

## Higher Education FAQs

### **How much will a visit cost?**

The price will vary depending on what option / activity you choose which can be discussed with the education department. Visit the **cost** section for more details.

### **Where are the visits held?**

The visits are held at the UKWCT Centre near Reading, Berkshire.

### **Do you every come out to colleges?**

One of the Trust's education officers can come and talk at your college or university but the wolves stay at home. Trust education officers will usually travel around 40 miles maximum and costs will vary.

### **How long have you been doing this? Is it safe?**

The UK Wolf Conservation Trust has been running 1995. We pride ourselves on our safety record with the public. All our wolf handlers go through a rigorous training programme and are only allowed to handle if they are fit, healthy and responsible and have a good relationship with the wolves. The handlers continue to train even after they qualify and safety procedures are constantly reviewed. On the day, if there is a problem the senior handler may make the decision as to if the wolves can interact safely or indeed if the students are not following instruction they have the right to withdraw the wolves to ensure everyone including the wolves are kept safe.

### **What does a visit include?**

Depends on the option you choose but will include a PowerPoint presentation, a chance for the students to ask questions and a tour of the centre. If a wolf interaction option is chosen they will go for a short walk before stroking a wolf.

### **How long will a visit last?**

This varies depending on what option you book but tend to last a maximum of three hours.

### **Do the students come into contact with the wolves?**

They will only come in contact with the wolves if prearranged. If they do a disclaimer form must be signed before the visit and handed to the senior handler in charge before they meet a wolf. Generally only small groups at a time can come in direct contact with a wolf (up to 30 maximum). This is because they have to be highly supervised when meeting people. Respect and comfort for the wolf is paramount along with the safety of the students.

### **How many can you accommodate at one time?**

At the centre we can accommodate 30 people at a time. In preference this would include adults as well, however we understand that at times due to adult supervision rules this may be slightly higher.

**What facilities/space do you have?**

The centre has an education room, parking, toilets, a shop, refreshments and picnic tables.

**Do you supply any worksheets or handouts?**

For students we tend to refer them to our website which has a lot of information on wolves. If an observation visit option is booked ethogram sheets will be provided.

**Can we see a copy of the risk assessment? How much public liability insurance do you have?**

On booking a visit you will be sent all the relevant paper work including a risk assessment which will include our dangerous wild animal license number and contact details for West Berks Council who licenses us. It will also include the name and contact details of our insurance company. We have insurance for public liability up to £5,000,000 (Five Million).

**I am a little nervous about the disclaimer. Why do we have to have those signed?**

Although the wolves are socialised they are still wild animals and as with any wild animal may be subject to unpredictability. This is extremely rare but to enable us to be insured we have to ask people to sign the disclaimer form. If you or any parent etc is unhappy about it there are non wolf contact options, we suggest you pick one of those. Our safety record is excellent and if the students follow all the rules the risk is extremely low. If we didn't have all the relevant precautions and paper work in place we wouldn't be allowed to operate. All our volunteers and staff are highly trained and the senior in charge of the event will have an outstanding relationship and understanding of the wolves. They will also have a proven track record of handling any situation that may arise.

We do not guarantee a stroke but try our best to accommodate everyone's needs, including the wolves.

**What happens when the students go on the wolf walk?**

The walk is run by a senior wolf handler and only wolves of known temperament are used. Students can meet the wolf in the normal meet and greet manner which involves approaching the wolf from the front and stroking them in the stomach area. They will also be asked to do a meeting line up where the wolves will be allowed to walk past and sniff everyone before going on the walk. This is so the wolves can identify everyone individually in the group and allows them to concentrate on the environment instead of focusing on the students. Meet and greets are only done if the wolves are calm and happy to be stroked. We do not guarantee a stroke but try our best to accommodate everyone's needs, including the wolves. Due to the close contact it is essential that the rules on clothing and foot wear on the disclaimer safety rules is followed. If a student is not wearing the correct clothing they will be asked to remove certain items or in extreme cases may be refused a walk with the wolves.

**Do we pay before, on the day or will you give us an invoice?**

An invoice will be sent either just before or just after the visit. On booking please give us details for the invoice. If you wish to pay on the day we do accept cheques and card payments except American Express cards. If you need a receipt though we can not guarantee you will get it on the day but it will be posted to you at a later date.

**What age do the students need to be to meet the wolves?**

Children from six years old can be in direct contact with a wolf. For younger students less than 18 years old please check the safety rules and disclaimer as it may be their parents need to sign the form for them before arriving at the centre.

**I have some special needs adults. Can they meet the wolves?**

We do have special needs children and adults interacting with the wolves. Each case is discussed separately with the senior Trust staff and if need be a special risk assessment is drawn up. Please contact the education department to discuss.

**How can I fit a visit into the requirements of the course I am running?**

There are a number of PowerPoint Presentations which cover subjects on wolf behaviour, animal management, conservations, communication, pack dynamics etc. Please feel free to discuss your needs when booking your visit.