

# Colchester City Council

## Greening Education Programme

High Woods Country Park is a wonderful and popular facility for everyone, especially children, to explore. We feel the experience of school groups visiting the Park is about educating children on the natural environment, and how to care for it. These guidance notes are provided to assist in making your visit to High Woods an enjoyable and educational experience as well as encouraging the children to consider the importance of respecting and caring for their natural world.

### Booking

The online Enquiry Form will be completed and submitted, provided there is no issue with the enquiry, then a confirmation email will then be sent to you for approval, alternative dates and/or activities will be offered if there is a clash of dates/equipment etc.

### Work Sheets & Equipment

Following your confirmation email, you will also receive copies of any relevant worksheets, session plans, a timetable and risk assessments. It is your responsibility to provide copies for the children/group. The school is responsible for providing clipboards, pencils and any drawing paper required.

All equipment for Ranger-led activities will be provided by High Woods Country Park.

Self-led activities – kits consisting of all the equipment and worksheets are provided at small cost, if required. Safe return of any equipment is your responsibility.

Gloves are not normally offered for use during den building.

### Before your visit

You can arrange a pre-visit to meet the Education Ranger and discuss the activities and locations you will be working in.

Ensure all accompanying adults/parents are well informed of their responsibilities during the activity and any safety advice.

Ensure pupils are well briefed prior to the visit, including guidance on clothing requirements.

- o Stream studies – all children need welly boots
- o Minibeast hunt – long trousers and long-sleeved tops recommended
- o Waterproofs are always recommended as well as an extra layer in case the weather is cooler
- o If it is hot and sunny, sun hats and adequate sun protection are required
- o Please refrain from snacking during the sessions, breaks will be allocated (this is due to handling insects, mud etc.)

### Arrival

If you have requested it at the time of booking, there will be a dedicated coach parking space reserved for you opposite the Visitor Centre. Please ask the driver to use this rather than drop off on Turner Road – this

is a much safer option for the children and there is ample room for a coach or double decker bus to navigate the car park. We will provide a car park permit for the coach on arrival.

Car park charges do apply for any adults arriving by car to attend the trip.

On arrival, you will be met by the Education Ranger who will advise you where to put school bags, lunch boxes etc. The Education Ranger will confirm the expected learning outcomes for the day and do their best to ensure that any priorities are met.

## Toilets

Toilet facilities are available at the building beside the Visitor Centre. It is recommended that toilet visits are carried out prior to any activities to minimise disruption during the educational session. Time will be allocated before each session for this.

## Weather

The Education Ranger will continue teaching regardless of the weather. In the event of poor weather, we are happy to alter the timetable to ensure that we still get the most out of the day. In the unlikely event of extreme weather, the Education Ranger will discuss the situation with the lead teacher at the earliest opportunity, to make a joint decision on the event.

In the event of hot weather, we are able to provide drinking water. Sun hats and adequate sunscreen are recommended as some of our outdoor classrooms can be exposed with little shade.

## Timings

The Education Ranger will discuss timings for your visit at the time of booking, sessions can start from 10am onwards. We do ask for you to arrive as promptly as possible, however we understand that delays are sometimes inevitable, and we ask you to please update us of any delays on the day of the visit as quickly as possible.

In the event of any delays, the Education Ranger will liaise with the lead teacher to ensure the programme is still met to ensure that we get the most out of the day.

## Discipline

You have responsibility for:

- Being 'in loco parentis'.
- Pupils and their behaviour during accompanied and unaccompanied sessions.
- Any equipment used during sessions.
- Country Park staff cannot take responsibility for the safety and discipline of visiting school groups and retain the right to withdraw any pupil from an activity if their behaviour is unacceptable.

## Ratios

There is no charge for adults who attend, just for the children. Therefore the adults can exceed the recommended number but must not fall below.

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

## Health & Safety

The Country Park has risk assessments for activities undertaken in the nominated outdoor classrooms at High Woods Country Park. This will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Country Park staff are qualified 1st Aiders and always carry 1st aid kits.

The Country Park is frequented by lots of dog walkers, in the event of a dog off lead approaching the group or individual children, children are advised to stand still and cross their arms over their chest, this should encourage the dog to move on.

Ticks can be found in the woodland and can carry Lyme disease, which is a bacterial infection that can be spread to humans by infected ticks. Please familiarise yourself and parents with the current guidance on ticks and how to check for and remove them.

## Lunchtime

During this time, the Education Ranger will leave your group. There are picnic areas near the Visitor Centre, and we can arrange an indoor area for small groups if the weather is very poor.

## Waste Free Lunch

Please encourage the children not to drop litter. Recycle any waste from packed lunches in the appropriate recycling bins. situated at the Visitor Centre or around the park.

## Other Food

If your class normally has fruit or a snack mid-morning, you are welcome to bring it with you and we will plan snack time in, either on arrival or between morning sessions. Please discuss with the Education Ranger during booking.

## Visitor Centre and Purchases

The Visitor Centre is open 9.30am - 4.30pm on weekdays. If your visit falls during opening hours and you would like to visit the Centre, please state on the enquiry form to ensure that enough stock is in place.

Classes can visit the shop during their lunch hour or at the end of the visit, please only send small groups of 6 children in at a time.

We can provide gift bags for children as a memento of their visit at a small cost. Please advise us at the time of booking if you would like us to arrange this.

Items can be purchased in advance for your group i.e., ice lollies and can be added to the invoice, please advise the Education Ranger to accommodate your group.

## Spare Clothing

We do not hold any spare clothing at High Woods Country Park so please ensure that all children come fully prepared for the weather conditions. Extra layers, spare gloves and waterproofs are recommended for all visits.

## Agreement

Please ensure you have read the guidance fully and comply to the recommendations herein.