

Gosforth Park Nature Reserve

Advice for Visiting School Groups

Gosforth Park Nature Reserve is a 60 hectare site of open water, reedbed, mixed woodland and ditches. The site is managed for wildlife and is therefore kept as natural as possible.

Supervision

You will be accompanied on your visit by someone who is familiar with the reserve and who will lead the activities you are going to do. However the children and their behaviour will remain the responsibility of the visiting school and the leader will need support from visiting teachers/adults. Children will need to be supervised at all times.

The children will need to break into small groups for activities and they will get the most out of these if they have an adult to help them. We have suggested maximum break-out group sizes for some activities, which should help you to plan the number of adults or helpers to accompany your visit.

Equipment

We will provide equipment for any activities that you book with us; however your school is responsible for ensuring that children have appropriate clothing, etc. If you wish to carry out and lead your own activities then you will need to bring any equipment with you.

Trails & Paths

There are several trails around the reserve but these do not have any surfacing, they are uneven and have small trip hazards such as tree roots. From October-June or during damp summers paths are likely to be muddy and wellington boots are strongly recommended.

Wooden boardwalks and bridges are provided to access or cross wetland areas. These have been covered with wire to provide grip but can still sometimes get slippery when wet and care should be taken.

The site is flat, so there are no hills.

Toilets

At present there are no toilets at the reserve but a new eco-toilet is being installed in mid-June 2016. Until then the nearest toilets can be found at the Garden Centre ½ mile north of the reserve along the A189. Children are welcome to “use the bushes” if necessary. An outside tap is available at the reserve entrance for washing hands/boots on departure.

Plants & Insects

During summer months there is a risk of stings/bites from plants such as nettle and insects such as mosquitoes, wasps and deer ticks. To avoid getting bitten or stung children and adults are advised to wear long trousers and long sleeves and if necessary use insect repellent. If any children have an intense allergic reaction to bites/stings then the child should bring any medication that they may need for this.

Shelter

The main wildlife viewing hide can provide shelter for about 35 people but as most of the activities take place outside children should be prepared for the weather.

Watching Wildlife

There is a lot of wildlife in the reserve but seeing it often requires time, patience and a bit of luck. It is unlikely that a boisterous group of children will actually see a lot of animals but they should see birds and lots of evidence of animals. They will of course see plants and insects and natural habitats.

There are wildlife viewing hides in the reserve and we are able to provide binoculars or a spotting scope for some activities to help the children to better see the wildlife.

Wooded Areas

The woodland is managed to support as much wildlife as possible. For this reason there are a lot of dead branches in the trees. During high winds or after heavy summer rain there is a risk in the woodland from falling trees or branches. If these conditions prevail on your visit then we may need to adapt the activities that we can safely conduct.

Parking

There is parking next to the reserve entrance for around 20 cars or 2 coaches.

Dogs & Pets

Dogs and pets are not allowed in the reserve, even on leads, in order to minimise disturbance to wildlife.

In an Emergency

The nearest A&E hospital is Royal Victoria Infirmary, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE1 4LP Tel: 0191 233 6161

Free Visit

In order to qualify for a free visit you must be at the reserve for at least 2 hours (although this includes time getting into and out of any transportation and getting the children ready) and you must also complete a simple form that we will supply to you.

More Information

If you have any further questions please contact us: 0191 208 2790 or nhsn@ncl.ac.uk