



# Visiting Blackpool Zoo

## Risk Assessment Guidance for Schools and Groups

Thank you for choosing to visit Blackpool Zoo for your school / group visit. We hope that you have an enjoyable and educational visit.

Blackpool Zoo has been open to the public since 1972 and welcomes around 500,000 visitors a year. The zoo is a 32-acre site which is home to over 1,500 rare and exotic animals.

Due to the amount of individual risk assessments that cover the zoo's operation, it is not possible to send them out on an individual basis. This document only contains risk assessment guidance and we would strongly recommend that all organisers make a preliminary visit to Blackpool Zoo to carry out their own risk assessment before bringing a group. Two free pre-visit tickets per booking are available on request once a booking has been completed. Please call us on 01253 830805.

It is essential that children are supervised throughout their visit. We ask that you adhere to ratio guidelines defined by your local council. The following ratios are recommended by the DfES Health and Safety on Educational Visits:

- 1 adult for every five pupils (primary)
- 1 adult for every ten pupils (secondary)

### COVID-19 – Information for Schools and Groups Visiting Blackpool Zoo

Schools should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to their educational visits to Blackpool Zoo to ensure it can be undertaken safely, this must include COVID-19.

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated its guidance for educational visits. Any educational day visits must be conducted in line with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) secure guidelines and regulations in place at that time. When planning a visit, you should take the current government guidance into account as part of your process of risk assessment, and then check it regularly in the days and weeks leading up to the visit and make any changes necessary to your plans.

Blackpool Zoo has assessed the risk of coronavirus and implemented control measures to prevent infection. Blackpool Zoo has reviewed the standard operating procedures to ensure that they include measures to reduce the risks from COVID-19. Our team participate in COVID-19 specific training programmes instructing them on how to stay safe as well as how to keep our guests safe. We have introduced personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for our team. You will find hand sanitiser stations around the zoo for visitors to use. Enhanced cleaning will take place throughout the day and we will undertake deep cleaning measures in the event that a person presents themselves with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

### Prior to arrival

- Schools and groups will have a clear understanding of the role they play in managing the risk of COVID-19, this includes promoting and monitoring of good personal hygiene
- The school is responsible for ensuring individuals who are required to self-isolate do not attend the setting
- Schools and groups will be asked to confirm that their setting is 'COVID-free' and everyone on the visit is in good health and not showing any signs of COVID-19, this will be confirmed upon arrival

### During the visit

- Regularly washing/sanitising hands including before and after touching shared objects such as activity equipment, before eating, after using the toilet, when getting on or off transport such as a minibus
- Avoid touching objects shared by other visitors – for example, a member of staff could hold a gate open to avoid everyone touching it
- A safe social distance should be offered to other visitors particularly in smaller, indoor animal houses
- Only one school at a time should occupy indoor eating areas. Tables and chairs should be cleaned after use and all rubbish left in sealed bin bags.

## Schools and Groups Visitor Code

Please follow these guidelines to make your day even more enjoyable and fun for yourselves and other visitors.

- Do not feed any of our animals.
- Do not taunt the animals or disturb them by running, shouting or banging on glass at enclosures or in houses.
- Stick to the paths – Do not cross any safety barriers.
- Do not allow children to climb/play on scenery or objects around the zoo.
- Help keep the zoo tidy – Please use the litter bins or recycled bins provided.
- Be clean – Make sure you use hand wash dispensers around the exhibits and always wash your hands before eating.
- Keep children safe – Children must stay with the accompanying adults in their group.

## Risk Guidelines

Below you will find risk assessment guidance covering the following topics.

1. Handling live animals, artefacts and substrates during lessons
2. Close animal contact areas
3. Free roaming animals
4. Visiting animal enclosures
5. Lost children protocol
6. Lost property
7. Visitors with additional needs
8. Play areas and coin operated rides
9. Escaped animals
10. In the event of a fire
11. Medical assistance

12. Eating arrangements
13. Miniature railway
14. Face painting
15. Zoo vehicles

In addition to the guidance below, we strongly recommend that all organisers make a preliminary visit to Blackpool Zoo to carry out their own risk assessment.

## 1. Handling live animals, artefacts and substrates during lessons

### Your Responsibilities

- Explain zoo rules and potential hazards prior to visit.
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling animals, artefacts and substrates.
- Discourage children from putting hands in their mouths or near their eyes, and from placing their face near the animals, artefacts and substrates.
- Eating and drinking is prohibited during lessons.
- Children should refrain from making loud noises and moving around during handling sessions.

### Zoo Responsibilities

- Zoo staff will explain contact rules and suitable behaviour before all workshops.
- Hand wash will be supplied after all contact sessions.
- All participants will be shown where the hand wash facilities are located to enable them to wash their hands.
- All animals are regularly examined and screened by our vet.
- Zoo staff will remove animals if they show any signs of agitation.

### Further information:

#### Young children

Children under twelve months old should not touch animals. Children aged one to three years have restricted and/or controlled access to close contact with animals.

#### Low immunity

Those with low immunity should refrain from handling animals. Zoo staff should be made aware of those with low immunity prior to lesson.

#### Allergies

Those with relevant allergies should refrain from handling animals, artefacts and substrates. Zoo staff should be made aware of those with allergies prior to lesson.

#### Substrates

Please be aware students will have contact with a number of different substrates when visiting the zoo including sand, mud and gravel.

#### Panic attacks caused by phobias

Those with phobias should make themselves known to zoo staff prior to the workshop. We recommend calmly leaving the lesson if you feel any animal will cause a phobic reaction.

## 2. Close animal contact areas

We have several exhibits that are walk-through, where you will have close contact with many animals. These are: World of Wings, Lemur Wood, Wallaby Walkabout, Children's Farm and Rainbow Landings

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Explain zoo rules and potential hazards prior to visit.
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after entering any close contact areas.
- Discourage children from placing their faces near the animals, putting their hands in their mouths or near their eyes.
- Do not allow children to drink from the taps in the hand wash areas.
- No eating or drinking in close animal contact areas. All food and drinks should be placed in sealed bags before entering close animal contact areas.
- Groups should be quiet and calm when near animals.
- Please read and follow all instructions on warning signs.
- All close contact animals should be respected and treated with care.
- Do not cross safety barriers.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Signage is clearly displayed in all close animal contact areas.
- Adequate hand washing facilities are provided.
- All animals are regularly examined and screened by our vet.
- Zoo staff will move animals if they show any signs of agitation to an area of no contact.

## 3. Free roaming animals

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Explain zoo rules and potential hazards prior to visit.
- No one should attempt to chase or touch any free roaming animals within the zoo.
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after eating.
- All free roaming animals should be respected and treated with care.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Hand washing facilities available where appropriate.
- All animals are regularly examined and screened by our vet.
- Zoo staff will remove animals if they show any signs of agitation.

## 4. Visiting animal enclosures

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Explain zoo rules and potential hazards prior to visit.

- Make sure an adequate number of responsible adults are present to supervise children.
- Groups should be quiet and calm when near animal enclosures and adhere to zoo rules at all times.
- Keep to designated paths and look out for any potential hazards. Do not cross any safety barriers.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Safety signs are clearly displayed around the zoo.
- Safety barriers are in place around the zoo.

### **Further Information**

#### Electric Fences

Public should be aware that there is electrical fencing around some enclosures to prevent animal escapes. Warning signs are clearly displayed at these enclosures and physical barriers are in place between the public and live electric fences.

#### Deep Water

Public should be aware that there are some areas of deep water within the zoo. Warning signs are clearly displayed and physical barriers between the public and deep water are in place. Buoyancy aids are provided.

#### Dangerous Animals

Warning signs are clearly displayed on all enclosures containing dangerous animals. Physical safety barriers are in place between the public and dangerous animals.

#### Panic attacks caused by phobias

All animal houses have signs indicating what animals are inside.

#### Animal Foodstuffs

Please note that that our carnivorous animals are fed part or whole animal carcasses.

## **5. Lost children protocol**

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Make sure an adequate number of responsible adults are present to supervise children at all times.
- Arrange meeting points throughout the day.
- Advise children to go to zoo reception or contact a member of zoo staff if they become separated from their group.
- Lost children should be immediately reported to a member of zoo staff.
- We advise that each child has a sticker displaying their teacher's name and a contact number for the school.
- Please report anyone acting in a suspicious manner to a member of zoo staff.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Zoo staff are trained in procedures when dealing with lost children.
- All staff are approachable for help and will have access to radios in order to alert other departments of a lost child.
- On finding a lost child every effort will be made to contact the group leader, and reunite the child and their group.

## 6. Lost property

### Your Responsibilities

- Children should label all property they bring to the zoo.
- Any lost property should be reported to the Visitor Services Hub, where a name and number will be collected to get in contact if the item is handed in.
- Items are left in the School Eating Area at your own risk.

### Zoo Responsibilities

- The zoo collects and registers all lost property at the Visitor Service Hub.
- Zoo staff will be in contact if your lost item is handed in.

## 7. Visitors with additional needs

### Your Responsibilities

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

### Zoo Responsibilities

- Adult-sized wheelchairs are available for free hire.
- Disabled toilets are provided and a room can be made available for any feeding or changing regimes (we do provide a hoist).
- All lessons and tours are adaptable to the special needs of each group.
- Flora is regularly maintained to prevent obstruction of view.
- All animal enclosures will be wheelchair accessible or have a wheelchair accessible point

## 8. Play areas and coin operated rides

### Your Responsibilities

- Full supervision is required for children using the play areas or coin operated rides. Please read instructional signage to determine if it is suitable for your children.

### Zoo Responsibilities

- Regular maintenance checks and inspections to comply with all relevant safety legislation.

## 9. Escaped animals

### Your Responsibilities

- Move away from the animal and into the nearest building.
- Inform a member of staff as soon as possible.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Recapture of animal in accordance with our animal escape procedure.
- Maintain visitor safety at all times.
- All staff trained on animal escape protocols

## **10. In the event of a fire**

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Report any fire to a member of zoo staff immediately.
- Move to an open area away from the fire.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Maintain visitor safety as per our current fire procedures.
- All staff have fire safety training.

## **11. Medical assistance**

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Anyone on regular medication should carry it with them or get a supervisor to store all medication and know how to administer it.
- Visiting schools and groups are responsible for the first aid needs of their group. Should a serious incident occur we do have duty first aiders to assist, a dedicated first aid room in reception and first aid boxes around the zoo. Should you require any assistance during your visit, please speak to any member of staff.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Our first aid team is unable to administer any medication.
- Zoo staff can request an ambulance on their radios.

## **12. Eating arrangements**

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Those with food allergies may prefer to bring their own food.
- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Do not feed the seagulls and beware, they may swoop and steal food from children.
- Items left unattended in the school eating area are left at your own risk.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- The Blackpool Zoo Cafe adheres to health and safety regulations.
- The Cafe staff will give details of allergens on request for pre-ordered lunches.
- Due to stringent food safety guidelines we have to adhere to we are unable to provide fridge facilities for food storage.

## 13. Miniature railway

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Adequate supervision required.
- Children should remain seated whilst the train is in motion.
- Adhere to the safety rules which are visible at the train stations.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Regular maintenance checks and inspections are carried out on the train.
- A trained member of staff will explain the rules to any passengers.

## 14. Face painting

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Children with skin conditions should refrain from having their faces painted.
- Follow the safety rules which are visible at face painting areas.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- All face paints used are hypoallergenic and can be removed with soap and water.

## 15. Zoo vehicles

### **Your Responsibilities**

- Be aware that vehicles will be driving around the site.
- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Children should be prevented from having any contact with the vehicles.

### **Zoo Responsibilities**

- Only experienced and fully trained staff will drive vehicles around the zoo.
- Zoo staff will keep to the set site speed limit.