



Visiting Blackpool Zoo

Risk Assessment and Accessibility Guidance for Schools and Groups 2024/ 2025

Welcome to Blackpool Zoo!

We're delighted you have chosen Blackpool Zoo for your school or group visit. With 32 acres of land and over 1,500 rare and exotic animals, we aim to offer an educational and enjoyable experience for all.

Due to the comprehensive nature of the zoo's operations, individual risk assessments are not provided. This document offers essential guidance, and we highly recommend that group leaders conduct a preliminary visit to complete their risk assessments. To assist with this, we offer two free pre-visit tickets per booking once your reservation is confirmed. Please contact us on 01253 830805 for further details.

Supervision Guidelines

- **Supervision of Children:** All children under 16 must be closely supervised at all times. Every child under 16 must be always accompanied by a member of staff. Please adhere to your local council's ratio guidelines for adult-to-child supervision. For further details, refer to guidance from the Department for Education.

Visitor Code of Conduct

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience, please follow these guidelines:

- **Animal Welfare:** Do not feed, taunt, or disturb the animals
- **Child Safety:** Children aged 15 and under must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Prevent children from climbing or playing on zoo structures
- **Cleanliness:** Use the provided litter and recycling bins
- **Seagulls:** Do not feed the seagulls to prevent swooping behaviour and the birds stealing food

Risk Assessment Guidelines

This section outlines risk assessment guidance for various aspects of your visit:

1. Handling Live Animals, Artefacts, and Substrates

Your Responsibilities:

- Brief your group on zoo rules and hazards before the visit
- Wash hands before and after handling animals or artefacts
- No eating or drinking during handling sessions

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Provide hand-washing facilities and explain safe handling rules
- Remove animals showing signs of agitation

Additional Considerations:

- **Young Children:** Children under 3 should not handle animals
 - **Low Immunity and Allergies:** Inform staff of any visitors with these conditions
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2. Close Animal Contact Areas

Visitors may encounter animals in walk-through exhibits like Lemur Wood or the Children's Farm.

Your Responsibilities:

- Wash hands before and after visiting these areas
- No food or drink inside walk-through exhibits
- Warning signs should be followed
- Do not cross barriers
- Quiet and calm should be maintained near animals

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Signage and hand-washing stations are available in all areas
 - Animals are regularly screened by a vet
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3. Free-Roaming Animals

Free-roaming animals can be found in certain parts of the zoo.

Your Responsibilities:

- Explain the zoo code of conduct and potential hazards before the visit
- Do not attempt to touch or chase free-roaming animals

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Hand washing facilities available where appropriate
 - Staff will monitor animal behaviour and ensure safety
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4. Animal Enclosures

Your Responsibilities:

- Stay on designated paths and adhere to safety barriers

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Safety signs and barriers are in place around dangerous enclosures

Further Information:

- **Electric Fences and Deep Water:** Warning signs and barriers are in place.
 - **Dangerous Animals:** Marked signs and barriers are present.
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5. Lost Children

Your Responsibilities:

- Designate meeting points and inform children to approach zoo staff if lost

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Staff are trained in procedures for reuniting lost children with their groups
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6. Lost Property

Your Responsibilities:

- Label all belongings. Report lost items to the Visitor Services Hub

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Lost property will be logged and stored at the Visitor Services Hub for collection

7. Play Areas and Coin-Operated Rides

Your Responsibilities:

- Full supervision is required. Follow signage for age-appropriate use

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Regular maintenance checks are conducted to ensure safety
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8. Escaped Animal Protocol

Your Responsibilities:

- Move to the nearest building and inform staff

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Staff will follow animal escape procedures and ensure visitor safety
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9. Fire Procedures

Your Responsibilities:

- Report any fire immediately and move to a safe, open area

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Staff are trained in fire safety and will direct visitors
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10. Medical Assistance

Your Responsibilities:

- Schools and groups are responsible for minor first aid

Zoo Responsibilities:

- First aiders are available and can call emergency services if required

11. Eating Arrangements

Your Responsibilities:

- Supervise children during mealtimes and avoid feeding seagulls
- Items left unattended in the school eating area are left at your own risk

Zoo Responsibilities:

- The zoo café adheres to health and safety guidelines and provides allergen information on request
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12. Miniature Railway

Your Responsibilities:

- Ensure children remain seated and follow the posted safety rules

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Regular safety inspections are conducted on the train
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13. Face Painting

Your Responsibilities:

- Children with skin conditions should refrain from face painting

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Hypoallergenic face paints are used, and all necessary safety measures are in place
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14. Zoo Vehicles

Your Responsibilities:

- Supervise children and prevent any contact with zoo vehicles.

Zoo Responsibilities:

- Only fully trained staff operate vehicles, adhering to speed limits on-site.
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Accessibility at Blackpool Zoo

At Blackpool Zoo, we are committed to ensuring that every visitor enjoys their experience. Below is essential information and resources to help schools and groups with accessibility needs.

Contact Us

For more accessibility information, please email info@blackpoolzoo.org.uk or call us at 01253 830830.

Planning Your Visit

Operating Hours

Blackpool Zoo's opening hours vary seasonally and during special events. Please visit <https://www.blackpoolzoo.org.uk/en> for the latest updates on opening times, early closures, and building closures.

Tickets for Visitors with Disabilities

We offer one free Carer ticket per paying visitor with disabilities. Proof of disability is required, and acceptable documentation includes:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Personal Independent Payment (PIP)
- Blue Badge (take a photo of both sides if using for proof at Admissions)
- Disability Bus Pass
- Access Card
- National Disabled Identification Card (DID)

Documentation should be dated within the last 24 months.

Transportation

Parking

Blackpool Zoo provides **14 accessible parking spaces** and **30 reserved spaces**. These often fill up quickly on summer weekends and busy days, so early arrival is recommended.

Public Transport

There is a bus stop near the zoo's main entrance for convenient access via public transport.

Taxis and Group Transport

We recommend pickups and drop-offs at the zoo's second entrance. However, groups with accessibility needs may be dropped off closer to the main entrance upon request.

Toilets and Changing Facilities

Accessible Toilets

Accessible toilets are available in every toilet block. Locations are marked on signs and the zoo map.

Changing Places Facility

We offer a **Changing Places** facility for visitors requiring additional space. It includes:

- Height-adjustable adult-sized changing bench
- Ceiling track hoist
- Peninsular toilet
- Privacy screen

The facility is accessed with a radar key. If you do not have one, you can borrow a key from the main café next to the Changing Places unit.

Baby Changing Facilities

Changing tables are available at every toilet block, and their locations are marked on signs and the zoo map.

Visitors with Children

- **Pushchair Hire:** Available for £5.00 from Visitor Services with a £20 refundable deposit
 - **Children's Meals:** Available at the Lakeside Café and Playbarn. A microwave oven is provided in the Lakeside Café for warming food, and hot water can also be supplied
 - **Breastfeeding:** Breastfeeding is welcome throughout the zoo. If you prefer a private area, please speak to a staff member
 - **Allergy Awareness:** Large signs around play areas raise awareness of food allergies, with steps to minimise risks
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Accessibility Resources

Accessibility Map

The [Accessibility Map](#) offers a high-contrast version of the zoo map, showing locations with high and low sensory experiences, as well as accessibility resources and amenities.

Social Story

Our [Social Story](#) helps visitors understand what to expect during their visit, including sights, sounds, and sensory experiences.

Visitors Using Wheelchairs or Mobility Devices

- The zoo is fully accessible, though surfaces may vary (tarmac, concrete, dirt paths, etc.).
- All public buildings have at least one wheelchair-accessible entrance.

Wheelchair Hire

Wheelchairs are available free of charge, with a £20 refundable deposit. Pre-booking is recommended.

- **To book:** Email info@blackpoolzoo.org.uk or call 01253 830830.
- **Maximum weight:** 18 stone (115 kg)
- **Seat width:** Approx. 45cm

Mobility Scooters

Mobility scooters are available to rent for £25.00 per day.

- **To book:** Email info@blackpoolzoo.org.uk or call 01253 830830.
- **Note:** Power drive mobility devices should be set to the lowest speed for the safety of all visitors.

Visitors Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Hearing Loops

Available at:

- Visitor Services
- Admissions
- Retail outlets
- Catering outlets
- Education Academy
- Interaction Tree House
- Playbarn (admissions and catering)

Hearing loops are also available for hire from Visitor Services with a deposit.

Makaton Signage

Makaton-style symbols with short sensory sensitivity sentences are installed across the zoo for animals and facilities.

Sign Language Safari

We offer a **Sign Language Safari** for primary school children, introducing them to British Sign Language.

Visitors Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

Braille and Raised Text Signage

All public signage includes raised text and Braille, available on:

- Animal enclosures
- Facility signs (toilets, first aid, ramps, etc.)

Brass Rubbing Braille Trail

Interactive plaques feature animal outlines, names, and Braille, allowing for a tactile experience across the zoo.

Sighted Guides

Zoo team members trained by **Guide Dogs UK** offer sighted guide tours on specific dates. Contact us for more information.

Assistance Dogs

Due to animal health restrictions, assistance dogs are not allowed in the zoo. However, assistance dogs can be looked after by a staff member, with prior arrangement.

Visitors Who Are Neurodivergent or Sensory-Sensitive

- **Quiet Days:** Mondays and Fridays tend to be quieter.
- **Sensory Elements:** Loud noises, flashing lights, or overwhelming stimuli are uncommon. However, you may experience strong smells, microphones for talks, and tannoy announcements.

Sensory-Friendly Resources

- Accessibility map
- Visual talks program
- Social Story
- Sensory-friendly events
- Podcasts

Building Sensory Information

Makaton sensory awareness signage is installed on most buildings and facilities to highlight high or low-sensory stimulation areas.

Education and Special Events

All zoo programs and events are designed to be accessible and engaging for everyone. We also offer specific programs tailored for people with disabilities. Contact zoo.school@blackpoolzoo.org.uk for more information.

First Aid and Assistance

If you need assistance or first aid during your visit, stop by the **Visitor Services Centre** or call 01253 830830. Any staff member wearing a uniform with the Blackpool Zoo logo can also assist you.

Gift Shops

Zoo staff are happy to assist with reaching items, reading labels, or describing products in our gift shops.

For further information or any specific inquiries, please don't hesitate to contact us at 01253 830805.

We look forward to welcoming you and ensuring a safe, educational, and memorable visit to Blackpool Zoo!