



School Group Visit Guide

Blank Park Zoo
7401 SW 9th St
Des Moines, IA 50315

Thank you for making the Blank Park Zoo a part of your educational experience. The following information will help you prepare for your trip to the Zoo, to make it more enjoyable and safe!

Preparation Checklist:

Before you arrive.

- Review your barcoded confirmation letter for the correct contact information and date.** To make changes, please follow the directions included in your confirmation email. Blank Park Zoo staff are available by phone at 515-974-2550.
- Arrange for 1 chaperone for every 10 students.** Blank Park Zoo requires a chaperone to student ratio of 1:10. Chaperones must accompany their students at all times regardless of student ages. No students are allowed in the gift shop without a chaperone. Groups with special needs may qualify for special pricing, please call 515-974-2550.
- Chaperones will receive a hand stamp once they have paid or verified they have paid.** Students will not receive hand stamps but will be required to be with a stamped chaperone to re-enter the Zoo at any time.
- Review the following Zoo safety rules with your students.** Please note that groups not respecting Zoo rules will be immediately escorted from Zoo grounds by Zoo staff.
 - Students are to remain with chaperones at all times regardless of age.
 - Respect the animals. This means being quiet and not attempting to touch, tease, feed, or disrupt normal animal behavior.
 - Walk on designated paths only.
 - Leave no trace. Keep the Zoo looking the way you found it, or better! Use the appropriate recycling and trash receptacles.
 - Leave native animals, flowers and plants for other guests to enjoy.
 - Be courteous and respectful to other guests.
 - Remain seated at all times on any rides.
- Choose a meeting place.** Complete and distribute the included itinerary to each chaperone to help coordinate your visit. A separate list is included for bus drivers.
- Look for Zoo staff and volunteers throughout your day to provide educational highlights.** Add an education program to your visit for \$55, call 515-974-2550 for more details. Please note: education programs must be scheduled at least **2 weeks in advance**.

When you arrive.

- Know the time.** Zoo hours are 10:00am—4:00pm Labor Day to Memorial Day, and 9:00am-5:00pm Memorial Day to Labor Day
- Due to the large volume of School Groups during May, bus queues are managed by Zoo staff.** Unless otherwise directed by Zoo staff, students will remain on the bus until a Zoo staff member greets you. The lead chaperone (who is responsible for payment) should exit the bus and proceed to the **door to the right of admissions with a peacock on the window**. A Zoo staff member will give students and remaining chaperones fun information about the zoo and go over zoo rules. We hope this will add to the educational value of the trip and eliminate some of the stress associated with the admissions process.
- Know the exact, separate count of students and chaperones.** The lead chaperone will enter Zoo Admissions with your numbers and printed barcoded confirmation letter and pay for your group with one transaction. If your admission numbers have changed, adjustments will be made at this time. If you are paying via purchase order you must have a copy of your PO at check in.
- Unload buses and enter the Zoo quickly!** Zoo staff will instruct which gate you are to enter. Please note that buses, including mini buses, are not allowed to park in the East and West Parking Lots. Once unloaded, buses must proceed to park in Bus Parking in the gravel overflow lot.
- No outside food or beverages (except water) are allowed inside the Zoo.** Blank Park Zoo does not provide lunch storage. If you are eating your lunch at the Zoo, please leave your lunches on your bus until it is time to eat. Picnic areas are available between our East and West Parking Lots and near the playground by the Bactrian camel exhibit. Groups are not allowed to eat in front of admissions, these sidewalks and green spaces in front of admissions should be left clear.

When you depart.

- Buses may unload and load in the Bus Loading Zone.** Buses are not allowed to park in the East and West Parking Lots. Once unloaded, buses must proceed to park in School Bus Parking in the gravel overflow lot. When your group is ready to leave, have your school bus meet you at the Bus Loading Zone.
- Ensure everyone is accounted for!**

To cancel or reschedule.

- Please call 515-974-2550 or email education@blankparkzoo.org.** We will work with you to find another date or cancel your visit.

Chaperone Student Group List

Complete and distribute to all chaperones prior to entering the Zoo.



Date of Visit: _____

Names of students in your chaperoned group (no more than ten):

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

School/Group Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Lead Contact: _____ Cell Number: _____

Bus Driver: _____ Cell Number: _____

Bus District: _____ Bus Number: _____

Education Program Time (if applicable): _____ Location (told upon arrival): _____

Lunch Time: _____ Meeting Place: _____

Departure Time: _____ Meeting Place: _____

In case of an emergency, please find the nearest Zoo staff or go to the nearest gift shop or concession stand. You may also call the Zoo switchboard at 515-285-4722, option 2.

Bus Driver Tips:

Before you arrive.

- Review your confirmation for the correct **contact information, date and time.**
- Exchange the below information** with your lead chaperone contact.

When you arrive.

- Unload at the **Bus Loading Zone** in the **East Parking Lot**, unless otherwise directed by Zoo staff.
- Pull up as far as you can.
- Keep everyone on the bus and wait for the lead chaperone to return after checking in.
- Ensure everyone in your group knows the departure time.
- The Zoo may be busy, so unload quickly.
- Know the plan for **Lunchtime**. Lunches must be stored on the bus so ensure someone can get to them.
- After everyone unloads, park in Bus Parking in the gravel overflow lot. **Buses are not allowed to park in the East and West Parking Lots. ALL BUSES, including mini buses, must park in Bus Parking in the gravel overflow lot. Please back in diagonally along the fence.**
- Zoo admission is free** for all bus drivers with identification.

When you depart.

- When your group is ready to leave, please pick up your group in the Bus Loading Zone in the East Parking Lot.
- When everyone is accounted for**, exit through the Zoo Main Entrance.

Date of Field Trip: _____

School/Group Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Lead Contact: _____ Cell Number: _____

Lunch Time: _____ Meeting Place: _____

Departure Time: _____ Meeting Place: _____

In case of an emergency, please find the nearest Zoo staff or go to the nearest gift shop or concession stand. You may also call the Zoo switchboard at 515-285-4722, option 2.

Arriving at Blank Park Zoo

Upon arrival, please have buses drop students off in the Bus Loading Zone. Once students are unloaded have buses proceed to overflow parking. **Buses may not park in the East and West Parking lots. Once buses are unloaded, all buses, including mini buses, must proceed to park in the gravel overflow parking lot. Please back in diagonally along the fence.**

The lead chaperone must proceed to Zoo Admissions to check in your group and pay for your visit. Please print and bring with you the barcoded confirmation letter you received after making your reservation.

Paper maps are not available. An electronic map can be found on Blank Park Zoo's website here: <https://www.blankparkzoo.com/map/>

