

Risk assessment – Climbing and Abseiling (single pitch), indoors and outdoors

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| Bolton School | Assessment carried out by: E.Lindle /S.Bradley |
| Date of next review: 04/09/2026 | Date assessment was carried out: 04/09/2025 |

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| Overview of activity | Climbing and abseiling (single pitch), indoors and outdoors, takes place at Bolton School with various groups, clubs and weekend visits. | | | | |
| | Supporting documentation to be used in line with the current SOP | | | | |
| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed? | What are you already doing to control the risk? | What further action do you need to take to control the risks? | Who needs to carry out the action? | When is the action needed by? |
| Instructor falling when rigging | Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor to ensure they use self-protection when descending from the top of a crag to any lower ledges, or when standing at the top of a crag to rig. • Instructor must stay attached by a recognized safety method, when rigging. | n/a | Staff | Before start of the session |
| Students falling when taking part in abseiling | Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable method of lowering or protecting the participant must be used to protect them when getting near to the ledge or edge. • Students must be attached to a safety system at all times until they are back on the ground. | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Unsafe positions when standing to belay | Staff Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to make sure that students are standing in a safe position when belaying. They must consider the method of belaying being used and where a student could end up if they step back. • Helmets must be worn outside when climbing and abseiling | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Unsafe belaying | Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to make sure that a sensible belay method is being used, taking into account the age of the students, venue and experience. | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Struck by falling objects | Staff Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of venues and any changes to them. • Ensure correct fitting of helmets and that they are worn when exposed to the hazard. • Designating a safe zone where helmets can be removed. | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Falling when not climbing or abseiling | Staff participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor establishes a base for the group away from hazards • Instructor briefs students at start of session on safety matters and ensures supervision throughout the session | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Holds spinning/breaking | Staff Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils briefed on Hazard • Holds on Walls should be pinned | | | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing wall staff informed if holds spin • Outdoor climbs should be visually inspected from the ground to check for any obvious instability | | | |
| Getting something stuck in belay or abseil device | Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select an appropriate belay method and ensure ongoing observation and support. • Rig releasable abseil lines. • Maintaining a line of sight whether it is with the belayer of another member of staff to ensure hands etc. are clear of any devices. | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Uncontrolled falls | Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils briefed on Hazards when bouldering and Leading • Helmets worn outdoors • First clips to be protected | | | |
| Stuck climber | Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful route choice for group ability. • Ensure rest of group are safe before sorted the problem out. | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Defective Equipment | Staff Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular inspection and maintenance • All equipment purchased where applicable must carry UIAA approval and meet any relevant PPE standards. | n/a | Staff | Before start of the session |
| Other wall users | Staff Participants General public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good group management by instructors • Awareness of where all the participants are at all times | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Muscles injuries due to over exertion | Staff Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the areas most likely to hurt, i.e. fingers and joints, get participants to warm up and stretch. Encourage a sensible approach so as not to do too much. • Encourage warming up and staying warm. | n/a | Staff | During the session |
| Weather | Staff/Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to ensure group are properly dressed and equipped • Forecast from reputable sources checked • Group shelter/Kisu carried | n/a | Staff/Pupils | Before session and during |
| Medical emergency | Staff/Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils medical records updated on isams and checked by staff and uploaded to evolve • Medical spares collected from BD proctor • Pupils checked prior to departure for medicines • Staff carry QR code for pupils to Scan with emergency details | N/A | Staff Pupils | |
| Lost/missing pupils | Pupils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils briefed to stay in pairs • Instructor to carry out regular head counts and ensure all group members are together before moving to another "area" | N/A | Staff Pupils | Before and during session |
| Route selection Lead climbing route selections | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If first time leading appropriate climb selected • Appropriate bolt spacing • Pupils taught to belay and fall while learning to lead | N/A | Staff Pupils | During |

