



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. Like other zoos and wildlife parks, we must be compliant with the Zoo Licensing Act. We are subject to official inspections by enforcement officers who assess our animals' welfare and the safety of visitors and staff.

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

Schools and Groups Visitor Code

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

Keep our animals healthy – Do not feed any of our animals.

Keep our animals happy – 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.

Keep our dinosaurs safe – Do not allow children to climb/play on them.

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 disabilities or special 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 lessons.
- 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 sand during the 'Roarsome Dinosaurs' lesson, and leaf litter and soil during the 'Mingling with Minibeasts' lesson.

Panic attacks caused by phobias

Those with phobias should make themselves known to zoo staff prior to lesson. 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: Amazonia, Lemur Wood, Wallaby Walkabout and Children's Farm

Your Responsibilities

- Explain zoo rules and potential hazards prior to visit.
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after entering any close contact areas. If there are any issues with the hand wash facilities, e.g. no soap in dispensers, please make a member of zoo staff aware.
- 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 remove animals if they show any signs of agitation.

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 in dealing with lost children.
- All staff are approachable for help and the majority 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 zoo reception.
- Items are left in the School Eating Area at your own risk.

Zoo Responsibilities

- The zoo collects and registers all lost property at the zoo reception.

7. Visitors with disabilities or special 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 not currently 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.

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

- Inform a member of zoo staff immediately. Move into the nearest building.

Zoo Responsibilities

- Recapture of animal in accordance with our animal escape procedure.
- Maintain visitor safety at all times.

10. In the event of a fire

Your Responsibilities

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

Zoo Responsibilities

- Maintain visitor safety as per our current fire procedures.

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 aiders are unable to administer any medication.
- Zoo staff can request an ambulance on their radios.
- All areas of zoo have ambulance access.

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.

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 climbing on any unattended 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.