

SCHOOL GROUP FAQS 2024

IS THERE A DROP OFF ZONE WHEN WE ARRIVE?

The coach park is at the far side of the car park, a short walk from the entrance to the Farm Park. To save you walking across the car park, you may be dropped off at the main entrance, and then the coach driver can park the coach. Please bring lunches/bags from the coach - we have space for the children to put these in the area they will have their lunch.

PREPARING CHILDREN

Many children who visit the Farm Park have not been to a rural location, interacted with animals or been on a school trip or a coach before. We recommend preparing the children on what to expect when they visit.

We have included a PowerPoint presentation within your downloadable resources which will help you to prepare for your upcoming visit.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE ARRIVE?

We encourage all of our group bookings to arrive on time as we often have more than one school visiting on any day. Whilst we will try our best to accommodate late arrivals, we can't guarantee being able to offer all your activities.

Your arrival time is between 9.30am and 10am. If you are allocated an earlier arrival time and don't think you can get here by then, please let us know and we will accommodate your preference.

On arrival, the group leader should report to the Farm Park shop and ask a friendly member of team to introduce you to your Host. Here, the leader can confirm numbers and pick up the welcome pack (which contains wrist bands for accompanying adults). We'll take you to the main toilets for a comfort break, provide you with Animal Snacks and then you will be shown through into the Farm Park and taken to your first location. Your Host will go through the schedule with you, and ensure your group knows where to go and when.

WHAT CAN WE DO AT THE FARM PARK?

We have an itinerary for each school group that shows you where to go for each section of the visit. This schedule will be sent out shortly in advance of the visit, so if you have not received a week before the visit, please get in touch.

IS OUR VISIT GUIDED OR SELF-LED?

The visit is mostly self-led and your schedule and pack will guide teachers and leaders through the Farm Park

For example, one activity includes visiting our much-loved rare breed walkway which is home to a wide variety of rare breeds. During your walk, you will have the chance to give Animal Snacks to our livestock and get involved with a self-guided activity on the way around.

CAN WE HOLD ANY ANIMALS?

Our main talk includes animal handling and there will be a chance for you to learn and have a go at holding some of our animals.

You will also have allocated time in the animal and discovery barns. During this period, we recommend you split into two and do the half in the animal barn and half in the discovery barn.

Both barns are also open to the general public and when busy you may not all get to touch the animals. A friendly member of our team will be in the barns and delighted to answer questions you may have.

CAN WE HAVE A PRIVATE FARM SAFARI?

The Farm Safari Tractor ride is no longer available at the Farm Park.

CAN WE JOIN IN WITH BOTTLE FEEDING?

Bottle feeding is a seasonal event, and when it is running it can get incredibly busy. We don't run a school's bottle feeding session so bottle feeding will only be possible when the farm park is otherwise very quiet.

WILL WE HAVE A RESERVED AREA FOR LUNCH?

Our education room will be available for you to use during your lunch. We also have an additional area that we allocate for lunches if more than 2 schools or groups are visiting on one day.

You will also be provided with a place to store your bags and lunchboxes. Please bring a packed lunch as our catering outlets are unable to cater for school groups.

We are happy for you to pre-purchase ice-creams for each member of your group and these can be put aside for you to collect during the visit. If you are interested in this please contact us to organise before your visit.

WHAT TIME SHOULD WE ARRIVE?

You should receive via email a booking itinerary with times scheduled throughout the day including arrival and departure.

WHAT FACILITIES DO YOU HAVE FOR WHEELCHAIRS AND SEN GROUPS?

Brand-new for 2023, we have a changing places washroom available at Admissions.

There are flat surfaced pathways to all the barns and Rare Breed's Trail, as well as low level wash facilities.

While the pathways in the woodland and conservation areas may not be specifically designed for wheelchair access, they are still available for use. Just keep in mind that they may have a rougher terrain.

If you have any specific needs, please get in touch and we can see if we can adapt our program for you directly as a booking outside of our standard school package.

HISTORY OF THE FARM PARK

Cotswold Farm Park was opened in 1971 by Joe Henson and his business partner John Neave, they had rented the land here since 1963 and Joe had developed a real passion for rare breed farm animals, many of which were becoming extinct. In order to help to financially support Joe's rare breed collection they opened the farm up to the public, making the Farm Park the first of its kind in the world.

Joe was always passionate about conservation and education; he went on to become founding chairman on the rare breed survival trust in 1973 and many of the farm animal breeds you will see on your visit are only still here thanks to the work of this important charity. Joe passed away in 2015, but his son Adam now runs the farm with his business partner Duncan Andrews, and despite being much bigger the farms values still sit heavily with conservation and education at the core.

STAYING SAFE DURING YOUR VISIT

- Visitors are requested to always follow signs, information boards and staff advice.
- Schools and group leaders should provide an appropriate number of supervisory adults to ensure the reasonable behaviour of the children in their group.
- Children should be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- There is no requirement for children to cross any public roads, although they will be required to cross the car park in order to gain access to the main entrance. Visitors must not stray into areas that are not open to the public.
- To avoid accidents, tripping, falling and sprains, children should be discouraged from running or playing on any steps and within the car park/driveway area. Children should refrain from climbing on straw bales, fencing, walls, trees, gates and seating and caution should also be taken on wet grassy areas.
- Dress for the weather! Please wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. Sturdy outdoor shoes (with closed toes) or Wellington boots should be worn, please check that these are clean before leaving the Farm Park. We advise that you pack waterproof clothing as the weather can be very changeable. Sun lotion should be applied and hats worn when necessary and adequate fluids drunk when it is hot.
- Download the Cotswold Farm Park Risk Assessment from the website.
- Download the Government leaflet "Avoiding infection on farm visits", available on our website.
- No eating outside of lunch areas. Before eating and after any animal contact it is very important that hands are washed. Facilities are located in all the barns, at the end of the walkway and in the toilet blocks, incorporating running water, soap and disposable towels/hot air hand dryers. Hand sanitisers are not a suitable replacement for washing with soap and water – they do not work with some of the bacteria that can be present in animals.