

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR SCHOOL ANIMAL CARE MODULES AT COLCHESTER ZOO

This risk assessment is a guidance sheet providing a general outline of potential risks and controls identified. It is strongly recommended that **all organisers make a preliminary visit to Colchester Zoo to carry out their own risk assessment before bringing a class.** Two free familiarisation tickets to complete this visit can be requested after you have made a school booking. If you have any questions about the details of the behind the scenes components, please ask the education team for specifics to help you complete your own risk assessment.

Please see the general school's risk assessment for a more general assessment of a visit to Colchester Zoo. Detailed risk assessments for each specific animal/keeper areas are available as per Keeper for the Day risk assessments.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher Responsibilities:

Teachers and any supporting adults are responsible for the behaviour of the students towards the animals, staff, and other visitors. At all times during the Animal Care Module, teachers must be present. This includes the classroom and out in the zoo portions of the module.

When in close contact with animals or anything associated with an animal, students should be supervised and teachers must **ensure appropriate hygiene** afterwards. Teachers are also responsible to ensure all groups **follow posted or verbal instructions and rules** before entering a situated with animals.

Zoo Responsibilities:

Colchester Zoo strives to provide a safe and enjoyable day out for schools, including schools taking part in behind the scenes and/or close contact situations. To ensure these groups' health and safety the zoo follows a variety of procedures, and has many existing control measures in place. Stated below is a general risk assessment identifying potential risks and the controls Colchester Zoo has in place to mitigate these potential risks.

Please note that these are guidelines only.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Identification	Risk Level	Existing Controls
Animals – Bites, scratches, etc.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No contact with species that are likely to cause harm • If animal feeding occurs, it will be supervised by zoo staff who will provide • Strict warnings and clear instructions given • Students made aware in situations where no secondary barriers are present • Clear instructions given on how to feed/behave around animals • Students kept a safe distance as denoted by rocks, yellow lines, and other safety barriers • No touching policy with potentially dangerous animals • Animals maintained under control through training and physical barriers • Trained first aiders on site and first aid equipment stored at various areas in the park • Keepers with group whenever close contact with potentially dangerous species occurs • Keepers competent in dealing with unusual behaviour of animal • Keeper pays close attention to animal's temperament • Majority of staff in radio contact in case of emergencies
Animals – Escapes	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established animal escape procedure • Established animal security policy in place • Majority of staff in radio contact in case of emergencies • Staff will accompany students at all time when they are in 'behind-the-scenes' areas close to any animal gates, traps, etc. • When students have access to enclosures they will follow the same safety procedures as staff
Animals - Disease	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No contact with animals likely to transmit disease • All reptiles used for handling are regularly health screened • In situations with animal contact, or potentially contaminated items (e.g. bedding, enrichment, faeces, etc.) students follow approved hygiene procedure (e.g. wear gloves, wash hands, etc.) • All tools which come in contact with animals, etc. are cleaned between use and prior to allowing students to touch them • Animal specific biosecurity procedures will be followed in regards to any specific disease which have zoonotic transmission as required and recommended
Enclosures – Electric Fencing	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand-off barriers to prevent contact • Warning signs in place where appropriate • Stand-off lines, rock barriers, etc. in place to ensure no one gets close to fencing • Depending on the enclosure, electric fence turned off when students in area

Risk Identification	Risk Level	Existing Controls
Lifting heavy objects	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students move objects at their own discretion • First aider on site
Peanuts and other nuts in area	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students asked whether they have allergies prior to encountering any food with nuts • Extra precautions taken if students have allergies
Trips/Falls	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily inspection of all paths undertaken with reporting system in place to deal with defects • Warning given • Steps, etc. highlighted with paint. • Signs in place (e.g. wet floor in kitchen) • Areas cleaned regularly (e.g. mud cleared away) • Students advised to wear sturdy footwear • Wood chips put on worst of slippery/muddy pathways • Lights turned on to improve visibility in dimly lit areas
Open Water / Deep Water	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fences and barriers in place • Warnings given • Rescue equipment (e.g. lifebelt) on site near deep water
Hydraulic gates – crush injury	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students kept well away during operation • First aider on site
Head hazard	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warnings given • Assistance available if needed • Students directed around obvious head hazards
Tools/equipment/chemicals	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools placed neatly to side • Chemicals kept in sealed containers clearly labelled • No direct contact / use of equipment.
Steps	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warnings given • Handrails in place on most step areas • First aider on site