have life lines in the event of emergency.
- Some individuals may suffer from allergic reactions whilst in the woodland areas.
- Due to the collection of trees, we have a large amount of wildlife within these areas, including bees, wasps, birds, rabbits and badgers.
- There is an Apiary in the gardens with live honeybees which may be active throughout the year but particularly during spring to autumn. Persons with known allergies are advised not to enter the area, which is signposted.
- There is a large concrete sphere nestled in the arboretum as an artistic representation of a meteorite. It is approximately 3 metres in diameter and is not suitable for climbing.
- The gardens are designated as a no smoking area.
The Children’s play area *(see guidance photos: figure 12)* is based in the centre of the gardens. Children must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. The equipment will not suit all age groups; this depends on individuals physical and mental abilities.

- A portion of our gardens is currently a construction site, as we build the First Light Pavilion. This area is clearly partitioned with HERAS fencing.

**Our Emergency Procedures**

We have fire-marshall trained staff in each of our buildings. In the event of a fire alarm, your group will be ushered or directed to the nearest muster point. These are identified by signage on site.

The Centre has an operational plan in the event of a terrorist attack or similar incident. We have an on-site Control Room which would act as communications hub for all members of staff and the emergency services. The Centre operates the ‘Run, Hide, Tell’ procedure as outlined by the Police and Government. We do not wish to publish any further details of our emergency procedures, as this could be a potential security risk.

**Guidance photos**

Fig 1:  
Fig 2:  
Fig 3:  
Fig 4: