

Successful Field Trip Tips!



Planning and preparing students will make the field trip more meaningful.

Getting ready...

Plan your Exploration

Download our Zoo Map and plan your day. Decide which animals/habitats you want to see. Read our Field Trip FAQ's on the next page. It has answers to our commonly asked questions that may come up as you get closer to the field trip date.

Prepare the students

It's important to prepare the students for what they might see. Go over your expectations and the day's schedule in advance. Please remind them to wear comfortable walking shoes and weather appropriate clothing.

Prepare the Chaperones

Let the Chaperones know what your educational goals are for the trip. It's also a good idea to go over school rules and expectations, what to do in cases of emergency, when and where to meet for lunch and the plan for the day. For your convenience a Chaperone Information sheet is included in the Field Trip Guide you'll receive with your confirmation. It includes animal viewing tips, zoo rules and an area for you to fill in lunch meeting time and place.

Prepare the Day of the Field Trip

Fill in the final count of students and chaperones on the Confirmation Form before leaving the school and bring the form with you (the admission gates must have an accurate count of students and chaperones in the school group). Distribute wristbands to the chaperones. Don't forget to bring leftovers with you to turn in at the ticket booth. And, don't forget to bring payment. Prepare the bus driver for the trip. Our Field Trip Guide contains a convenient Bus Driver Information sheet including a directional parking lot map for unloading and loading and an area for you to fill in lunch and pick-up times.

At the Zoo...

Before you enter

We know your time is limited. The fastest way to get in the Zoo is to be well organized. Be prepared to have the teacher with the payment separate from the group while the students are unloading. That teacher will take the Confirmation Form with the final numbers, leftover wristbands and payment to the ticket booth. As soon as the teacher is finished at the ticket booth return to the group to enter the Zoo together. If you are dividing into smaller groups we ask that you wait until you're inside the Zoo to do so. Our Compass Rose Plaza, immediately inside the Zoo gates, is much larger than our entrance plaza. You'll have more space to spread everyone out.

In the Zoo

Be Flexible. It's great to have a plan for the day. But, we are comprised of living animals that can be unpredictable. An animal you planned to see may be off exhibit for the day. Or, a new animal may have joined the collection. Be sure to thoroughly look all over the exhibit before moving on. As is the nature of some animals they may be under a bush/rock or in the water. You may also find one of our Docents hanging around. Our Docents are full of interesting information about our animals and their exhibits.

Leaving the Zoo

Everyone may need a restroom break before leaving. The restrooms next to the Zoo Entrance can form a line during our Field Trip Season, March - May. The next nearest restroom is in our Barnyard next to the Beastro. It's a good alternative to the Entrance Restrooms.

Field Trip FAQ's

How is payment handled?

Payment is collected at the ticket booth on the day of arrival. We accept cash, credit cards (Visa and MasterCard) and Business/Organization check made payable to Norfolk City Treasurer.

Which days typically fill?

April and May are our busiest months for field trips and days fill quickly. If you are planning a field trip during this time we recommend that you send in your Reservation Request Form by the end of February.

Can we use Memberships?

Virginia Zoo Members may send a copy of their membership card to you for their child's admission. Give the copy to the cashier with your payment. We cannot accept photo copies of Reciprocal Memberships, for example North Carolina Aquarium. Zoos and Aquariums with which we have reciprocity do not receive the same benefits as Virginia Zoo Members. However, if the parent will be attending they may take their child through the ticket booth with their membership.

Do you have activity sheets?

We encourage you to create your own and use worksheets with care. Teachers often find activity sheets or scavenger hunts a great way to keep students on task. Studies have taught us that it's important to design these to take advantage of unique experiences. Below are a few websites, of the many available on the internet, with information and templates for creating activity sheets to support your classroom instruction and zoo field trip.

<http://Intreasures.com/>, <http://www.abcteach.com/directory/theme-units-zoo-4884-2-1>, <http://www.kidsparkz.com/zoo.html>,

What do I do if it rains the day of our visit?

As soon as you've decided to reschedule your visit call Visitor Services at (757) 441-2374 ext. 251. We will work with you to schedule another day.

Can my Chaperones/Parents get the school rate if they pay individually when we arrive?

No, they will be charged full price admission at the gate. The discounted \$6 rate is only available if they are included in the school's payment.

What if parents are late and coming in after the school group?

Please encourage parents to arrive with the group. Anyone entering separately from the group will be charged our regular admission rates.

When do I give you my final numbers or what do I do if my numbers change?

It's not necessary to notify us of attendance changes before your visit. Your final count is given to the ticket booth the day of your visit. Any changes are made at that time.

Where can we store/eat lunch?

The African Village Restaurant can provide nutritional meals for your group. A Bagged Lunch order form is included in the Field Trip Guide you'll receive with your confirmation.

Picnic areas are available on a first serve basis outside the Zoo in Lafayette Park. Meal storage prior to lunch time is the responsibility of the group. The Zoo does not have storage/lockers for your lunches.

Can we change the date after we've received the confirmation?

Yes. If you need to change your field trip date please call Visitor Services at (757) 441-2374 ext. 251.

Can I order more adult wristbands before the field trip?

Once you've received your confirmation any changes are done at the ticket booth on your day of visit. Additional wristbands, if needed, will be given to you then.