

Schools 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 schools and colleges?

One of the Trust's education officers can come and talk at your school or college but the wolves stay at home. Trust education officers will travel around 40 miles maximum and costs will vary. As we are very busy a visit may be dependant on if we have time to come to you.

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 children 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 children / student 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 children / students come into contact with the wolves?

They will only come in direct 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 the wolves (up to 30 maximum). This is because the wolf has to be highly supervised when meeting people especially children. Respect and comfort for the wolf is paramount along with the safety of the children.

What happens on a wolf walk?

Before the walk a senior handler will give the children a safety brief and make sure they understand the rules which must be followed. If a child breaks these rules, for their own safety they will be removed from the walk. The wolves will

not be allowed to approach the children at any time and UKWCT staff will keep the children back behind the wolves (about 12 – 18 feet) at all times. When they stroke a wolf it will be calm and quiet, having had a chance to settle and also meet some adults first. Only the calmest, quietest wolf is used and the children do not go near the head of the wolf. While being gently contained by two handlers the children slowly walk in towards the hind quarter area, stroke the belly of the wolf and when asked slowly walk back out the way they have come.

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. If the group is very big we would ask you to split it into two visits.

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?

We can provide a pack for you to use with the children. This is on-line under the school section of www.ukwolf.org. The worksheets and handouts will, where possible, link into the national curriculum. For older students we tend to refer them to our website which has a lot of information on wolves in the student resource section.

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, PTA or governor group 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 children 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.

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 contact 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.

I think my children are a little young. At what age is it safe for them to meet the wolves?

Children need to be six years old or above to be in direct contact with a wolf. Even if there is no direct contact we suggest they are still six years old so they can understand safely instructions and sit quietly without undue fidgeting as this can distract the wolves.

I have some special needs children / 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 UKWCT senior 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 National Curriculum?

A wolf visit will hit many key stage points from English to maths, science, geography, art etc. and where possible we have fitted our presentation and handout / worksheets to cover these areas. We subscribe to the excellence in enjoyment policy and hope we can bring your curriculum alive. With a little planning the whole school can spend one week to half a term benefiting from the visit and using the information to capture the imagination of the children.