

RISK ASSESSMENT

Guidelines for Visiting Schools and Groups

Visits to zoos are becoming increasingly popular particularly for young children. In order for everyone to enjoy contact with the zoo animals and their environment we have put together a series of guidelines highlighting how schools and zoos can work together to ensure that you have an enjoyable and educational visit. Please note that these are only guidelines. We would encourage you to conduct a risk assessment for your school. A pre-visit ticket is available to groups who have made a booking and are sent on request by contacting the education department on (01253) 830805.

Risk 1: Does handling live animals and/or artefacts carry a risk of infection?

School Responsibilities... Explain health issues (if you are unsure of these contact the education dept.) prior to visit and wash hands thoroughly after handling animals and/or artefacts. All animals are regularly inspected and tested by our vet. Discourage children from putting hands in mouths or near their eyes.

Zoo Responsibilities... Supply chemical handwash. Staff will explain risk and suitable behaviour beforehand.

Risk 2: Are young children and those with low immunity at greater risk of infection?

School Responsibilities... Restricted access to handling animals to children under 4. Those with low immunity should refrain from handling animals.

Zoo Responsibilities... Zoo staff will explain risk of infection. Clearly displayed signs in all handling areas.

Risk 3: Are those with allergies at greater risk of infection?

School Responsibilities ... Explain health issues prior to visit, (if you are unsure of these contact the education dept.) those with allergies should refrain from handling animals. Make zoo staff aware of those with allergies prior to handling. All animals are regularly inspected and tested by our vet.

Zoo Responsibilities... Zoo staff will explain risk of allergic reaction to fur, feathers, food, handwash etc. Clearly displayed signs in all handling areas.

Risk 4: Does animal handling stress the animals and if so is it safe?

School Responsibilities... Children should refrain from making loud noises and moving around during handling sessions. Wash hands both before and after handling so they do not smell of food.

Zoo Responsibilities... Zoo staff will explain risk and appropriate behaviour prior to handling. Appropriate animals will be selected and these are on a rotation. Zoo staff will remove animals if they show signs of agitation.

Risk 5: Panics caused by phobias

School Responsibilities... Those with phobias should make themselves known to zoo staff prior to handling session.

Zoo Responsibilities... We recommend calmly leaving handling session if you feel animal will cause phobic reaction. Clear signs around zoo and zoo map indicate animals in all houses and each enclosure.

Risk 6: Does the feeding and petting of animals in Children's Zoo carry a risk of infection?

School Responsibilities... Explain health issues prior to visit (if you are unsure of these contact the education dept.). Wash hands after feeding and petting. Putting hands in mouths, sampling of food and drinking from tap are discouraged. All animals are regularly inspected and tested by our vet.

Zoo Responsibilities... Provide adequate washing facilities. Clearly displayed signs in all feeding and petting areas.

Risk 7: Close contact with animals

School Responsibilities... Explain suitable behaviour around wild animals prior to visit. Do not touch, run towards, corner or make loud noises near wild animals. E.g. Lemurs and peacocks. Do NOT feed the animals apart from specified animals in the Children's Zoo. Wash hands before and after eating.

Zoo Responsibilities... Warning signs on entrance to free ranging areas. Hand washing facilities available where appropriate. All close contact animals are harmless if respected and treated with care.

Risk 8: Will droppings around the zoo carry a risk of infection?

School Responsibilities... Explain health issues prior to visit. Wash hands before and after eating. Putting hands near mouths is discouraged. Zoo Responsibilities... Washing facilities are provided at all toilets.

Risk 9: Lost children protocol

School Responsibilities... Make sure an adequate number of responsible adults are present to supervise children. Arrange meeting points throughout the day. Advise children to go to zoo offices if they become separated from their group. We advise that each child has a sticker displaying their teacher's name and a contact number for the school.

Zoo Responsibilities... Zoo office staff are trained to deal with lost children. Tannoy announcements will be made throughout the zoo to find supervisor. All staff are approachable for help.

Risk 10: Lost property

School Responsibilities... Children should label all property they bring to the zoo. Report to zoo office reception to retrieve any lost property.

Zoo Responsibilities... All lost property collected at zoo office daily.

Risk 11: Access to amenities by disabled/special needs visitors

School Responsibilities... Make education staff aware of any special needs requirements when booking in visit.

Zoo Responsibilities... Wheelchairs available for loan, disabled toilet, ramp available for classroom access. All classroom sessions and tours are adaptable to the special needs of each group. Fauna regularly maintained to prevent obstruction of view.

Risk 12: Playground

School Responsibilities... Full supervision required for children using the playground.

Zoo Responsibilities... Regular maintenance checks.

Risk 13: Will many animals bite if given an opportunity or if provoked?

School Responsibilities... Children should be advised to read all enclosure warning signs before approaching exhibit. Do not feed animals. Hands, feet and bags etc. should be kept away from enclosures as they may be mistaken for food (especially with otters, donkeys and parrots). Ensure a qualified first aider is part of your staff.

Zoo Responsibilities... Clear signs explain risks around enclosures. First aid box available at zoo office.

Risk 14: Elephant contact sessions

School Responsibilities... The public must obey keepers and wash hands after the contact session.

Zoo Responsibilities... Zoo staff will explain the session and suitable behaviour around wild animals prior to visit. Keepers will always be stood with the elephants. Adequate washing facilities provided.

Risk 15: Escaped animals

School Responsibilities... Inform a member of zoo staff, move to an open area in the zoo

Zoo Responsibilities... Recapture the animal. Alert the public when the area is safe. Maintain high levels of health and safety for public and animals.

Risk 16: Fire

School Responsibilities... Inform a member of staff, move to an open area.

Zoo Responsibilities... Escort the public from the building and ensure fire is extinguished.

Risk 17: Medical assistance

School Responsibilities... Anyone on regular medication should carry it with them or get a supervisor to store all medication and know how to administer it. Inform a member of staff if a member of your group is unwell is in need of medical assistance.

Zoo Responsibilities... First aid is available in the zoo office. First aid box available in zoo office. Zoo staff can request an ambulance on their radios. All areas of zoo have ambulance access.

Risk 18: Café

School Responsibilities... Those with food allergies may prefer to bring their own food (only food purchased in the café is to be eaten on the café premises).

Zoo Responsibilities... The Blackpool Zoo cafeteria adheres to health and safety regulations. An area for eating packed lunches is provided. Ask for details upon arrival.

Risk 19: Zoo shops

School Responsibilities... Teachers must supervise the children when they use the shops.

Zoo Responsibilities... Pre-ordered school packs are available to avoid the need for children to visit the shops. Two additional shops are open during the season to accommodate school children.

Risk 20: Train

School Responsibilities ... Adequate supervision required. Children should remain seated whilst the train is in motion.

Zoo Responsibilities... Regular maintenance checks are carried out on the train.

Risk 21: Face painting

School Responsibilities... Children with skin conditions should refrain from having their faces painted.

Zoo Responsibilities... All face paints used are hypoallergenic, approved by health and safety insurance and can be removed with soap and water.

Risk 22: Craft activities (Pre-booked sessions)

School Responsibilities... Adequate supervision required. Education staff to be made aware of any special needs.

Zoo Responsibilities... Education staff to fully explain and supervise the activity. All materials used are child friendly.

Other areas to be aware of:

1. Water areas/Lakes. Although they are fenced off supervision around these areas is advised.
2. Toilets. These are cleaned regularly and are available near the main entrance, the playground and café. Please note these areas also contain handwashing facilities.
3. Child protection "Stranger Danger". Unfortunately all children's leisure parks sometimes attract unwanted visitors so please make sure that all children are well supervised at all times. Please report anyone acting in a suspicious manner to a member of the zoo staff.
4. Animal foodstuffs. As some of our animals are carnivores the food we give them may consist of mice, fish or chicks. This may upset some of our younger visitors during deliveries or feeding times.
5. Mice, rats and weasels. Due to the concentration of animals and foodstuffs at Blackpool Zoo we can attract other animals. We are aware of this problem and have an ongoing policy to deal with unwanted rodents.
6. Birds. Please do not let children touch or chase any of our free roaming birds as they may peck in defence.