

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR SCHOOL AND GROUP VISITS TO 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 of children.** Two free familiarisation tickets to complete this visit can be requested after you have made a school booking.

1. INTRODUCTION**Teacher/Leader Responsibilities:**

Teachers/Leaders and any supporting adults are responsible for the behaviour of the children towards the animals, staff, and other visitors. All children up to **Year 9** (14 years old) must be directly supervised at all times. Responsible students in Year 10 and older must have supporting leaders in the zoo, but are allowed to traverse the zoo in small independent groups without direct supervision. All unsupervised children must be in uniform and/or otherwise identifiable.

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

Play areas are **not supervised** by Colchester Zoo staff and are open to general visitors. If children are eligible to use the play area it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure adequate supervision.

- School groups and other children's groups are not permitted to use the Jungle Tumble indoor soft play area
- School groups in **EYFS – Year 6** (children 10 and younger) can use any of the zoo's outdoor **play areas between 12pm and 2pm**; they are not permitted to use the play areas outside of these times
- **Secondary school students** in years 7 and above **are not allowed on any play area** at any time.

If children are not eligible to use the play area it is the **teachers' responsibility to ensure the students do not use the play area.**

In the event of any emergency, follow zoo staff instruction and ensure all students and adults with your group also follow said instructions.

Zoo Responsibilities:

Colchester Zoo strives to provide a safe and enjoyable day out for schools and children's groups. 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 and teachers are recommended to complete their own risk assessment prior to a school visit.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Identification	Risk Level	Existing Controls
Animals – bites, scratches, etc.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No visitor contact with species that are likely to cause harm. • Stand-off barriers to prevent contact between animals and visitors. • No feeding policy except in designated areas (Familiar Friends and Australian Rainbows) • Trained first aiders on site and first aid equipment stored at various areas in the park. • Majority of staff in radio contact in case of emergencies. • Signage is visible, warning visitors of bites etc.
Animals - Disease	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No contact with animals likely to transmit disease. • Where animals are used for handling or close contact, hand washing facilities are available. • All reptiles used for handling are regularly health screened. • Children under 12 months old should not handle animals. • Visitors may only feed animals in designated areas.
Animals - Insect Bites	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bee and wasp sting emergency procedure in place. • Teachers are advised that any students that are known to have a severe allergic reaction to stings must have appropriate medication with them and understand its administration • Regular inspections for and removal of wasp nests • Trained first aiders on site and first aid equipment stored at various areas in the park.
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.
Enclosures – Electric Fencing	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand-off barriers to prevent contact. • Warning signs in place where appropriate.
Nettles/Brambles	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular cutting back and control measures in place
Trips/Falls	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors asked to keep to marked paths. • Daily inspection of all paths undertaken with reporting system in place to deal with defects.
Trees	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Risk Assessment and Inspection carried out annually. • Regular tree maintenance undertaken. • Grounds and gardens staff alert to any potential hazards.
Open Water	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fences and barriers in place. • Group organisers asked to ensure that no climbing takes place on or over these barriers.

Risk Identification	Risk Level	Existing Controls
Lost Children	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are visible around the zoo and can be contacted if a child is lost. • Staff equipped with radios to alert other departments to a lost child. • Lost Child policy in place.
Weather – Sunburn/Sunstroke	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of undercover and shaded areas available. • Small children advised to wear sunhats. • Sun cream or sun block advised in conditions of strong sunlight.
Weather – Getting Wet	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a large amount of undercover areas which include extensive animal houses, covered walkways and sheltered viewing areas. • Everyone advised to bring wet weather clothing if rain is forecast.
Play Areas	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety checks are carried out every day. • Signs detailing rules and code of conduct at the play areas. • Soft flooring around the play equipment. • School children usage of play area limited to between 12-2pm to allow visitors with smaller younger children access to the equipment while preventing potential injury. • Older groups of school children are not permitted on play equipment, to prevent potential injury to smaller, younger children.
Fire	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Procedure in place for each building. • Evacuation Procedure for the whole park in place. • Regular risk assessments undertaken.
Safeguarding	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colchester Zoo utilises Safer Recruitment principles during the hiring process. • Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Policy in place. • Staff trained in awareness of safeguarding issues. • Education Department staff undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
Evacuation (bomb threat, terrorism, etc.)	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation Procedure for the whole park in place. • Procedure in place for evacuation of each department/section of the zoo. • Regular risk assessments undertaken. • Staff trained in how to respond to a variety of threats which would result in evacuation.
Transmissible Disease – Human (Covid-19, etc.)	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand washing facilities are located around the zoo • The zoo thoroughly cleans toilets, food outlets, and other public areas • Visitors and staff who are sick are requested to follow NHS guidelines on transmission. • In the event of emergent diseases, Colchester Zoo will follow government guidelines.