



FIELD TRIP PREPARATION PACKET



WELCOME TO YOUR ZOO FIELD TRIP!



Dear Teachers, Chaperones, and Students,

Welcome to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium! We are thrilled that you've chosen us as a part of your educational journey and look forward to hosting you on your upcoming field trip. Our Zoo is home to a wide variety of animals from all around the world, and during your visit, you'll have the opportunity to see many of these amazing creatures up close. More than just a fun day out, this field trip will help students connect classroom learning with real-world conservation efforts, discover how animals adapt to their environments, and explore how we can all contribute to protecting wildlife.

As you explore the Zoo, you'll notice our focus on conservation and animal care. Our mission is to inspire a deeper understanding of and commitment to protecting the natural world, and we hope your students walk away with a newfound appreciation for the incredible diversity of life on our planet. Whether it's through observing animal habitats, asking thought-provoking questions, or participating in hands-on activities, this field trip is designed to be both educational and engaging.

In this packet, you'll find everything you need to prepare for your visit, including a map of the Zoo, important safety information, and learning goals aligned with your classroom curriculum. Please take a moment to review the guidelines and expectations to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience. Chaperones, we truly appreciate your help in keeping students focused and engaged throughout the day.

Thank you for choosing the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium for this exciting educational experience. We can't wait to welcome you and your students and hope the trip inspires the next generation of conservation leaders!

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Warm regards,

Casey Boehm
Teacher Engagement Educator
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Please help conserve resources by
only printing the necessary pages
to reduce waste and protect the
environment.



KEYS TO A ZOOPER FIELD TRIP

Thank you for registering for a field trip at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Please review this packet as it contains important information for planning a successful field trip.

BEFORE YOUR FIELD TRIP:

- Plan to dress for the weather. Be aware that the zoo can sometimes be 10 degrees cooler than the city of Columbus.
- Encourage your students to wear your school colors! It is very helpful to chaperones and Zoo staff if students wear the same color. Fill out the Chaperone Form on page 7 and make copies for all adults attending the trip.
- Check out the most up-to-date map here: <https://www.columbuszoo.org/park-map>
 - **Water Bottle Refill Stations:** Stingray Bay, Wild Burger, Jr Zookeeper, Nocturnal Building, Carousel, Mapori, Congo River Market
 - **Restrooms** are available in every region! Please check out the app for easy directions.
- Check out accessibility resources and maps here: <https://www.columbuszoo.org/accessibility>
 - Social stories, a communication board, sensory maps, and other accommodations
- Check out self-guided field trip activities here: <https://www.columbuszoo.org/educators>
- **Remember: the Zoo is cashless!**
 - There are pre-paid debit card machines on-site so can you swap cash for a prepaid Mastercard. Be prepared with a working phone number. These machines can be used by students and adults. We recommend purchasing Zoo gift cards before your visit if students will need access to funds to avoid any lines.

Download the **FREE** Columbus Zoo mobile app for easy navigation and up-to-date info!





ON THE DAY OF YOUR FIELD TRIP, BEFORE DEPARTING YOUR SCHOOL:

- Take an accurate headcount of all members of your group. Pass out nametags, schedules, or worksheets before you leave your school.
- If you are a large group, organize your students before boarding the bus. If your students are assigned to specific chaperones, have them sit together on the bus.
- Remind students of expected behavior during the trip, including staying with their assigned chaperone, respecting the animals, and following Zoo guidelines.
- Please bring your printed ticket barcodes (one for students and one for chaperones), membership numbers/contact names, and purchase order (if applicable) for quick and easy admission.
- Any parents driving separately must pay a parking fee of \$10 per vehicle.
- Please note that the Zoo is cashless. We accept Visa, Mastercard, Apple Pay, or Google Pay.
 - Still have cash? No worries! We've got pre-paid debit card machines on-site, so you can swap cash for a prepaid Mastercard (and you can use the card after you leave the Zoo, too!)
 - For more details, visit <https://www.columbuszoo.org/cashless>
 - To avoid lines, we recommend purchasing Zoo gift cards before your visit if students will need access to funds.

Tip: Share the entry barcodes and final numbers with each teacher/bus on the trip. That way, any teacher can check in the group.

FIELD TRIP CHECKLIST



- ☐ *Attendance Sheet/Class List*
- ☐ *Completed Permission Slips*
- ☐ *Printed Ticket Barcodes*
- ☐ *Purchase Order (if applicable)*
- ☐ *Membership Number and Contact Name List*
- ☐ *Emergency Contact Forms*
- ☐ *Chaperone Contact Information*
- ☐ *Bus Driver Information*

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Bus # _____

- ☐ *Student Medication and Allergy Information*
- ☐ *First Aid Kit*
- ☐ *Optional- Name Tags*

TIP

Share your contact info with chaperones. Send out a out a text with a meeting time/place for departure.



FALL AND WINTER ARRIVAL AT THE ZOO:

- You can arrive anytime after the Zoo opens until 3:30pm. Please note that Zoo hours will change throughout the year.
- Chaperones should report directly to the **main Zoo gate** for entry.
- Exit your bus at the main gate. Proceed through EVOLV.
- Send one representative to check in at a ticket booth. At this time, final attendance numbers can be accepted. Then, create one group line to scan your ticket and enter the Zoo together.
- Buses can park in the north side parking area.
- If you need to go to your car or bus, get a stamp on your hand at the Zoo exit. You must have the appropriate stamp on your hand to re-enter the Zoo.
- Any students, staff, or chaperones arriving late must pay full admission at the gate.
- Lunches may be eaten in non-reserved shared spaces located inside the Zoo.

SPRING ARRIVAL AT THE ZOO:

- You will be emailed instruction at least 48 hours before the trip.
- You can arrive anytime after the Zoo opens until 3:00pm. Please note that Zoo hours will change throughout the year.
- Chaperones included in your reservation should report directly to the **Zoombezi Bay gate** for entry.
- Zoo staff will greet the bus and ask for the representative who completed the reservation to proceed to the check-in stand. Final attendance numbers can be accepted at this time. Everyone will remain on the bus.
- Your group will proceed to the Zoombezi Bay EVOLV and admission gates.
- Buses can park in the north side parking area.
- If you need to go to your car or bus, get a stamp on your hand at the Zoo exit. You must have the appropriate stamp on your hand to re-enter the Zoo.
- Any students, staff, or chaperones arriving late must pay full admission at the gate.
- Lunches may be eaten in non-reserved shared spaces located inside the Zoo.

MEMBERSHIPS

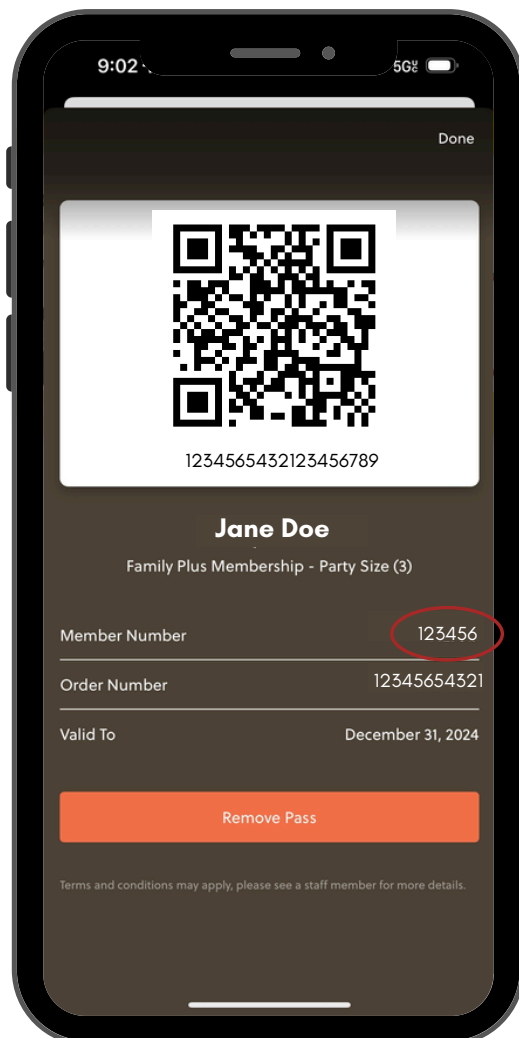


YOUR MEMBER NUMBER

If your student's family has a Zoo membership, they are more than welcome to enter the Zoo with your group for free.

Create a spreadsheet of student names and membership numbers to hand in when you arrive.

**Please note that your students are NOT able to use the guest spots that are on their pass without a named adult.*



Create a spreadsheet of student names and membership numbers to hand in when you arrive.

IMPORTANT CHAPERONE INFORMATION



Thank you for agreeing to chaperone our field trip to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

We will meet for lunch at:

Time: _____ am/pm Location: _____

We will get on the bus and return to school at:

Time: _____ am/pm Location: _____

If you need to contact your school group leader.

The school group leader's name is:

The school group leader's cell phone number is:

Here are a few tips which will help to make your day go smoothly:

- Parking is \$10 per vehicle.
- Upon arrival, please continue through the Evolv system. You will meet your group after everyone has passed through Evolv.
 - Refrain from joining the students at the bus. This procedure is designed to help streamline entry and ensure a smoother flow, especially on busy days
- Chaperones not included in the reservation will need to purchase tickets and enter through the main Zoo entrance. They can meet the group in the Adventure Cove region once the group enters.
- Please note, the Zoo is cashless. We accept Visa, Mastercard, Apple Pay, or Google Pay.
 - Still have cash? No worries! We've got pre-paid debit card machines on-site, so you can swap cash for a prepaid Mastercard (and you can use the card after you leave the Zoo, too!)
- Decide on a meeting place if a student gets separated from your group. If this happens, immediately contact your school group leader.
- Dress for the weather. The zoo can be about 10 degrees colder than the city of Columbus.

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING AS A CHAPERONE!



Your role is crucial in ensuring that students have a fun and safe learning experience. As we explore the Zoo today, please help us by staying close to your group and keeping students focused. If you notice any students becoming distracted or too excited, gently remind them to stay together and follow the guidelines so everyone can fully enjoy the day.

Your support makes a huge difference in helping us make this field trip both educational and enjoyable for all the students. Feel free to reach out to me or any staff member if you need assistance with anything!

To help ensure a fun, safe, and educational experience for all students, we encourage following the Zoo's Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS)-aligned expectations, which focus on being Respectful, Responsible, and Safe throughout the trip.

Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Be Safe
Use quiet voices when near animals to avoid startling them.	Stay with your group at all times, and follow your chaperone's instructions.	Stay on pathways and behind barriers to keep yourself and the animals safe.
Respect the animals' space by not tapping on glass or attempting to feed or touch them.	Take care of your belongings and keep the Zoo clean by disposing of trash properly.	Walk, don't run, to avoid accidents and ensure everyone enjoys the exhibits.
Be kind to others—whether it's Zoo staff, other visitors, or your classmates. We're all here to enjoy the day!	Follow the schedule so we don't miss any fun learning opportunities.	Report any issues (lost items, group separations) to a chaperone or Zoo staff right away.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS


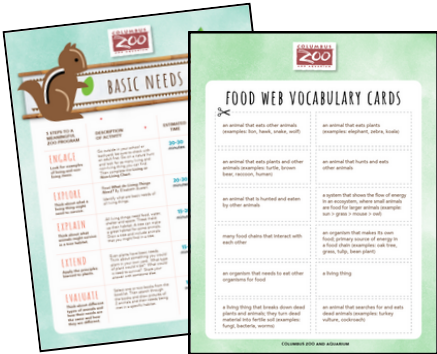







Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Be Safe
<p>Use quiet voices when near animals to avoid startling them.</p> 	<p>Stay with your group at all times, and follow your chaperone's instructions.</p> 	<p>Stay on pathways and behind barriers to keep yourself and the animals safe.</p> 
<p>Respect the animals' space by not tapping on glass or attempting to feed or touch them.</p> 	<p>Take care of your belongings and keep the Zoo clean by disposing of trash properly.</p> 	<p>Walk, don't run, to avoid accidents and ensure everyone enjoys the exhibits.</p> 
<p>Be kind to others—whether it's Zoo staff, other visitors, or your classmates. We're all here to enjoy the day!</p> 	<p>Follow the schedule so we don't miss any fun learning opportunities.</p> 	<p>Report any issues (lost items, group separations) to a chaperone or Zoo staff right away.</p> 

- **What should we do if our group size changes?**
 - When registering for your trip, we recommend overestimating the number of tickets you need. If you purchased tickets with a credit card, we can provide refunds for any unused tickets. For registrations made with a purchase order (PO), you will only be charged for the number of students who actually enter. If you need to add additional guests, please submit a separate reservation for at least 15 guests. This can follow the same reimbursement process outlined above.
- **What's the procedure for canceling or rescheduling our trip?**
 - Email schools@columbuszoo.org, and we'll take care of it.
- **Do I need to assign names to each ticket? Does each student and chaperone need a valid ID to enter?**
 - No, you do not need to assign names to these tickets. We recommend leaving the automatic fill-in as "Guest". We will not require a valid ID for school groups to enter.
- **What is the policy for late arrivals on field trip day?**
 - Students, staff, or chaperones arriving late must pay the full admission price at the gate. The entire group must enter at the same time to receive the school group rate.
- **Are there guided tours or resources available for field trips?**
 - We offer several different resources! See page 11 for more details. For specific requests, contact teacher@columbuszoo.org
- **What payment options are available?**
 - The Columbus Zoo is now cashless! We accept credit cards and purchase orders for school trips. To receive the school group rate, please finalize and submit your attendance numbers before your visit. The discounted rate does not apply at the gate.
- **How can we use a purchase order (PO)?**
 - You'll need to request a PO from your school. A quote worksheet is available if needed. Please overestimate the number of tickets you need, as you'll only be charged for the actual amount used.
- **What is needed to use the Pre-Paid Debit Card machines?**
 - For anyone planning to make a purchase, please remember the Zoo is now cashless. There are pre-paid debit card machines on-site so can you swap cash for a prepaid Mastercard. To use these machines, be prepared with a working phone number. These machines can be used by students and adults. To avoid lines, we recommend purchasing Zoo gift cards before your visit if students will need access to funds.
- **Can we reserve a picnic shelter for lunch?**
 - If available, you can book picnic shelters when registering for your field trip for \$50. For questions, email schools@columbuszoo.org
- **Where can we store our lunches?**
 - Lunches can be stored in the pavilion outside the main Zoo entrance (free of charge), in your rented pavilion, or carried on your person.

For all other questions, please email schools@columbuszoo.org

RESOURCE GUIDE

Welcome to the resource guide! This page will direct you to our educator resources to meet any needs you may have before, during, and after your field trip. Don't see what you're looking for? Please send an email to teacher@columbuszoo.org to submit a request.

Self-Guided Resources	Region Videos	Free Resource Library & Facebook Group
<p>Enhance learning with free, self-guided resources designed for field trips, classrooms, and at-home exploration. These materials align with science concepts and Ohio's Learning Standards, helping students connect with wildlife and conservation in meaningful ways.</p> <p> Find lesson plans for K-8!</p> 	<p>Found on the Educator page of our website and on YouTube, our video tours take you through each of the Zoo's regions. These tours are perfect for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Previewing a field trip before your visit 🖥 Virtual learning for classrooms unable to attend in person 📚 Supplementing lessons with engaging wildlife content <p>Each video focuses on a unique topic and includes supplemental resources to enhance learning.</p> <p> Start exploring today!</p> 	<p>Connect with fellow educators and gain access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ FREE resource library ✓ A supportive teacher community ✓ Exclusive updates on events and opportunities ✓ Inspiring projects from local teachers <p>Be the first to know about exciting new resources and ways to bring conservation education into your classroom!</p> <p> Join today!</p> 
Accessibility	Maps	Teacher Advisory Council
<p>The Columbus Zoo is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible experience for all guests. Visit our website to download:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Stories to help prepare for your visit • Sensory Maps and a Tactile Experiences Map • ADA Attraction Map for accessible pathways and features • Communication Board for non-verbal communication support <p>Upon arrival, KultureCity Sensory Bags are available at Guest Relations with a \$10 refundable deposit. Additional accommodations and rentals are also available—please contact us for more details.</p> <p>📞 614-645-3400</p> 	<p>Download the FREE Columbus Zoo mobile app for seamless navigation and real-time updates! Use the app to plan your visit, explore exhibits, and stay on track during your trip.</p> <p> Get the app today and make the most of your Zoo experience!</p> 	<p>Join Us in Shaping Future Resources and Programs!</p> <p>The Teacher Advisory Council (TAC) meets quarterly during the school year to collaborate on resource development, explore the Zoo, and connect with fellow educators who share a passion for conservation education. Your insights help shape meaningful programs and materials for classrooms.</p> <p>Get involved and make an impact—join us today!</p> <p> APPLY NOW</p> 

EVOLV

We have enhanced safety at the Zoo by adding a new EVOLV security system with advanced threat detection and screening technology. Please allow extra time for your group to pass through EVOLV screening before check-in.

- The EVOLV system will open 30 minutes before the park, unless stated otherwise.
- All guests must enter through the EVOLV system.
- Upon arrival, simply walk through the dividers. If your bag requires further inspection, a security team member will ask to check it.
- Strollers and wagons will be screened manually.
- Common items that may trigger the screening include hard glasses cases, umbrellas, and laptops.
- Bags and coolers entering the Zoo are subject to be searched at any time by security.

BAG POLICY

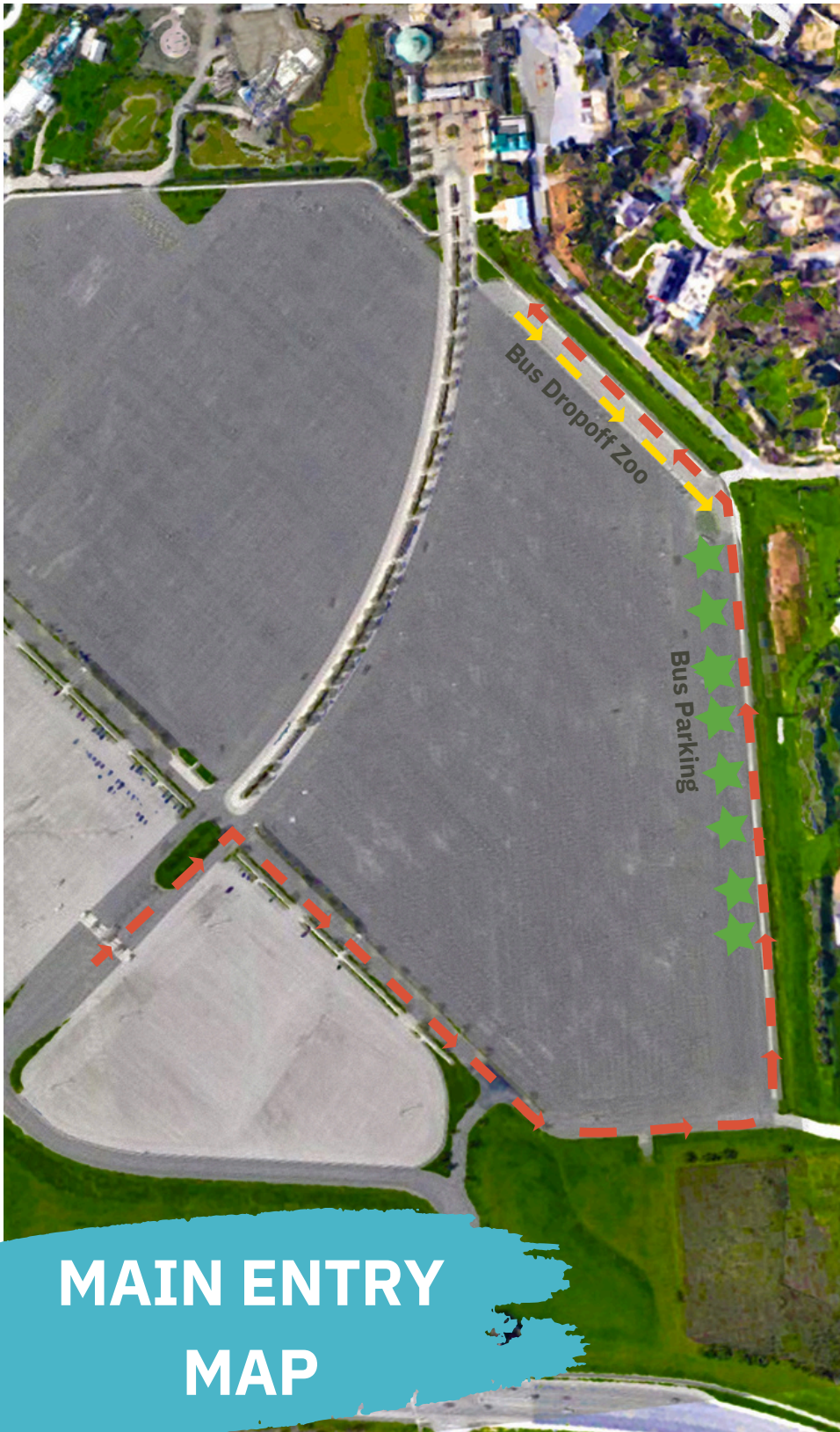
We understand your need to transport your group's lunches and are happy to help accommodate your group.

- Coolers larger than 24 inches in length when full will not be allowed in the park and may still be inspected.
- Please note that bags must be kept in a pre-booked shelter, the pavilion in the Entry Plaza, a cooler holding-area, or kept with you at all times throughout the day. Any unattended bags or coolers will be confiscated.
- [Click here](#) to read more about the bag and cooler policy.
- We are unable to help transport lunches.

DAY OF TRIP MAP



BUS DRIVER INFORMATION



ARRIVAL AT THE ZOO:

- Once you have passed through the parking booths, turn right at the stop sign. Follow the **red arrows** around the edge of the parking lot and into the bus drop off zone.
- The students will need to exit the bus in an orderly fashion and move to the sidewalk. The group should wait for everyone to get off the bus.
- Once the bus is unloaded, please follow the **yellow arrows** up to the Bus Parking.
- Bus parking is located where the **green stars** are on the map.

DAY OF TRIP MAP



ZOOMBEZI BAY ENTRY MAP

This map applies many days in April & May to support the high volume of school groups.

You will receive an email confirmation if your group should report to the Zoombezi Bay entrance on the day of your trip.

BUS DRIVER INFORMATION



ARRIVAL AT THE ZOO:

- Once you have passed through the parking booths, turn left or go straight at the stop sign. Follow the **green arrows** around the edge of the parking lot and into the bus drop off zone.
- A Zoo representative will meet your bus to get any additional information from the teachers.
- The students will need to exit the bus in an orderly fashion and move to the sidewalk. The group should wait for everyone to get off the bus.
- Once the bus is unloaded, please follow the **orange arrows** up to the Bus Parking.
- Bus parking is located where the **green space** is on the map.

ZOOMBEZI BAY ENTRY MAP

This map applies many days in April & May to support the high volume of school groups.

You will receive an email confirmation if your group should report to the Zoombezi Bay entrance on the day of your trip.