



## Advice to Teachers and Others who Organise Visits for Children

Based upon HSE information sheet AIS No 23 Supplement (rev2)

***This supplement to AIS23 preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions advises teachers and others who organise visits by children on the precautions necessary to reduce the risk of ill health arising from contact with animals.***

All animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans, where they may cause ill health. Some of these, such as the bacterium *Escherichia coli* O157 (E coli O157) or *Cryptosporidium parvum* (a microscopic parasite), present a serious health hazard and have the potential to cause severe illness and health problems which may be particularly acute in young children.

As with many other educational or recreational activities, visits can never be considered free from all risk. However, while the hazards are real, the risk of infection in children can be readily controlled by simple everyday measures. The following practical steps will help make your visit even more safe, healthy and enjoyable.

### ***Before your visit, you should:***

Read and understand the advice in the main AIS23 information sheet, and discuss arrangements for the visit with the management at the site;

Confirm that the control measures provided at the site match the recommendations in AIS23;

Seek advice from your local authority or organisation on what the appropriate ratio of children to teachers/leaders/assistants/parents etc should be;

Discuss and agree with the supervisors, parents or staff of the school, crèche, leaders of youth organisations etc, their roles and responsibilities during the visit. In particular, they must understand the need to make sure that the children wash, or are helped to wash, their hands thoroughly after contacting animals. Key points to cover with the children should include:

Explaining the rules for the visit, stressing that they must not eat, drink or chew anything (including sweets) outside the areas in which you permit them to do so;

Explaining why they must wash their hands thoroughly after contact with the animals, and before eating or drinking anything;

Demonstrating how to wash their hands properly;

Discussing the requirements for appropriate clothing, including suitable footwear. You should liaise with the attraction to ascertain what this is; and

Checking that cuts, grazes etc on children's hands are covered with a waterproof dressing.

During and after the visit, make sure that the children:

Are reminded of the rules/precautions to take on arrival at the site;

Do not kiss animals;

Always wash their hands thoroughly before and after eating, after any contact with animals, and again before leaving the site;

Eat only food that they have brought with them, or food for human consumption they have bought on the premises, in designated areas, and never eat food which has fallen to the ground, or taste animal foods;

Do not suck fingers or put hands, pens, pencils or crayons etc. in mouths;

Where practical and possible, clean or change their footwear before leaving; and

Wash their hands after changing their footwear.

Check that the children stay in their allocated groups during the visit and that they:

Do not use or pick up tools (eg spades and forks) or touch other work equipment unless permitted to do so by site staff;

Do not climb on to walls, fences, gates or animal pens etc;

Listen carefully and follow the instructions and information given by the site staff;

Approach and handle animals quietly and gently;

Do not chase, frighten or torment the animals; and;

Do not wander off into unsupervised or prohibited areas, eg manure heaps.

***Remember:***

The children are your responsibility during the visit;

You should supervise them during the visit, especially during hand washing to make sure that each child washes thoroughly. Site staff may be able to help with this supervision; and

Allow plenty of time before eating or leaving so that the children do not have to rush.

If a member of your group shows signs of illness (eg sickness or diarrhoea) after a visit, advise them or their parent/guardian to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

***Additional advice:***

Further advice on E coli O157, including a video on hand washing, is available at: [www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/farmsafe/ecoli.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/farmsafe/ecoli.htm)

***Other advice is available from a number of other government websites including:***

[www.hpa.org.uk/](http://www.hpa.org.uk/)

[www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/)

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm)

[ww2.defra.gov.uk/](http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/)

This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.



## GROUP VISITS RISK ASSESSMENT

At Windmill Animal Farm the Health and Safety of our visitors is our number one priority.

We work with local and national experts as well as the local authority to constantly assess the safety of our provision.

Each year the Farm welcomes 60,000 visitors, of which approximately 8,000 are as part of an organised group visit.

As part of our approach to managing Health and Safety, we continually appraise our offer and Risk Assess various activities. Below is our standard Risk Assessment for a visit to the Farm.

However it is very important that you, as a group leader, carry out your own Risk Assessments relevant to your visit. To arrange a complimentary visit to carry out your own assessment, please call 01704 892282.

We hope you have an enjoyable visit and our staff will only be only too happy to help you in any way they can.

Hazard or activity	Risks associated	Potential to cause harm	Controls in place and action required by visitors
Animals	Infection Biting	Low	All animals on site are hand picked for their kind and docile nature. How to feed the animals will be covered during your safety talk. <b>Your Group Leaders must ensure that children wash their hands after handling the animals and especially before eating or drinking.</b> Please note that wet wipes are not sufficient.  Do not touch or feed the pigs donkeys and horses.
Animal droppings	Infection	Low	All animal areas are thoroughly cleaned each morning. Public pathways and grassed areas are free from animals.
Animal handling	Infection	Low/med	<b>After walking around the animal pens and paddock areas and after touching any animals all visitors MUST thoroughly wash their hands and follow guidance procedures displayed.</b>
Play area	Falling Tripping	Low	Children must be supervised at all times. All signage for equipment must be adhered to at all times. Our equipment is inspected on a regular basis.



Sand pit	Sand in eyes	Low	The sand complies with British Standard BS5665 and is rounded sand. If it is a windy and dry day, the sand is watered to prevent blowing.
Lake view	Falling into water	Low	The pond is fenced off to ensure children can't fall in. An emergency life buoy is situated adjacent to the pond.
Lost children	Child becomes separated from Group	Low	Clear objectives so children know what is expected. Clear instructions as to expectations of behaviour and responsibilities to themselves and to one another. Your Group Leaders must have a list of the children and carry out a periodic check of numbers. Count pupils on to the coach and then count again (another adult) before setting off.
Uneven surfaces	Slip / trip / fall	Low	Your Group Leaders and children should take care when walking and wear sensible footwear. Children should not run whilst on site.
Wet grass	Slip / trip / fall	Low	Your Group Leaders and children should be aware of the possibility of wet grass and take adequate precautions.
Medical attention	Grazes Stings Bites	Low	Trained first aiders are always on hand.
Indoor soft play	Falling Tripping Impact		All soft play rules and guidance procedures displayed must be adhered to. Daily checklist of play area equipment is adhered to. Height restrictions apply. Children must not run. Your Group Leaders remain fully responsible for the children at all times.