



Dear Group Organiser,

## **Risk Assessment**

We are happy to provide information regarding Health and Safety procedures at Chester Zoo as follows.

We can confirm that a comprehensive Health and Safety Management System, including risk assessment, is in place providing assurance as to the safety of our staff and visitors.

To this end we have in place full procedures for many topics, including:-

- Fire evacuation
- Animal escapes
- Lazy River Boat Trip evacuation
- Lost children and vulnerable adults

We also provide a comprehensive First Aid service for our visitors; acknowledge our responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) and our food and beverage establishments are inspected regularly under Food Safety legislation.

Chester Zoo is subject to regular inspections carried out under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 as well as being subject to all aspects of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999). We are committed to continual improvement and our performance will always be in full compliance with relevant Legislation and Approved Codes of Practice.

We can also confirm that we have adequate Public Liability Insurance cover for all our activities.

Please note that Chester Zoo holds a valid Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge which provides assurance that we meet accepted standards of risk management.

More information on all Health and Safety related topics and legislation may be found either on the Health and Safety Executive Web site - [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) or Chester Zoo website – [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org)

We trust these comments alongside the following Health and Safety information are sufficient for your requirements.

Yours faithfully,

**Chester Zoo Health and Safety Team**  
September 2022



## **Health & Safety Information for Group Visits to Chester Zoo**

We are not able to carry out risk assessments on behalf of groups because we are not aware of all the pertinent circumstances regarding your particular visit, for example, we do not know the level of supervision which you are proposing, whether you have anyone with special needs, or other relevant individual details.

We strongly recommend that Group Leaders make a pre-visit to carry out their own risk assessment. This can be facilitated by prior arrangement and is free.

We have also prepared this document to help you.

Please feel free to contact our Health and Safety Team if you have any further queries.

Tel: 01244 380280

[healthandsafety@chesterzoo.org](mailto:healthandsafety@chesterzoo.org)

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **1. Medical Provision**

##### **What are the medical provisions on site?**

Fully qualified First Aiders are always on hand when the zoo is open. If necessary, you can contact any member of staff who will contact the duty first-aider by telephone or radio.

First Aiders are trained to deal with all minor injuries on site and also, in the initial stages of any major injuries until the emergency services arrive.

The first aid team cannot dispense medicines of any kind – including 'Epi-Pens' or inhalers - so anyone who may need medication must bring it with them.

There is no 'sick bay' where guests who are unwell can be accommodated so arrangements must be made to return individuals home if they are too unwell to continue with their visit. For serious incidents an ambulance will be summoned.

It is advisable to bring a small first aid kit to deal with minor injuries such as blisters as wait times for non-urgent first aid incidents may be lengthy at busy times.

There are numerous Automatic External Defibrillators located around the Zoo site.

The nearest pharmacy to the zoo is located at Morrison Supermarket, Mill Lane, Upton, Chester, CH2 1AU.

The nearest hospital to the zoo is Countess of Chester Hospital, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1UL and has accident and emergency facilities.

Both of the above are approximately 5 mins drive away.

## **2. Slopes, Steps and Surfaces**

### **Are there any steep slopes or any steps to climb within the zoo?**

There are no prolonged steep slopes within the zoo, although there are some steep bridges that are not suitable for wheel chairs or mobility scooters. There are some steps, but disabled access is provided where necessary.

### **Could any ground or floor surfaces be wet and slippery or uneven? If so, what measures are in place to prevent accidents?**

Ground and floor surfaces are non-slip wherever possible. The outdoor nature of the zoo means that it is exposed to weather conditions that can have an adverse effect on surfaces and care needs to be taken when surfaces are wet. Indoors, a 'Wet Floor' sign procedure is in operation when required.

Some outdoor areas may be slightly uneven but significant trip hazards are identified and controlled.

## **3. Signposting**

### **Is there clear signposting within the zoo?**

Yes, the zoo is well sign-posted throughout. There are large maps displayed on noticeboards at various points around the site. A downloadable map is available via our website.

The zoo itself is also well signposted on the local roads.

## **4. Traffic and Transport**

### **Are there any traffic hazards, if so, how are these minimised?**

There is a large coach and car parking facility near the main entrance where you may encounter vehicular traffic at slow speeds.

The zoo is an enclosed area and contains no public roads. Pedestrian walkways are provided throughout the zoo. It is closed to most vehicular traffic whilst open to the public. Critical zoo vehicles and emergency vehicles will on occasion move around the grounds during open hours at slow speeds. Some staff also use bicycles within the site at slow speeds.

### **How do we see the zoo if we get tired?**

The zoo covers a large area of ground but seating is available at numerous locations to enable visitors to sit and rest when required.

The Lazy River Boat Trip allows viewing of a portion of the Islands zone of the zoo – supervision of children is required to ride on this.

Children's buggies are available for hire.

## **5. Disabled Persons Provision**

### **What provisions are there for disabled persons?**

The walkways are all surfaced throughout the zoo and there is ramp access as alternatives in areas where there are steps.



Wheelchairs and mobility scooters are available free of charge with a £25.00 refundable deposit. These can be reserved in advance by calling 01244 380280 or emailing [guest.services@chesterzoo.org](mailto:guest.services@chesterzoo.org). Powered mobility aids are speed restricted and familiarisation training will be given upon collection.

Please note that the bridge adjacent to Tropical Realm entrance is not suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters due to the steep slopes at both sides of the bridge.

There are a number of accessible toilet facilities and changing facilities for children and an adult changing facility with hoist is located at the Jubilee toilets near to June's Food Court.

There are many seats at various locations within the zoo grounds.

Bicycles, skateboards, segways, scooters, roller blades, skates and 'heelies' (shoes with wheels) are not permitted in the zoo.

## **6. Lost Children and Vulnerable Adults**

### **What are the zoo provisions for lost people?**

We cannot arrange for searches unless it is for a child or vulnerable adult. Wherever possible, please make plans beforehand of what to do if your group becomes separated ie exchange of mobile phone numbers; arrange meeting points, etc

If you lose a child or vulnerable adult from your group, ask any member of staff to help (staff are recognisable by their blue uniforms with zoo logos and their name badges). They will radio or telephone security who will coordinate a search and inform exit gate staff to prevent them leaving site.

## **7. Emergency procedures**

### **Is there a team of trained staff members on hand at all times and briefed in emergency and First Aid procedures?**

Yes. The zoo has a comprehensive emergency plan that has been developed in conjunction with the emergency services. The emergency plan covers incidents such as fire, animal escape, boat failure, and security incidents.

### **Is there an evacuation procedure?**

Yes. There is a full evacuation procedure in place, which the zoo takes care of.

In the event of an emergency follow instructions given by staff or broadcast over the public address system.

## **8. Security**

### **What security measures are there in the zoo?**

The zoo has a dedicated security team which is able to deal with any minor security issues on site. The security team spend their time patrolling the zoo and dealing with any security related matters and the team is also trained to deal with any emergency incidents. To help ensure your safety, CCTV is in operation throughout the zoo.



### **What supervision is required for children?**

Unaccompanied children under 14 are not allowed alone in the zoo.

Within organised educational visits we're happy to admit a quota of adults free of charge to supervise students in the zoo. It is the group leader's responsibility to ensure that there are effective supervision arrangements and appropriate adult to child ratios are in place to ensure acceptable behaviour at all times.

School groups of all ages must be accompanied by a responsible adult in order to enter Fruit Bat Forest; Butterfly Journey; ride on the Lazy River Boat Trip; and use playground equipment.

Year 10 students and below must be accompanied in our main retail outlets.

### **In the event that children are unruly or misbehave and climb on fences etc. do staff members take disciplinary action?**

Uniformed zoo staff are on duty at all times and would take the necessary steps. The zoo has regulations which are displayed at the entrance. Staff are trained to enforce these regulations for the benefit of all guests and will instruct children to behave when necessary.

The quality and safety of all our attractions are important and therefore, a considerable amount of time and effort is spent on ensuring that all our visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience at the zoo.

## **9. Lockers**

### **Are lockers available to store belongings?**

No. There are no lockers for visitors to store their belongings. You may however return to your vehicle and re-enter the zoo. However, it is not advised to leave valuables in your vehicle.

## **10. Shelters**

### **Are there areas of shelter for use during adverse weather conditions?**

Sheltered areas are located throughout the zoo and sheltered picnic areas are also available. For hygiene reasons animal houses are not suitable places to consume food and drink.

Many of the animals are themselves housed in weatherproof viewing enclosures, so that large parts of the zoo can be seen in comfort, whatever the weather.

Ensure that your group is prepared for the expected weather for the time of year.

In extreme weather conditions, that might pose a threat to safety, the zoo may close to visitors.

## **11. Food Safety**

### **Is the food in the shops and food outlets clearly labelled?**

Yes. All food for sale fully complies with trading standards for food. The food and beverage outlets operate within Food Safety legislation and are regularly inspected by the local Environmental Health Department.



If you have any food allergies please speak to a member of the team at any of the food and beverage outlets for more information and highlight that you have a food allergy before purchasing food items.

## **12. Glass Hazards**

### **Do glass doors and windows pose a hazard to children?**

No. Safety glass is used wherever necessary throughout the zoo.

## **13. Sensory Triggers**

Some areas of the zoo may contain sensory triggers

### **Enclosed spaces**

Some areas may feel enclosed because they are dimly lit. Indoor areas can feel enclosed on busy days or in poor weather when more visitors head indoors.

There is a tunnel section of pathway within Monsoon Forest.

### **Lighting**

Some indoor areas are dimly lit to resemble night time such as Fruit Bat Forest and AyeAyes exhibit at Tropical Realm.

When entering dark exhibits pause to allow your eyes to adjust to the new light levels.

### **Heat and Humidity**

Some indoor plant and animal habitats must maintain high heat and humidity. These are signposted so they can be avoided if necessary.

### **Noise**

Some areas of the zoo can be noisy from animal calls, pre-recorded soundtracks of natural sounds or music, or from visitors themselves. Please minimise noise when around animals as they can find it distressing.

Playing music from personal devices such as radios or phones is not permitted in the zoo.

## **14. Safety Inspections**

### **Are the boats and play areas inspected daily for any hazards?**

Yes. Daily inspections are carried out by zoo staff. The play areas are also inspected annually by RoSPA and the boat trip is inspected regularly by a third party engineering company.

## **15. Animals**

### **Can we stroke the animals?**

Sorry, no. For your own protection from possible kicks, bites or scratches, for hygiene reasons and so that the animals are not stressed; we do not allow any of the animals to be stroked or petted.



### **How safe are we from the zoo animals?**

The animals are housed behind suitably constructed barriers through which the visitors are able to see, but through which the animals cannot pass.

Chester Zoo is operated under strict licensing conditions. A dedicated team of experienced animal keepers care for the animals. To ensure that they are content and to avoid stress, the animals are able to go into areas within their enclosures which are away from public view if they choose. Therefore not all of the animals may be visible for all of the time.

There are some areas where birds, bats, butterflies are in free flight and where small mammals are not separated from visitors. There should be no attempt to touch animals in these areas and visitors must be quiet and calm so as not to distress the animals.

Handwashing is recommended after visiting these areas and sinks are provided for handwashing in addition to those in WCs located around the zoo. There are also a number of hand sanitiser stations placed around the zoo.

### **Wild animals**

The zoo is also home to large numbers of native British wildlife, particularly birds and insects.

Although many of these seem quite tame no attempt should be made to touch birds as they can bite and peck. Children should be discouraged from touching or chasing these animals as this can cause distress to the animal.

There are some colonies of native bees in the zoo - these areas are clearly marked with signage.

At certain times of the year wasps will be attracted to sweet drinks and foods and will congregate around them. Wash hands and face after consuming sweet foods and drinks and take care around waste bins. Do not 'swat' at wasps as this makes them more likely to sting. Stay calm and move away.

### **Assistance animals**

Dogs and other pets are not allowed into the zoo and must not be left in vehicles. Registered disability aid dogs are permitted into the zoo but are restricted in some areas for the safety and wellbeing of the animals.

## **16. Water bodies**

There are large numbers of outdoor and indoor water bodies and features around the zoo such as ponds, canals and moats. These are contained by borders, barriers and/or have warning signage posted. Visitors must not pass over, under or through barriers erected for the purposes of safety.

## **17. Play areas**

The play areas in the zoo have been designed for mixed ages and abilities. Adult supervision is essential for these areas. See Section 8

## **18. Biosecurity**

Personal items that are lost in animal enclosures may not be suitable for return for hygiene reasons and the Zoo reserves the right to dispose of these items as clinical waste.

Items that are returned should be washed and disinfected thoroughly. The Zoo holds no liability for potential biological contamination consequences.

Visitors should follow hygiene precautions following entry into animal houses, particularly 'walk through' exhibits. Wash hands after exit and before eating, drinking, smoking or using the toilet

Visitors must refrain from eating or drinking inside animal houses, particularly interactive exhibits.

## **19. Plants and Trees**

The plants and trees within the gardens are proactively managed and trees are subject to regular safety inspections and remedial work where needed. Visitors must not enter the planted areas that are fenced or climb trees.

**Chester Zoo Health and Safety Team**

Sept 2022