

FAQ – Self Led Learning Groups

What classifies as a “group learning visit”?

- If you are a preschool, school, college or university
- If you are a youth community group (e.g. brownies, scouts)

I home school my child / children. Can we pay the learning group rate?

We do not allow individual families to enter under the group learning rate. You are welcome to come on a learning visit as part of a home schooling network group with several other families, but we ask that there be at least 10 children in your group. If you live locally and will be making several visits Westonbirt membership is excellent value for money.

How do we book a visit?

Call or email the learning team at Westonbirt (see contact details below) to check availability of your date. We do have a large capacity of availability for self-led visits but there is a limit on coach parking space and self-led backpack resources so it is always best to check. We will send you a booking form by email to fill in.

Do we have to fill in the booking form? Can't we just turn up?

If you want to pay the discounted learning group rate you need to fill in the booking form. If you turn up without booking, you will be charged the normal admission charges. During busy times we cannot guarantee coach parking space and may have to turn you away if you haven't pre-booked.

I've sent my booking form in. What happens next?

One of our learning team will send you a confirmation email with details about your visit. Please print these off and bring them with you on the day.

How much does it cost for the students on a self-led group learning visit?

Student Age	1 st Mar – 30 th Nov	1 st Dec – 29 th Feb
Under fives	FREE	FREE
5-18	£2 each	£1 each
19+	£6 each	£4 each

How many adult helpers can we bring? What does it cost?

Students	Free Adult ratio
Pre-school and reception	1 adult free : 4 children
Year 1 – Year 6	1 adult free : 5 children
Year 7+	1 adult free : 10 students
Students with additional needs	1:1 or 2:1 if required

Any adults above these ratios will cost **£7 each** 1st Mar – 30th Nov, or **£5 each** 1st Dec – 29th Feb

How do we pay?

- If the cost of your visit is **£25 or above** we will invoice you after your visit.
- If the cost is **under £25** we ask you to pay on the day at the Welcome Building on arrival. You can pay by cash, card or a cheque made payable to the Forestry Commission.

Is there a charge for parking cars or coaches?

There is no charge for parking. Parking does not provide access to the arboretum.

Our school is from a deprived area, can you reduce the cost?

We cannot reduce the cost of your entry but if you are from a deprived area you can apply for our coach bursary to reduce your travel costs. There are a limited number of bursaries available every year. Please email or call us (contact details below) to find out how to apply.

Where do we drop off/park?

If you are coming in a coach ask your driver to drop you off at the coach drop off point near the Welcome Building. Your coach driver can park in the coach park near the Welcome Building and your driver can get a free day ticket to the arboretum. We will send you a map of the entrance and car park with your confirmation pack.

What do we need to do on arrival?

Once you've unloaded, walk down to the Welcome Building. Tell the person at the admissions point which school you're from and the number of students and adults that are with you. This is the data we use to invoice you so please make sure it is accurate. The admissions staff will let you through the barriers, be prepared to move through together as one group.

Can we leave our packed lunches anywhere?

You will need to carry your lunches with you.

Where can we eat lunch?

There are picnic benches on the downs between the Welcome Building and the Great Oak Hall. You can also picnic anywhere in the Old Arboretum or Silk Wood (but please be aware dogs are permitted in Silk Wood). You may want to bring a groundsheet or mats if you would like to sit on the ground.

What if it rains?

Please dress appropriately for rain as there is no indoor space for lunching in. Evergreen trees provide the best rain cover.

Can you send us a risk assessment for our visit?

You need to complete your own risk assessment for your visit but we do have an outline risk assessment that we send out with the confirmation email. This can be used to help you consider the risks of your visit.

Can I come on a pre-visit?

Yes, teachers and teaching assistants can come on a free pre-visit to help you prepare for your visit. Please contact us to let us know when you are coming, preferably a week in advance, so we can get you onto the admissions list. If you bring family members or friends with you they will need to pay normal admission costs.

What can we do on our self-led visit?

There is lots to choose from for a self-led visit. You could follow a seasonal trail for a walk tailored to the season, engage in outdoor play, download some activities from our website or hire a backpack of equipment for the day. More details here: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-92QE55>

I've booked a backpack. Where do I collect it from?

You can collect the backpack from the Welcome Building when you arrive. Please drop the backpack back here when you leave.

I'd like to take my class on the seasonal trail or play trail. Where can I pick up trail maps?

These are available in the information centre at the Welcome Building. Please take one per small group, so that each adult helper has one.

Can we take our class into the Exploratree Play Area?

Supervised primary classes split up (no more than 18 children at a time) may play in the Exploratree Play area. Please make your class aware that there may be very young children playing there.

Can we order food in advance from the restaurant?

If you want to order food for your class please contact the restaurant directly on 01666 880064

Can we go in the shop?

Yes, students are welcome in the shop but to avoid overcrowding, please enter in groups of ten or less.

Where are the toilets?

There are toilets at the Welcome Building and at the central facilities near the café.

What accessible facilities do you have?

There are accessible toilets at both the Welcome Building and our central facilities. Wheelchairs can be hired free of charge from the Welcome Building – please call 03000 674861. Our hard paths are marked on the seasonal trail map. The Old Arboretum has more level ground whereas Silk Wood is more hilly.

Question not covered here?

Contact the Westonbirt learning team: Tel: 03000 674856

Email: learning.westonbirt@forestry.gov.uk