



GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT FOR SCHOOLS/GROUP VISITS

INTRODUCTION

Please note:

Wildwood is a natural woodland site with all the hazards you would expect to find on a walk in the woods – trees, roots and stumps, branches, and open ditches which are dry in summer and wet in heavy rain. Our animals are accommodated in natural enclosures and the woodland paths twist and turn through the trees. This contributes hugely to the wild character of the site, but also means that visitors should be aware that Wildwood is not a conventional zoo with a concrete infrastructure – if it's wet, expect our natural paths to be muddy with puddles. Likewise, Wildwood's play area is a woodland adventure playground for children to explore. We want your children to enjoy their visit and to be safe, so we ask you to ensure their supervision in the park and the playzone at all times.

Playzone Information

Wildwood's adventure playground underwent a major refurbishment during 2010-2011, with tall viewing towers added to the existing fort, a new twisting tube slide and the largest drop slide in the Southeast complementing the existing zip wire, basket swings, etc. A children-sized badger sett with climbing wall and other additions were completed during 2012. The Pine Marten Towers with climbing wall, twisting tube slide, and rope bridges was added in 2017. The playzone is extremely popular with visiting schools and there is strong competition to use it at peak times. It is important that you are aware of the changes and, as always, that you supervise your children or students when using this equipment. The drop slide has to be supervised by a member of Wildwood's staff as well as a member of your own school's staff and is not usually open during school visits. If you would like it opened for your school, please ask the education team in advance and we will then be able to timetable someone to open it for you, usually between 1 pm and 2 pm. A member of your school staff needs to remain at the head of the slide with the supervisor to ensure only your children use it while it is open. The tube slide, towers, fort, etc. however remain open without our supervision.

If you are having a range of taught activities during your day with us, please treat your free time slots as an opportunity to use the playzone at times when it is not in use by all the other visiting schools (usually after 1 pm). If you only have free time after lunch, please take extra special care in supervising your children/students, as there will be several schools trying to use the area at the same time.

Specific Risk Assessments

The following is a generic risk assessment for schools/groups visiting the park. Specific risk assessments exist for activities which take place in the woodland off the public paths, involve chemicals (CSI) or take place off site. If these are relevant to your visit, please ask for any of the following risk assessments:

- Woodland risk assessment – for minibeast hunts, CSI as an outdoor activity and woodland ecology
- Beach risk assessment – for sixth-form beach ecology visits
- CSI risk assessment – for chemicals used in CSI: Wildwood
- External visits – these will be specific to each visit, according to site.

| IDENTIFY RISK | RISK LEVEL | MITIGATION OF RISK |
|--|------------|--|
| CHILD SAFETY | | |
| Child protection, safeguarding | Low | All Wildwood staff DBS checked. All tutors experienced and familiar with the animals and park layout. Tutor to welcome school/group and introduce all Wildwood education staff involved to children/students and teachers. Teachers to bring sufficient accompanying adults to supervise small groups of children properly (approx 1:4 ratio for 5-7yrs; 1:6 for 7-11yrs and 1:10 for 11-18yrs). |
| ANIMALS | | |
| Bites/Kicks/Butts | Low | No visitor contact with animals Stand-off barriers to prevent visitor contact Warning notices at enclosures No feeding policy for visitors Feeding only by Wildwood Trust staff taking guided groups School groups invited to leave food bags behind for tours to avoid attracting animals Adder bite emergency procedure in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o anaphylactic students to bring their epi-pens o advise students of risk of wild adders in woods on day o advise not to approach snakes but to call tutor o local hospital aware of captive adders |
| Disease (human/animal and animal/human transmission) | Low | No contact policy for visitors (risk of disease transmission to and from animals) Feeding only by Wildwood staff taking guided groups Animals used for education not normally handled or touched by members of the public Guided groups advised to wash hands with soap and hot water in public toilets after tour/activities before eating; alcohol gel hand washing dispenser on café veranda and in education centre |
| Insect bites (wood ants/bees/wasps/mosquitoes) | Low | Large wood ant nests identified as ancient woodland indicators and advice given to students on keeping their distance and stepping over wood ant trails to avoid ants' defensive responses Bee/wasp sting emergency procedure in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o groups warned to be alert o bee garden not included on usual tours o warning signs on approach to bee garden o first aiders trained to be alert to risk of anaphylactic shock o teachers to be aware of presence of bees Highly allergic students to bring their own sting relief cream/epi-pen (Wildwood's first aiders are not qualified to administer any medication) Ecology students working in woodlands asked about allergic reactions during initial H&S introduction Bee hives behind glass panel and boundary fence - contact unlikely Mosquitoes generally a seasonal problem only in May-June – general advice on presence in woodland and need to bring own insect repellent/sting relief |

| | | |
|--|-----|--|
| Escapes | Low | Established animal escape procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ head keeper to co-ordinate recapture ○ staff to clear public to safety during recapture ○ list of all visiting groups in shop/education diary |
| | | Established places of safety (all buildings: shop, café, badger building, rat barn, education centre, toilets) |
| ENCLOSURES | | |
| Electric fencing (inside some enclosures) | Low | Stand-off barriers to prevent contact |
| | | Warning signs in place |
| RED SQUIRREL WALK-THROUGH | | |
| Slips/trips | Low | Elevated walkway has a high wire mesh-covered railing to prevent falls Walkway checked daily for fallen branches/twigs Walkway slippery when wet. Visitors are advised to wear suitable footwear with good treads |
| Trees | Low | Overhanging branches pruned regularly so as to not come in contact with visitors Staff advised to be alert and keep eyes open in strong winds in case of falling branches/trees |
| Animal contact | Low | Squirrels have access to elevated walkway and railings but are naturally fearful of human contact so highly unlikely to come within reach of visitors Visitors are advised that feeding or touching the squirrels is prohibited Visitors advised to wash hands with soap and hot water at the hand wash station at the end of the walk-through or in public toilets after walk through and before eating; alcohol gel hand washing dispenser on café veranda and in education centre |
| WOLF PLATFORM | | |
| Slips/trips | Low | Elevated platform has a high solid wooden barrier to prevent falls Platform checked daily for fallen branches/twigs Platform slippery when wet. Visitors are advised to wear suitable footwear with good treads |
| BEAR BRIDGE | | |
| Slips/trips | Low | Visiting groups should only cross with adult supervision and in small groups. Bridge closed during winter. |
| Fear/panic | Low | Visiting groups should only cross with adult supervision and in small groups. |
| WOODLAND | | |
| Trees | Low | Staff advised to be alert and keep eyes open in strong winds in case of falling branches/trees |
| | | Paths checked daily for overhanging/fallen branches |
| Natural paths | Low | Exposed tree roots, stumps and growing trees in pathways; care required |
| | | Paths may become muddy and flooded after rain; suitable footwear (eg: wellington boots) required |
| Trips/falls | Low | Visitors are requested to keep to the marked paths |
| | | Most stumps/tree roots eliminated from woodland paths but reasonable care required as pathways are natural, not concrete or tarmac |
| | | Students advised to be alert to trip/eye hazards |
| | | Trained first aiders on site and first aid equipment stored in all permanent buildings on site |
| Nettles/brambles | Low | Regular cutting back carried out on paths |

| | | |
|--|--------|--|
| | | Students advised to be alert to plant hazards |
| Drainage ditches | Low | Dry in summer, wet in winter – care required on bridges, especially in wet/frosty conditions; students advised accordingly |
| Open water | Low | Fences/barriers in place |
| | | Close supervision of children required to prevent climbing |
| Lost children | Low | Winding paths run in a complete circle – advise students they will return to the play area as long as they keep going in the same direction; report then to shop staff who will alert education staff to re-unite them with their group |
| Fire | Low | Fire procedure in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ established fire assembly points at park gates ○ keepers trained as fire marshals to clear park ○ all other staff to assist ○ list of all visiting groups kept in shop/education diary |
| WEATHER | | |
| Sunburn/stroke | Low | Tree cover/shade extensive through spring-autumn |
| | | All students advised to wear sun hats/cover up bare skin/use sun cream |
| Getting wet | Medium | Tree cover extensive through spring-autumn |
| | | Hides, covered verandas and small buildings around park offer brief refuge during downpours |
| | | Students advised to bring rainproof clothing |
| | | Café veranda and outdoor classroom available for student picnics in wet weather; please remember to encourage children to clean up after themselves so the covered spaces can be enjoyed by all visitors. |
| WOODLAND ADVENTURE PLAY AREA | | |
| Main play equipment | Low | Equipment checked daily |
| (wooden) | | Deep wood bark play surface |
| | | Some equipment unsuitable for very young children but designated under-fives play area separately fenced |
| | | Teacher supervision required at all times |
| | | Care required in wet weather as wooden ramps and surfaces may be slippery |
| | | Zip slide requires continuous adult supervision and only one person permitted to use it at a time |
| | | Fort gates are closed at park closing; staff will check fort is empty before closing but teachers/group leaders must also account for all members of their party |
| Number of children (may be several schools at peak times) | Low | Wildwood-run activities are staggered during school visiting times to relieve pressure on play area |
| | | At peak times every effort is made to email schedules to schools in advance so teachers are aware not only of their own timetables but those of other schools visiting on the same day, so they can adjust their free time to avoid conflicts |
| | | Staff supervision required at all times |
| DROP SLIDE (top) | | |
| Injury on stairs - tripping, slipping, falling, shoving, bumped heads | Low | Handrails, signs and overhead padding provided |
| Injury on stairs - crowding on exit from drop slide | Low | Alternative exit into main fort provided |
| Inappropriate clothing – friction burns | Low | Cover up bare skin by wearing long trousers, socks and sleeved T-shirts; tuck in T-shirts at the back |

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| Wearing shoes (banned) - limits effectiveness of slide, destroys slide surface and can interfere with smooth passage down slide | Low | Children to remove shoes Advisory signs from stair base to top Shoe storage areas provided |
| Falling - pushing at top of slide | Low | Advisory signs on correct use of slide provided, especially warning against pushing off from top of slide Teacher/group leader supervision required at the top and bottom of the slide while your children are using it |
| Injury - pushing at top of slide, panic, incorrect use | Low | Advisory signs on correct use of slide provided Teacher/group leader supervision required at the top and bottom of the slide while your children are using it |
| Wasp stings - potential nests in wooden roof , stings | Low | Regular checks for nests, preventative methods used around play/picnic areas and disposal |
| Panic - congestion on stairs, unable to reach bar at top of slide, lack of confidence | Low | Teacher/group leader supervision required at the top and bottom of the slide while your children are using it |
| DROP SLIDE (bottom) | | |
| Injury - bumping at end of slide | Low | Impact cushions provided at slide end Slower momentum at slide end No entry signs to deter incomers Directional exit signs from slide |
| Injury - articles dropped on slide (and retrieval) | Low | Teacher/group leader supervision required at the top and bottom of the slide while your children are using it to prevent dropped articles Any dropped articles will follow person to slide end |
| Injury - entering slide at end point | Low | Correct entrance to drop slide signposted Long covered walkway from endpoint back to entrance |
| Injury - observation/taking photographs of children on slide | Low | Ledge to stop observers overhanging slide Long walkway beside slide |
| TOWER 1 | | |
| Congestion – panic, trapping, injury | Low | Fire Brigade inspection/test confirmed area is sufficient for stretcher rescue |
| TOWER 2 | | |
| Congestion – panic, trapping, injury | Low | Two exits from tower |
| TOWER 3 | | |
| Injury – bumped heads | Low | Signage and overhead padding |
| TUBE SLIDE | | |
| Fear - darkness | Low | Signage in advance |
| Injury – bumping within slide | Low | Signage |
| Injury – falling, climbing over fence from stairway | Low | Crenellated castle topping on fencing |
| Injury – falling, climbing over edge | Low | Crenellated castle topping on fencing No footholds Netting |
| Injury – bumped heads (low ceilings and doorways) | Low | Signage and padding |
| PLAYZONE AREA | | |
| Other equipment risks | Low | Equipment checked daily |
| | | Deep wood bark play surface |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| | | Some equipment unsuitable for very young children but designated under-fives play area separately fenced |
| | | Teacher/group leader supervision required at all times |
| | | Care required in wet weather as wooden ramps and surfaces may be slippery |
| | | Zip slide requires continuous adult supervision Only one person permitted to use it at a time |
| Lost children | Low | Single entrance/exit to play area; path leads out of play area in two directions (towards restaurant and towards animals) |
| | | Teacher/group leader supervision required at all times |
| | | Playzone closed and locked at park closing; Wildwood staff will check playzone is empty before closing but teachers/group leaders must account for and bring together all members of their party outside playzone beforehand |
| GENERAL | | |
| Emergencies | Low | Trained first aiders on site and first aid equipment stored in all permanent buildings on site |
| | | All park staff, including tutors and shop staff, in radio contact in case of emergencies |
| | | |



Ada Roman, Education Department
Risk assessment last updated April 2019