



Guidelines for safe school group visits

1. The School Group Leader's Responsibilities

COVID-19

In order to keep our visitors, volunteers and staff safe, we really encourage schools to do temperature checks on staff and students before they visit Bedgebury. Thank you.

a) School group control and safety

To ensure a safe visit, the group leader and other adult helpers will be expected to take an active part in the visit and will be entirely responsible for discipline, safety and overall control of the group.

- School group leaders should try to arrange a preliminary visit with Forestry England (FE) staff to discuss the programmes and the group's needs and to assess the site conditions.
- The school group leader must carry out the necessary risk assessments for the visit.
- All parental or guardian consents and permissions should be obtained by the group leader before the visit.
- Leaders must ensure the visit conforms to relevant FE risk assessments.
- The forest is a working environment. The group leader will ensure that warning signs and instructions from Forestry England staff are heeded, areas where work is in progress are avoided and the group is kept together.
- FE staff may refuse to lead your group if you do not fulfil the minimum ESCC / KCC pupil:adult ratios:
Pre-school /Year R (under 5 yrs): 1 adult to 5 children
KS1 (5-8 yrs): 1 adult to 6 children
KS2 (8-11 yrs) 1 adult to 8-10 children
KS3 (11 yrs +): 1 adult to 10-15-children.

b) First Aid

- In the case of an accident, the school group leader and visiting staff will be on hand to give any information about special requirements.
- The school group leader will be responsible for ensuring that at least one supervisor has a basic knowledge of First Aid. Accidents, whether requiring treatment or not, must be reported to FE staff.

c) Respect for the site

- The school group leader is responsible for ensuring all litter is taken away with the group and that no damage is caused to the environment or site facilities. The school group leader and/or their organisation will be held responsible to make good any such damages.
- The school group leader should remind the group that trees, flowers and wildlife are living objects and should not be damaged.

Additional permits may be required for specialist activities or field studies. Contact FE for advice



d) Clothing

- It is the school group leader's responsibility to ensure that **students** and **adult helpers** are wearing appropriate footwear and clothing for the conditions. Weather conditions can change rapidly and forest sites are often muddy - advice should be sought if in doubt.
- Bring suitable outdoor waterproof clothing including a warm waterproof coat with hood.
- Footwear should be suitable for uneven terrain. Trainers in dry conditions and wellingtons or walking boots in wet conditions are advisable.
- Bring a warm hat, scarf and gloves in winter.
- Everyone is advised to wear trousers, even in hot weather.
- Shorts and sandals are not recommended due to brambles, ticks and midges.
- Please bring a sun hat, and apply sunscreen in warmer months.

2. Forestry England staff responsibilities

- During a visit led by Forestry England staff, the staff member will co-ordinate the activities of the group and will advise the group of any particular known hazards that may apply on the day of the visit.
- Most Forestry England staff have basic knowledge of first aid and have personal first aid kits at their disposal, although the prime responsibility for rendering first aid remains with the group leader.
- Forestry England staff have the discretion to exclude from the visit anyone who is not properly equipped or fails to comply with other conditions listed.

On the day

- Your Forestry England leader will meet the school party in the coach park on arrival and will introduce you to the site.
- The group leader or coach driver should report to the visitor centre on arrival to check in the vehicle registration.
- Bring a packed lunch and drink (there is a café, but groups must pre-book food if required). FE-led school bookings have use of reserved outside undercover picnic benches. Other seating is for public use. Use of the classroom for lunches is at the discretion of FE staff.
- The group leader should bring a list of students attending. Teams/group lists should be organised before arrival.
- In case of delayed or late arrival contact our Visitor Services team on 01580 879820