



## WILDWOOD VISITS – FAQs

*These have been divided into four sections; planning your visit, what we can offer, booking your visit and on the day. If you cannot find the answer to your question, please get in touch.*

### CONTACT EDUCATION TEAM:

Email: [education@wildwoodtrust.org](mailto:education@wildwoodtrust.org)

Tel: 01227 712111

## PLANNING YOUR VISIT

### Who should I contact about an educational visit?

- If you have not visited Wildwood before or if you would like to discuss a programme for your visit, please get in touch with the education team, email [education@wildwoodtrust.org](mailto:education@wildwoodtrust.org)
- Education staff can be difficult to contact by phone as we are usually out in the park with school groups. The best way to contact us is by email. We will always get back to you as soon as we can.

### Do you have a risk assessment?

- Yes. If you would like a copy of our school/group visits' risk assessment, please let us know and we will email one to you, or you can download it from the education pages of our website ([www.wildwoodtrust.org](http://www.wildwoodtrust.org)).

### Can I do a pre-visit/carry out my own risk assessment?

- Yes. Teachers/lecturers/group leaders are always welcome to pay a complementary pre-visit to the park and have a discussion with our education team to see what we can offer (*please ring/email first to arrange*).
- Teachers/group leaders are free on production of a staff ID; you may also bring up to four members of your family with you at half price on your pre-visit.

### Do we have to have educational activities or can we just do our own thing?

- Either. Schools/colleges/groups are welcome to visit the park independently and to tour on their own and/or to have educational sessions with a member of Wildwood's education department (pre-booking essential).

### Do you have worksheets/ educational resources we can use?

- Yes. We have a range of educational materials for all ages, some of which can be used at school before or after your visit and some of which are more suitable for use at Wildwood. These are available to download from our website free of charge.
- We also provide a series of practical worksheets for use during our own tutor-led activities.
- Please remember to bring clipboards/pencils/crayons if you want to use any worksheets.

### Where is Wildwood?

- Wildwood is situated on the A291 at Herne Common, three miles outside Herne Bay in East Kent (look out for the big wolf sign at the roadside).
- *By coach/car* from the north, take the M2/A299 Thanet Way to Herne Bay, turning on to the A291, following the signs for Sturry and Canterbury through Herne village. You will find us up ahead on the right hand side, 3 miles from the A299 junction.
- *By coach/car* from Canterbury/Thanet to the south, take the A28 to Sturry and then take the A291 turning, signposted Herne Bay, near the level crossing in the village. We are 2.3 miles ahead on the left.
- *By bus* No. 4/4A buses from Herne Bay Railway Station and No. 6/6A buses from Canterbury Bus Station/Sturry stop just outside Wildwood (request stop between Broad Oak/Sweechgate and Herne Garage). Every 10 minutes from 9am-6pm. These are known as the triangle buses as they serve three local towns.

### Do you have an Education Centre or is it all outdoors?

- Wildwood is predominantly a woodland site so the majority of your visit will be spent outdoors.
- Indoor workshops with Wildwood's own tutors are held in the education centre, situated just outside the main entrance to the park in a log cabin-style building.
- We only have one classroom so there are usually three available slots a day for workshops during school visiting hours – 1030-1130am, 1145am-1245pm and 1-2pm. On occasions, four slots are available if schools are local and likely to arrive at 10am promptly and leave later. Please book early to avoid disappointment.
- Schools are requested to leave the education centre in the condition in which they found it.
- **Please note:** *following an unfortunate series of incidents of damage and disappearance of artefacts, books and equipment from the education centre, we no longer permit students to occupy the centre without a supervising teacher present, including at break times.*
- All damage/thefts must be paid for.

### Do we need to wear any special clothing?

- Wildwood is an ancient woodland with natural paths through the wood, complete with tree roots, overhanging branches, nettles, brambles, etc.
- Clothing should be appropriate for a day out in the woods with trousers, sensible footwear, plus a waterproof in case it rains. Expect puddles after rain!

### Is there a café on site?

- Yes. We have a roomy log cabin-style café with a large covered veranda and children's menu (hot meals/ice creams/cold drinks can be ordered in advance – call 01227 712230).
- The café is for paying customers - schools may book to eat in there if buying Wildwood food.
- Picnic tables are located by the play area if you would like to bring your own food.
- Please note:
  - Wildwood is not responsible if a child in your group becomes ill after eating their own food while on a day out at Wildwood.
  - The café is for all our customers to use; it is not a common room for students who are between tasks and are not purchasing food/drinks!

### Is there a playground?

- Yes. We have a large adventure playground with a wooden fort, towers, the tallest drop slide in the south-east, tube slide, zip wire and basket swings (one gate for entrance and exit only)
- There is also a separate under-fives playground
- Both playgrounds are open all day; the drop slide is open and supervised 1-6pm weekdays and all day at weekends and during the holidays
- The playground is included in our risk assessment.

### What if it rains?

- The woods in full leaf offer reasonable wet weather shelter. However, we are an outdoor site so it is important to come prepared for wet weather.
- Sheltered areas are available for eating lunch but unless you have booked indoor activities, you will be outside all day.

### Is there good disabled access?

- Yes. Disabled minibuses are welcome to use the disabled parking bays immediately outside the park entrance in the Wildwood top car park (*please follow signs – see map also*).
- The park has wheelchair access throughout with alternative routes to avoid obstacles. We also have a disabled toilet.
- Several enclosures have low viewing windows to ensure everyone can see the animals.
- We have recently completed an extensive upgrade of the paths to improve wheelchair access. The majority of paths have been laid with compact stone chippings but some areas can still be muddy in wet weather.

### Do you have a gift shop?

- Yes, sorry, we do have one!
- It stocks a variety of pocket money gifts, including stickers, stationery, animal masks, soft toys and science games.
- We stock a range of materials related to British wild animals which teachers often find useful for pre-visit/follow-up work in the classroom – e.g. animal masks, posters and postcards, books, badges, crafts, reference materials, etc.
- Shop staff always appreciate it if children visit the shop in small individual groups with an adult to supervise.

- If schools are able to stagger shop visits throughout the day, staff are able to serve much more quickly than if every school tries to visit at lunchtime.
- We can provide pre-prepared and priced goody bags for collection (please book before your visit). A list of typical goody bag contents and prices is available on our website ([www.wildwoodtrust.org](http://www.wildwoodtrust.org)).

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

### PLAYGROUPS AND NURSERIES

- Please see separately our pre-schools' activities list for details and prices.

### PRIMARY SCHOOLS KS1 AND KS2

- Please see separately our primary schools' activities list for details and prices.

### SECONDARY SCHOOLS, A-LEVEL/IB, FE COLLEGES AND ABOVE

- Please see separately our secondary schools'/A-level/IB/FE colleges' activities list for details and prices.

### SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

- Please talk to us about your students' needs and let us discuss how we can help.
- Subject to eligibility – Gold membership scheme for special needs schools and groups. Please ask for details of our Gold membership criteria and application form.
- We have run successful year-round visits for students with various levels of special needs and disabilities and have a range of artefacts which can be handled.
- We are also used to making the most of the smells and sounds of our woodland animals.
- Disabled minibuses are welcome to use the disabled parking bays immediately in front of the main entrance in the Wildwood top car park (*please follow signs*).
- The park has wheelchair access throughout with alternative routes to avoid obstacles.
- Several enclosures have low viewing windows to ensure everyone can see the animals.
- Following recent extensive work, the majority of paths have been laid with compact stone chippings and now offer much easier wheelchair access. Some paths can still be muddy in wet weather.

### BEAVER SCOUTS

- We do have real beavers at Wildwood! Please be aware that they are nocturnal so they are likely to be asleep in their lodge during the day. The lodge has viewing windows so that the beavers can be seen whilst they are asleep.
- If you wish to see the beavers outdoors, the best times of year to visit are late afternoons in mid/late winter.

### OTHER GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Most of the activities available to schools (e.g. guided tours, workshops, meet an animal sessions, etc.) are available to other groups by arrangement, depending on tutors' availability, and are differentiated according to age and interest.
- Please discuss your needs with us in advance so we can ensure your day is successful.

## BOOKING YOUR VISIT

### How do I book a visit?

- Once you have decided on possible dates for your visit, please contact us (email: [education@wildwoodtrust.org](mailto:education@wildwoodtrust.org)) to discuss availability.
- If you do not require a tutor, it is still advisable to check dates before booking as some very popular dates may be closed to avoid overwhelming the park.
- If you would like to book a tutor, it is vital to check early that there will be enough Wildwood education staff available on your chosen date.
- Admission prices and education department fees are reviewed annually; bookings made before December 31st for the following year are held at the previous year's prices. Ask for a pricing schedule or check the website.
- Peak season (June-August) visits booked before March 1 qualify for an extra early booking discount.
- Once you have agreed a date, then you need to fill in a copy of our booking form. This is available on our website or we can email one to you.
- **Your booking cannot be confirmed nor your tutor allocated unless we receive your form in good time.**

### Can Wildwood family membership cards be used on school/group visits?

- Sorry, no. Occasionally, some parents may ask you if they can use their Wildwood family membership card for their child to come on a school/group visit to us and therefore not pay the group admission fee. The answer is no.
- Wildwood operates a membership scheme for regular visitors (which, on payment of an annual fee, allows unlimited free visits throughout the year). The membership card allows named children up to the age of 18 years to visit with named family members only, who must remain responsible for them throughout their visit to comply with our insurance.
- If selected children on a school outing were able to use their family membership card, they would be getting a 'double benefit' – free admission to the park plus access to all the education facilities the other children are paying for. This could compromise our charitable status.
- In addition, the fees charged to schools/groups fund the costs of providing our educational service, which includes classroom facilities, tutors, equipment, materials, etc., to ensure Wildwood is a safe and enjoyable place for schools/groups to visit.
- These additional expenses for the charity are not covered by private family membership.
- Please refer any parents questioning this policy to the terms and conditions on their membership cards, which state clearly that cards may not be used for school/group visits.

## How is our day organised?

- Wildwood opens at 10am. School groups cannot normally gain entry to the park until this time (A-level/IB groups may be an exception; please ask).
- If you have not booked any activities with a Wildwood tutor, then your day is your own to organise as you wish.
- Group size for any educational activity is limited to a maximum of 30 students - or one primary school class - as this can be accommodated comfortably at one time.
- If there are more classes and/or other groups requiring activities on the same day (it is particularly busy in June and July), each class/group will be given a timed slot for their activity.
- If you are bringing more than one class, activities will normally be staggered throughout the day. If each class is having more than one activity then more than one tutor will work with you and groups will rotate round each activity.
- If you would like your day organised differently – for example, if you would like everyone to have lunch together – please let us know well in advance so we can allocate tutors accordingly. We will try to fit in with whatever your preferences are, as long as we can ensure that all groups visiting the park on any one day are covered.
- Timetables are completed each Sunday for the forthcoming week. They can be emailed to you but, due to the number of last minute bookings that we receive and the consequent timetable alterations, it is not possible to send you your timetable several weeks in advance.

## ON THE DAY OF YOUR VISIT

### Where should we park?

- Coaches should park in the marked coach bays on the right in the first car park as you turn off the A291.
- Please note new parking arrangements for 2012 mean that you need to ask your driver to park parallel to the entrance road in the first car park, not at right angles to it as previously (see coach parking map sent with your confirmation).
- Disabled minibuses are welcome to use the disabled parking bays immediately in front of the gift shop entrance in the Wildwood top car park (*please follow signs*).

### How do we announce ourselves?

- After disembarking from your coach, please walk the children up the short Wildwood drive to the main park gates on the right and announce yourselves to admissions staff in the shop.
- Please be ready to tell them how many children and accompanying adults you have in your party (this is for your invoice).
- Admissions staff will have a copy of your schedule for the day and will be able to tell you the times of your activities if you have not brought your previously emailed copy with you.
- They will direct you to the toilets for a loo stop while they radio your tutor, who will agree a time and place to meet you for your activity.

### Can you invoice us or do we pay on the day?

- You can pay:
  - in cash on the day.

- by card on the day
- or we can invoice you afterwards.
- If you prefer to be invoiced, please bring with you a sheet of headed notepaper with your contact details and the name of the person/department to which the invoice should be addressed.

### Where are the toilets?

- Toilets are located at the entrance – there are no others anywhere in the park so making sure that children visit them before starting to walk round is advisable!

### Where should we leave our bags/coats/lunches?

- There are covered shelf units for bags etc behind the harvest mouse kiosk (beside the café). Please pack bags tightly together on as few shelves as possible as there may be several schools visiting.
- Bags/coats/lunches can also be left on the picnic tables next to the play area, unless you prefer that your children keep everything with them.
- We recommend that children keep money and other valuables with them at all times.
- Food should be well wrapped inside sealed plastic lunch boxes, zipped up rucksacks or carrier bags with the handles tied tightly together - we have a host of woodland birds and invertebrates (especially ants), that will find their way into a tempting jam sandwich if they can smell it!
- If the weather is poor, you may leave bags etc on the veranda of our café. If the weather is fine, please leave those tables free for paying customers.

### Where do we eat lunch?

- Please use the picnic tables adjacent to the play area to eat lunch.
- If wet, you may eat lunch on the veranda of the café.
- If it is very wet or there are too many children to fit on the veranda, please ask the café manager if it is possible to eat indoors. If you do eat indoors, please make sure that you clean up all of your rubbish at the end of your meal.
- Please note that café tables are also required for paying customers. If the weather is fine you may not eat indoors unless all children are having café food.
- The education centre is not usually available for lunches unless it is not being used for other activities that day. Please check before your visit.
- If you should be able to use it, schools are requested to leave the education centre in the condition in which they found it.
- **Please note:** *following an unfortunate series of incidents of damage and disappearance of artefacts, books and equipment from the education centre, we no longer permit students to occupy the centre without a supervising teacher present, including at break times.*
- All damage/thefts must be paid for.

### How do we find our way around?

- Maps are available from the shop and there are map boards and illustrated signposts at regular intervals around the park (follow dark green signs for the full park trail, dark brown for directions to park facilities and mustard-coloured signs for animal enclosures).
- The woodland trail around the park follows a circular route.

- Please advise your children and accompanying adults that, should they become detached from their group, they should either continue following the trail in the same direction, which will eventually bring them back to the café/play area, whichever way they go, or follow the dark brown signs straight back to the shop or café.
- They should then go to either the shop or café, where the staff can alert other park staff to reunite the child/adult with his/her group.
- All uniformed park staff are in radio contact and can respond immediately to any emergency.

### **Can we feed the animals?**

- No. Visitors are asked not to feed the animals because of the risk of spreading disease (human/animal and animal/human).
- Also, the animals have specialised diets and can become extremely ill if fed inappropriate food or materials (e.g. chocolate, crisps, pencils or plastic bags).
- Please ensure that your group is aware of this and that they do not feed animals.
- Please ensure that everyone washes their hands before eating as the woodland has its own wild inhabitants and virtually any surface may have been used as a feeding station.
- Hot water and soap are available in the toilets. Antibacterial hand wash dispensers are located outside the café, shop and in the education centre.

### **Are there first aiders on site?**

- Many of our staff are trained first aiders. There will always be trained first aiders on duty each day.
- First aid boxes are located in all permanent buildings around the park (e.g. shop, vet room, badger building, rat barn, office).
- All uniformed park staff are in radio contact and can respond immediately to any emergency.
- If you have a walking casualty, please take them to the shop as the first contact point.

### **More questions?**

- Please contact the education team – we're only too happy to help make your day run smoothly!

Anne Riddell  
Head of Education

*Last updated: January 30, 2012*