School Guidelines

All staff employed at Tropical Wings Zoo have Health and Safety training and we do everything possible to make the environment safe for all our visitors. Please see our website for Risk Assessment ZR001 which is specific to visiting schools and groups. However we do recommend a visit to the site prior to your trip to undertake your own risk assessment specific to your needs. We will permit two teachers complimentary entry in order to do so, however we must first have a completed booking form from you and you must arrange this pre-visit with us in advance by returning the request form attached to your confirmation email.

You should find the following guidelines useful and they should be read and understood prior to your visit. Please consider downloading and printing your own Zoo maps from our website in advance of your visit.

- Discovery sessions accommodate 35 individuals (maximum) so please be aware that smaller groups may be joined by other groups from different school and similarly larger groups may have to be split into smaller groups. All sessions must be booked in advance as we have a maximum number of 280 individuals per day this also avoids disappointment when trying to secure your ideal date.
- You will have already booked in your school group and notified us of the number of vehicles you will be bringing and an estimated time of arrival. If this differs at any time please telephone the Zoo on 01245 425394.
- On arrival look out for staff members wearing hi-vis jackets. They will help direct your vehicles to park and board your vehicle to give a Health and Safety talk. Coach and minibus parking is within the first section of the car park which will be cordoned off appropriately.
- It is imperative that your group remain in your vehicle until given the go ahead to disembark by a trained member of Zoo staff.
- Staff will run through proceedings for the day with the lead teacher(s). They will inform you of timings for any booked sessions, your designated lunch time, animal feed times etc. **PLEASE NOTE: Zoo maps, Activity and Teacher packs will not be available to print on the day, please ensure you print these before your arrival**. You will also be asked to confirm the number of children and adults you have with you; please be sure of this number as you will be asked to sign a confirmation and this is the number you will be invoiced for.
- You will have likely briefed your children already, however it is important that a member of Zoo staff is able to board your vehicle to welcome them to the zoo and brief them on specifics of their visit.
- The unloading of children can be a worrying time for schools and therefore will require strict supervision by supervising adults at all times. Please remember to remain in your vehicle until given the go ahead to disembark by a trained member of Zoo staff. They will guide you to a safe area but all adults and children will need to be aware of incoming and outgoing traffic at any time.
- We recommend that any toilet trips wait until you are inside the Zoo where possible. If absolutely necessary a toilet block is situated at the far side of the car park; children must be accompanied by a supervising adult due to incoming/outgoing traffic.
- When the entire group has disembarked and traffic has been stopped, a member of staff will lead you across the car park, along a pathway and through a side entrance. This entrance avoids the busy Reception area and Gift Shop and gets you straight into the zoo. You will be

guided to an undercover picnic area where you can leave lunchboxes if desired. No valuables should be left unattended. **Please note you may be sharing the lunch area with another school group, so please ensure lunches are clearly labelled**.

- There are toilets situated near the side entrance. We advise that lunchboxes are positioned first before returning to the toilet block.
- Once inside the Zoo you are welcome to explore at your leisure. If you are booked into any Discovery Sessions, as would have been discussed with you, **please ensure your group attends on time**. Our Education team members are working on a tight schedule and a late start will mean that your session may need to be cut short in order to prevent annoyance or disappointment to another group. Please be considerate to other visitors at all times.
- Due to the walkthrough nature of the Tropical House we ask that your group splits into smaller groups and staggers themselves when entering this area.
- If you plan on visiting the Gift Shop, we again ask that you split into smaller groups to attend.
- Exit is either through the exit gate in the Bird Gardens or through the Reception. Please note you will not be able to exit through the side entrance you entered.

You will have read our Risk Assessment, and possibly undertaken your own, however here is a summary of some of the Health and Safety points you should consider.

1. Children visiting the zoo are the responsibility of the staff accompanying them and there should be adequate numbers of adults to supervise them. Children must not be left unattended or allowed to wander freely, do not let any child out of your sight at any time.
2. A number of Zoo staff are First Aid trained. If you should need First Aid assistance during your visit please ask the nearest staff member who will call a First Aider for you. However we do recommend that a proportion of your accompanying adults are First Aid trained in case you should be unfortunate enough to have someone fall sick or have an accident. If someone in your party has specific allergies we also recommend that you bring your own First Aid kit.
3. First aid stations can be found throughout the Zoo please make sure you are familiar with these by looking on the park map or during a pre-visit as they are clearly marked with signs throughout the Zoo. These can be located in reception or near the main arena.
4. Please make note of our **three emergency fire meeting points**, these are clearly marked on the park map and on signs within the zoo. These points are located in the main car park, the bird gardens and the display lawn. In the event of a fire please make your way to the nearest meeting point and wait for further instructions from zoo staff.
5. There are set procedures in place for any accidents that may require an ambulance. Please do not attempt to call 999 yourselves in the first instance, please ask the nearest member of staff who is trained to call for assistance over their two-way radio.
6. We have Accident and Emergency policies in place, records are made and kept for the amount of time required by law and are available for inspection if required (surcharge applicable).
7. Check that cuts and grazes are covered with a waterproof dressing.
8. Visitors are not allowed to climb on fences, up any trees or on tables or chairs, and should be encouraged to behave appropriately when exploring the zoo. There is an indoor soft play and an outdoor play area with climbing frames and slides for closely supervised play. You will need to assess the suitability of this play equipment for your children and respect the age limits in place.
9. No balls or ball games, skates, bikes, heelys or scooters are allowed in the zoo.

10. Visitors must not chase or tease any of the animals.
11. Please do not allow children to sit on, or attempt to sit on, any animal.
12. The zoo animals are all given a special diet and are cared for by trained zoo keepers. Visitors are not allowed to feed any of the animals unless permitted to by a zookeeper during an Animal Encounter.
13. As stated by safety signs around the zoo, feeding of animals is prohibited so there should be no reason to put hands near enclosures or through surrounding mesh. Even non-dangerous species, which do not necessarily require a safety barrier, can bite or peck if they feel threatened. If a personal possession is dropped over a barrier or fence, do not attempt to retrieve it, call a member of zoo staff immediately.
14. The zoo is mostly outdoors with some small undercover areas throughout the site. Please consider the weather and ensure that appropriate clothing and footwear is worn for wet or cold weather, and that in hot weather hats and sunscreen are considered, and extra water is brought with you. A drinking fountain can be found near the outdoor play area if required.
15. We ask that in order not to disturb or frighten our animals (some of whom may have young), low levels of noise are maintained where possible. We appreciate children will get excited, however they should be asked not to scream and shout, or bang on windows of enclosures.
16. It is a Health and Safety requirement that all visitors wash their hands before eating. There are various hand sanitising dispensers situated around our site, and toilet and hand wash facilities are situated near the outdoor play area, adjacent to Macawbers Café and in our Reception area. Close supervision for children is needed and we recommend that hand wipes are also used.
17. There is one main area of water to consider: Tropical House ponds, surrounded by a stand-off barrier.
18. Litter could harm our animals. Please ensure all litter is placed in the bins provided.
19. Please be aware that there are other visitors in the zoo at the same time as you. Please respect their needs so that everyone has an enjoyable day.
20. It is zoo policy for no member of staff to be alone with a child under any circumstances. During any pre booked Discovery Sessions or animal feed talks, children must be supervised at all times.
21. Risk assessments, policies and records are available for inspection (surcharge applicable). Tropical Wings Zoo is regularly inspected by Zoo Licensing authorities to ensure we are compliant with the existing legislation. Inspections cover all aspects of Health and Safety and animal welfare standards. Our Zoo License is issued by Essex County Council and is displayed at the zoo entrance.
22. We have five million pounds Public Liability Insurance. Policy Number 1251258/0.

While every effort is made to ensure TWZ is a safe environment for your visit, we remind you children must be kept under strict supervision at all times. Thank you, we hope you have an enjoyable visit.