

The John Simonds Trust at Rushall Farm

Information for teachers or leaders bringing a group to Rushall Farm

1. CLOTHING

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF PRE-VISIT PREPARATION. PLEASE COME SUITABLY DRESSED FOR A VISIT TO THE COUNTRYSIDE IN ALL WEATHERS.

Inclement weather: Waterproof coat, hat or hood and gloves are essential. Common problems include cold feet and not enough layers on top halves of bodies. Stress the importance of more than one pair of warm socks: especially if wellies are to be worn. Also several thin layers are often warmer than one thick one. Wellies or sturdy boots are the best footwear. Old trainers are adequate. Make sure everyone has a change of footwear for the coach.

Warm weather: Children should have water with them (N.B. see **Hand washing**, below), be wearing a hat and have adequate sunscreen protection (often a good idea if school staff have back up sunscreen).

Spare clothing: it's advisable for schools to bring a complete change of clothing (including footwear) for both sexes. The John Simonds Trust has a limited number of pairs of wellingtons and coats that can be borrowed

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please check the following prior to the visit:

Tetanus injections: check that children are up to date on these.

Cuts or scratches: should be protected with waterproof plasters securely held in place.

Allergies: These should be reported to the Education Officer on arrival.

First aid kit and children's medication: please bring these with you and notify trust staff of any particular issues.

During the visit

Hand washing: ensure children wash hands after contact with the livestock, prior to eating and before departure. Until hands are washed children should be advised to keep hands away from eyes, noses and mouths and not engage in eating or drinking.
Trust staff carry phones and first aid kits

Boot washing: On farm based visits we use a foot bath / mat to wash shoes but they will always benefit from a further wash at home. As a further precaution we advise a change of shoes as well which further reduces the potential spread of infections and keeps the coach clean. Whether the students change their shoes or not the last thing they do should be to wash their hands with soap and water (not hand gel). It is the responsibility of both school staff and helpers and trust staff to ensure this happens.

3. STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

The John Simonds Trust undertakes to provide a safe environment for children to be in. Discipline problems however, can compromise children's safety. **THE BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN DURING THE VISIT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL STAFF. Trust educational staff have the authority to halt a visit if safety is being compromised.**

4. ORGANISING YOUR FIELDWORK

Pupil – teacher ratios: make sure you have enough adult helpers to cover the activities planned. Pupil: teacher/supervisory adult ratios will depend on the age of the children. See <http://www.rushallfarm.org.uk/costs-for-school-visits> for our recommended ratios.

Pre-visit: essential for schools that haven't visited before.

Activities: be selective in deciding which activities will be most suitable for your visit.

Teacher involvement: your active participation in the visit sends a positive message to children and helps to ensure an enjoyable and successful day.

Groups: the Education Officer will advise on the size of groups needed.

Recording information: make the recording system as simple and quick as possible. The John Simonds Trust has templates for many activities if the school chooses to use them. Bring plenty of spare pencils. Clipboards are useful, The John Simonds Trust have a limited number of these that can be used.

5. POND DIPPING

Water-borne infection: please be aware of the possibility of infection from still or moving water. The chances of infection are low, especially when precautions are taken (see above). However, any child who shows flu-like symptoms within fourteen days of being in contact with a body of water should see their doctor and tell them exactly what they have been doing.

6. LUNCH

Please ensure all children, teachers and helpers are aware they'll need to bring a packed lunch. It's also worth mentioning this to any coach drivers as well. There is free tea and coffee available for all adults.

FAQs

What do I have to do as a helper? - All visiting groups must have a certain adult:child ratio: your group leader or class teacher may discuss your role and specific responsibilities with you prior to your visit. In general, helpers are there to supervise and support children during their visit. This is likely to include helping children with study activities and field work, assisting with environmental games, supervising lunch and toilet breaks, helping to supervise hand and boot washing, and making sure that children behave responsibly and safely at all times.

I don't know anything about farming or the countryside: Does this matter? – No, not at all! We don't expect helpers to be experts in the field. The trust staff are here to provide the educational input but any input from school staff or students is welcomed.

I'm not very keen on animals: Is this a problem? - No; it's not unusual for people to have fears or phobias about certain animals such as spiders, slugs, pigs etc. Our advice to helpers is if you come across an animal that you are afraid of, simply move away from it. The only important thing is not to show fear or disgust of the animal in front of your group – children learn to react negatively to livestock and wildlife in this way.