

Toronto Zoo Field Trips – Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated: 2019-04-23

ADMISSION AND BOOKING

Question: Do you offer a discounted admission rate for schools?

Answer: We are pleased to provide school groups with a discounted admission rate.

School Group Admission Rates*

Elementary (K-8)	\$9.00
Secondary (9-12)	\$10.00
Post-Secondary	\$11.00

One teacher per class receives free admission. For Kindergarten classes, one teacher and one ECE receive free admission. All additional supervisors pay the school group admission rate.

Admission fees are waived for support persons accompanying students with disabilities who require one-on-one support for health and/or safety reasons. Support persons should not be included in the minimum supervisor ratio, as their attention is focused on an individual students

If your students are participating in a school program, additional program fees apply.

Proceeds received from school visits support the operations of the Toronto Zoo, including our on-going conservation and education initiatives to protect species at home and abroad.

HST is included in all rates (HST# 119216398RT001)

**Rates are subject to change without notice. For current rates, please [click here](#).*

Question: Who is eligible to receive the school group admission rate?

Answer: The school group admission rate is available to groups from schools registered with a provincial Ministry of Education or Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, in addition to other education facilities, for the sole purpose of meeting learning requirements outline in a course curriculum. In July and August, school group rates are valid only for education institutions on a modified school year.

Question: Do you offer a discounted admission rate for licensed child care centres?

Answer: Licensed child care centres* are eligible to receive the \$9.00 school group rate for children aged 3-12 during the 2018-2019 school year (excluding school holidays). During school holidays, licensed child care centres will receive 25% off regular admission rates.

**Child Care Centres must be licensed with the Ministry of Education and book with a minimum of 10 students to receive the discounted school group rate.*

Question: How much does parking cost?

Answer: School buses can park in the main parking lot for free. A \$12.00 parking fee* applies to all personal vehicles.

**Rates are subject to change without notice. For current rates, please [click here](#).*

Question: One of my students has a Toronto Zoo membership. Can they use it to cover the cost of admission?

Answer: Yes, Toronto Zoo memberships are honoured for school groups. Both students and supervisors can use their membership to cover the cost of admission. Please photocopy all memberships (on a single page if possible) and present to Guest Services upon arrival. School programs fees will still apply (*if applicable*).

Question: How and when do we pay for our visit?

Answer: Deposits are not required for school visits. Full payment is due upon your arrival and is based on the number of students and supervisors present on the day of your visit. If paying by cheque, refunds will be given for overpayment.

Acceptable Methods of Payment

- Invoice (schools associated with an Ontario Ministry of Education School Board can be invoiced)
- Credit (American Express, MasterCard, Visa)
- Debit/Interac
- School cheque (payable to *Toronto Zoo*)

Schools that are part of a publically-funded school board in Ontario can be invoiced; however, this must be arranged prior to your visit by contacting Guest Services at 416-392-5932.

Question: Do I need to book the field trip in advance?

Answer: School visits should be booked at least two weeks in advance to ensure your confirmation package will arrive prior to your trip. School programs and guided tours should be booked well in advance, as space is limited.

Question: How do I book a school visit?

Answer: SELF-GUIDED VISIT: [Book online](#) or call 416-392-5932
GUIDED TOUR: Email tzvolunteers@torontozoo.ca or call 416-392-5942
SCHOOL PROGRAM: Email schools@torontozoo.ca or call 416-392-5944

Question: Are we able to cancel or reschedule our field trip if needed?

Answer: Field trips can be rescheduled or cancelled without penalty. Rescheduling a school program or guided tour is subject to availability.

Question: How many supervisors are we required to bring?

Answer: For the safety of our student guests and the enjoyment of our public patrons, the supervisor to student ratio is strictly enforced.

Supervisor Ratios

Grades K to 3: 1 supervisor per 5 students
 Grades 4 to 8: 1 supervisor per 10 students
 Grades 9 to 12: 1 supervisor per 20 students

** In the event that your group does not meet these requirements, you will be charged in accordance with the minimum supervisor ratio and a letter will be issued to your school requiring that any further bookings meet this requirement.*

The role of the supervisor is to ensure the safety of all students, encourage appropriate behaviour from each student, and model respect for the animals and plants. All students should be accompanied by a supervisor at all times. Any display of inappropriate behaviour will be grounds for expulsion from the Zoo site. Supervisors must be at least 18 years of age.

Question: What type of field trips do you offer?

Answer: SELF-GUIDED VISIT

Enjoy the flexibility of exploring the Zoo on your own with your students and discover the diversity of wildlife that call the Zoo home. To learn more about the animals, attend a Meet-the-Keeper talk ([schedule](#)) or the Amazing Animal Show (runs seasonally), visit an interactive interpretive station, or download **FREE** curriculum-linked resources ([elementary](#) & [secondary](#)).

GUIDED TOUR

Toronto Zoo Volunteers will guide your students through the Zoo on an exciting, two-hour tour (10:00 am -12:00 pm) where they will learn about animals connected to your chosen curriculum-linked topic. Spend the remainder of your visit exploring the Zoo on your own.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Delivered by Toronto Zoo educators, school programs are a unique and exciting way to bring the curriculum to life. A variety of programs are available for both elementary and secondary students.

ELEMENTARY:

Full-day Workshops (Gr. 1-7)
 Half-day Workshops (Gr. 2 & 6)
 Polar Bear Programs (Primary & Junior/Intermediate)
 Exploring Wildlife Conservation Presentation (Gr. 7-8)

SECONDARY:

Half-day Workshop (Gr. 10)
 Exploring Wildlife Conservation Presentation (Gr. 9-12)
 Green Technology Tour (Gr. 9-12)

Question: I am not familiar with the Toronto Zoo. Can I visit ahead of time to plan my field trip?

Answer: To help prepare and plan for a successful field trip, educators who have pre-booked a school trip are invited to visit the Toronto Zoo for FREE* ahead of time by presenting a copy of your school visit confirmation letter and a valid OCT card or equivalent Teacher ID card, along with photo ID, at Guest Services.

**Valid for one admission and parking pass per educator, up to the number of qualified complimentary educators indicated in the school visit confirmation package. All educators attending the planning visit must check in at Guest Services at the same time*

GENERAL ZOO INFORMATION

Question: When is the best time to visit?

Answer: The Zoo is open year-round and is a great place to visit regardless of the weather! The majority of school groups visit the Zoo in the warmer months of October, May, and June. However, with five indoor pavilions, the Zoo offers a wide variety of animals for your students to explore when it's raining or snowing. In the cooler months, animals tend to be more active and with fewer visitors at the Zoo, students will have the opportunity to spend more time at an exhibit observing the animals.

Question: What time does the Zoo open at?

Answer: For current hours of operation, please [click here](#).

Question: Is the Zoo accessible?

Answer: The Zoo has many features that makes it accessible for all visitors, including free wheelchairs (with refundable deposit), automated entry systems on washroom and pavilion doors, ramps in lieu of stairs, and accessible washrooms.

Additionally, support persons providing one-on-one support to a student for health and/or safety reasons receive complimentary admission.

For more information about accessibility at the Zoo, please [click here](#).

Question: Do you have educator resources available?

Answer: We have a variety of curriculum-linked resources available for both elementary and secondary students, including self-guided tours, lesson ideas, activity guides, and assignments. Resources will help support your field trip and enhance your students' learning both in the classroom and at the Zoo. Visit torontozoo.com to download your **FREE** resources (**elementary** & **secondary**) today!

Question: What should students bring with them?

Answer:

- Appropriate clothing for the season (layers work best)
- Backpack
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Hat
- Lunch & Snacks
- Reusable water bottle
- Sunscreen
- Notebook & pencil to record their observations
- Camera (optional)
- Raingear (if needed)

Question: Can we bring our own lunches?

Answer: Absolutely! Students can either bring their own litterless lunch with them or purchase food at one of the restaurants. If you would like to add a Zoo pizza or boxed lunch to your trip, please contact Compass Foods at 416-392-6003 prior to your visit.

**Note: Some restaurants are open seasonally – [click here](#) to find out what's open for your visit.*

Question: Where can we eat?

Answer: Picnic tables are available throughout the Zoo. Please refer to the [Zoo map](#) for details about the location of picnic tables and picnic shelters.

**Note: Some picnic areas may be closed for events. Please refer to signs posted at entrance of picnic area.*

Question: Do you have a place to store belongings or lunches?

Answer: Lockers are available to rent at the Main Entrance. However, due to the limited number of lockers available and the size of Zoo, it is recommended that students carry their belongings with them during their visit. Schools participating in full-day workshops have access to a classroom space to store their belongings.

Question: Are students able to feed or touch the animals?

Answer: Zoo animals are on specialized diets – any additional food can cause them serious harm or trigger fighting within the group. Please do not attempt to feed or approach any wild birds or animals on the Zoo site, as these animals may become aggressive.

Wildlife Care staff often bring Outreach animals out for casual encounters with Zoo visitors. If you spot an animal around the Zoo with Wildlife Care staff, students are welcome to approach for a closer look, but please ensure that your students follow the directions of the keepers, as they are for the safety of both the animal and your students.

Question: Why is an exhibit empty?

Answer: Unless there is an 'Animal off-display' sign in the exhibit, chances are that the animal(s) is on display, but has found a spot to hide.

In the event of inclement weather, some animals may be off-display or given access to indoor holdings. Animals may also be temporarily off-exhibit due to routine medical check-ups or brief exhibit maintenance. Animals may be off-display for longer periods of time for exhibit renovations.

For a list of animals that are currently off-display, please [click here](#) or contact Guest Services at 416-392-5929.

SAFETY

Question: What happens if a student has a medical emergency or becomes separated from their group?

Answer: In the event of an emergency, please report to the nearest staff member, use a red emergency phone (see Zoo map for locations), or call the emergency contact number for Security (provided in your confirmation package). For minor injuries or illnesses, a First Aid Centre is located by the Africa Restaurant.

If the Zoo needs to contact you during your visit, they will first call the cell phone number provided to Guest Services upon arrival and then contact the school directly.

- If you have additional questions about Toronto Zoo field trips, please contact Guest Services at **416-392-5932**.
- For specific questions about **school programs**, please email schools@torontozoo.ca or call 416-392-5944.
- For specific questions about **guided tours**, please email tzvolunteers@torontozoo.ca or call 416-392-5942.