



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, open ditches which are dry in summer, 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 south-east complementing the existing zip wire, basket swings etc. A children-sized badger sett with climbing wall and other additions were completed during 2012. 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 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 between 1pm and 2pm. A teacher 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 under siege from all the other visiting schools (usually after 1pm). 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 CRB checked. All tutors experienced and familiar with the animals and park layout. Tutor to welcome school/group and introduce all Wildwood staff to children/students and teachers. Teachers to bring sufficient accompanying adults to supervise small groups of children properly (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"> ○ advise teachers on pre-visit inspection to warn parents of anaphylactic students to bring their epi-pens ○ advise students of risk of wild adders in woods on day ○ advise not to approach but to call tutor ○ 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 may not be 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"> ○ groups warned to be alert ○ bee garden not included on usual tours ○ warning signs on approach to bee garden ○ first aiders trained to be alert to risk of anaphylactic shock ○ teachers advised of presence of bees
		Advise teachers on pre-visit inspection to warn parents of highly allergic students to bring their own sting relief cream/epi-pen (first aiders may not administer)

		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
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 (wellies) 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 available for student picnics in wet weather; please ask restaurant staff permission - staff are very understanding but do appreciate schools collecting their own litter!
		Education centre may be available for lunch on occasions if not being used for a school session; no children/students allowed without proper adult supervision. Breakages/damage/thefts must be paid for. Outdoor education centre may also be available.
WOODLAND ADVENTURE PLAY AREA		
Main play equipment (wooden)	Low	Equipment checked daily
		Deep woodbark play surface
		Some equipment unsuitable for very young children but designated under-fives play area separately fenced
		Staff 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
No. 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 woodbark 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

Anne Riddell Head of Education *Risk assessment last updated February 2014*

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