



SCHOOL & GROUP RISK ASSESSMENT 2026

Thank you for considering a visit to the Rare Breeds Centre. We want you to have an enjoyable and pleasant time and have produced this assessment to advise you of the risk associated with a visit and the measures put in place to try to keep everyone safe.

In the last 17 years we have safely and successfully hosted over 1600 school visits. The safety and enjoyment of your staff and pupils are our primary concern.

If during your visit you observe anything that causes you concern or that you consider would be an appropriate addition to this information sheet please let us know as we are always seeking to improve our arrangements for future health and safety.

Teachers are advised that once a booking has been confirmed, The Rare Breeds Centre welcome a familiarity and safety visit by two representatives of the school for you to undertake your own risk assessment, however this must be pre- arranged. Please contact reception for further details by telephoning 01233 861493 or emailing schools@rarebreeds.org.uk

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CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED and SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES

1) Fire

Assessment of risk; Fire can happen at any time. The soft play area, restaurant, administration centre and shop are all equipped with alarm systems and extinguishers are located around the site. Regular electrical checks are carried out on the wiring and all equipment. Fire exit routes in buildings are signed.

In the event of a fire:

- All alarmed buildings will automatically sound their alarm.
- Upon hearing the alarm please leave by the nearest fire exit- staff will ask you to leave if you haven't already done so.
- Please go to the nearest fire assembly point – these are marked on the map and located:
 - Outside the gift shop and reception
 - The main paddock next to the pig race track

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANYONE RE-ENTER A BUILDING ONCE EVACUATED.

We ask teachers and other supervising staff to:

- Keep your party under control and keep them in one group. Please let Rare Breeds Centre staff know if anyone is unaccounted for.
- Await directions from fire wardens.
- Do not try to exit the site. This can prevent access for emergency services,

We have a no smoking policy (including vapes) across the site.

2) Accidents/First Aid

RARE BREEDS CENTRE HAS FIRST AID TRAINED STAFF, WHO CAN BE CALLED FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.

IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT ADVISE RARE BREEDS CENTRE STAFF; PLEASE GO TO EITHER THE;

- GIFT SHOP (by main entrance)
- RECEPTION
- NEAREST MEMBER OF RARE BREEDS CENTRE STAFF

Rare Breeds Centre staff will call emergency services in the event of an accident that requires more qualified support.

The site has two defibrillators (located outside the shop entrance and in the farm office) and a first aid room available. We have the necessary pads for adults and under 8's and have defibrillator trained staff on site.

Rare Breeds Centre cannot supply or administer lotions, medication or other substances that have potential for allergic reaction.



The site attracts bees, wasps and other insects. We employ pest control and eliminate nests as soon as one is identified. We regret that we cannot administer medicines in the event of a sting etc. **If anyone has an allergy or needs medication we ask them to bring their medication with them.*

All accidents are recorded and investigated. If you do suffer an accident, even if it is very minor, please report it to a member of staff. This allows us the opportunity to investigate the cause and prevent a repeat.

Communication

A number of staff carry radios and can call for assistance. Tractor drivers always carry radios. Regular 'walkabouts' around the site are carried out by staff during the day.

Some areas of the farm are a long way from immediate assistance. These areas have a minimal staff presence.

The Rare Breeds Centre is also in a poor reception zone for some mobile phone networks. Vodafone and O2 tends to work but all other networks are variable. Public Wi-Fi is now available on site.

In an emergency calling 112 will connect from all networks.

Trips, slips and falls

The area covered by the Rare Breeds Centre is extensive and includes wooded areas, farm land, fields, natural pathways and variations in surface levels. The risk of a slip trip or fall can be increased in adverse weather.

Footwear: We recommend the use of footwear suitable for uneven or slippery conditions. Wellingtons may be appropriate at certain times of year but may be a hindrance if other activities are planned. Sandals are generally not a good choice. Sturdy outdoor shoes are recommended.

The Rare Breeds Centre has boot washing facilities on site (located by the wash station near the shop) and recommends that footwear is washed before leaving.

3) Hygiene including infectious diseases/viruses

The Rare Breeds Centre is an active animal farm open to the public and there are risks associated with animals, especially relating to hygiene/ infectious diseases.

All visitors are required to wash their hands on arrival and before they leave in the facilities provided.

All visitors can only touch our animals in our designated animal contact areas, which are made clear with signs around the centre. We require everybody to wash their hands after leaving one of these areas, and adult supervision is highly recommended for young children when handwashing.

The animals are regularly inspected by both our trained staff team and by other specialists. We try to keep our animals in top condition. However, there is always a chance of cross contamination*



Please follow our Animal Contact Advice (located around the site, it is also available to download from our website and is attached with confirmation of your school booking by e-mail in advance of your visit).

*Direct contact with animals or their waste products can spread infection.

Gates and fences where animals are located are likely to carry some bacteria that can be picked up by any contact.

Disinfectant solution is used on a daily basis that kills 99.99% of viruses, including coronavirus on all surfaces.

Rare Breeds Centre has hand washing facilities in several locations. Infection can be collected on footwear/wheelchairs/buggies etc. We recommend using the welly wash area before leaving the site.

Signs are placed to encourage frequent washing of hands around the site.

We recommend that hand washing should take place at regular intervals but **ALWAYS:**

- 1) Before entering the site
- 2) After any contact with an animal or their pens
- 3) Before eating or drinking
- 4) Before leaving the site
- 5) After leaving a designated animal contact area

Please note that Environmental Health advice regarding **ALCOHOL GELS** is they represent a further precaution against infection but are **NOT A SUBSTITUTE** for **HAND WASHING**.

PREGNANT WOMEN

During times of lambing or calving, women who are, or may be pregnant are potentially at risk of acquiring certain infectious diseases (Toxoplasma/Chlamydia abortus/Listeria) from pregnant livestock including sheep, cattle and goats.

Our livestock come from a flock/herd where there has been no record of such diseases.

However, as an extra precaution:

- If you are or may be pregnant PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH SHEEP, LAMBS, CATTLE, and ADULT GOATS OR THEIR KIDS DURING TIMES OF LAMBING OR CALVING
- Follow our ANIMAL CONTACT ADVICE
- Take care not to become cross contaminated e.g. by holding hands with a child who has touched the animals or pens
- As always, WASH YOUR HANDS after touching any animal, their pens and before eating.



4) Animals

Animals should only be touched during the supervised 'Meet the Animals', educational activity sessions, and in designated animal contact areas.

Animals with a calm temperament are selected for contact during our supervised 'Meet the Animals' sessions and educational activity sessions. The animals are accustomed to being handled and are usually friendly, however all animals have the potential to bite or butt and should be treated with respect. It is best to hold your hand flat and approach the animal from below its chin, rather than towards its eyes or forehead, which it may interpret as a threat. Encourage the children to be quiet, calm and gentle around the animals.

We try to keep all our animals in good health, we will, of course, withdraw any animal that we know to be unwell, distressed or may pose a risk to the public.

We have hand washing facilities around the farm and any contact with animals or their pens necessitates hand washing. Please follow our Animal Contact Advice (located around the site, available to download from our website and e-mailed in advance of your visit).

Generally, access to animals is fenced off but some animals can still present a risk, especially if people put fingers through cages or fences. Please do not encourage children to put fingers into fences, cages or wires.

5) Vehicles/ Pedestrians

Please adhere to the 10 mph speed limit. We do try to enforce this limit but please be aware that some motorists ignore the instruction. There is a coach, disabled and standard car parking available for visitors. When walking to and from the entrance please supervise children at all times. Please be mindful of delivery vehicles.

Machinery/ Farm Vehicles

The farm vehicles are kept away from the car and coach park. Movements are heavily restricted from 10am to 4pm. Our drivers are experienced and know the dangers presented by excited children.

The farm equipment is kept away from the public in a compound. Any farm vehicle left unattended will have keys removed. Do not allow children to climb on farm machinery/vehicles.

The tractor rides (see below) do operate during the day. The driver is very experienced but usual care is required around vehicles.



6) Activities

Children's Barn

Used for 'Meet the Animal' sessions and a designated animal contact area. These are supervised by staff at all times and allow visitors the opportunity to touch and pet selected animals.

Adult (parental/group leader) supervision of children is required at all times.

We are careful with our selection of animals in the Children's Barn and any animal that is thought to present a risk at any time will be withdrawn from the session and not used. Direct and indirect contact with animals pose a risk of infection such as E-coli 0157. All participants are advised to wash hands immediately before and after leaving this area, touching animals and before eating or drinking. Adult supervision is highly recommended for younger children when washing hands. There are hand wash stations on entrance and exit to the Children's Barn. Please follow Animal Contact Advice (displayed around site and paper copy given to group leader prior to visit and on day of visit).

Please be aware that there is the potential low risk of a bite or scratch.

With all our animals do not let anyone in your group put their fingers through pen mesh or bars.

Trailer Rides

The ride takes passengers on a tour of the farm in trailer towed behind a tractor. The driver supervises the ride and carries a radio. Passengers are supervised on and off the ride. A safety briefing is given prior to moving off.

The trailer has protective bars on all sides, whilst a gate secures the tailgate. The tailgate is bolted and chained by the driver before each trip commences. Children must have adult supervision at all times.

The route the tractor ride takes is laid to tarmac, however speeds are restricted to a maximum of 10 mph, however there is always the potential for an emergency stop. The risk of any injury is significantly reduced when safety precautions for the ride are followed and we ask supervising school/group staff to implement the control measures as described in the driver's pre-ride safety briefing.

The activity may be stopped in adverse weather conditions.

Pig Race

The event is controlled by Rare Breeds Centre staff who carry radios at all times and are trained in first aid procedures.

Benson Barn

This area has picnic tables and benches, which can be used, as an indoor eating area by general visitors and groups. There is a hand wash station located inside. Please ensure hands are washed on entering the barn. Follow our animal contact advice and handwashing guides.

Indoor Soft Play Barn

Supervision is required at all times



The Indoor play area that has professionally designed and maintained play equipment. We ask children over 10 years old not to use the facility and a height restriction is in place.

All visitors must remove their shoes BEFORE entering our soft play area and leave them on the shoe racking provided. Buggies must also be left outside the soft play area, and we strongly advise hand washing before entry. There is a handwash station available next to the entry to soft play.

There are slides, climbing frames, ball games enclosed within a safety net. The potential fall heights are less than 600mm. The slide presents the usual hazards and is designed such that a fall from the edge is not possible. Nets are in place all round the activity to limit potential for falls.

The most likely injury will be due to someone trying to twist on the way down the slide and getting a finger, or toe under their body as they come down.

Friction burns are a possibility, and therefore we advise that socks and long sleeved tops be worn whilst playing in this area. We ask that only one child uses the slide at a time.

The Play barn has an emergency call point for staff assistance.

Educational Activities

We offer pre-booked Rare Breeds Centre staff led education sessions to school groups including animal talks and understanding nature through play. These all take place on the main site; close to handwashing facilities, they are supervised however school/group staff supervision is also required.

Understanding nature through play activities take place in a designated fenced off area specifically for educational activities, there is a pond in this area but access is always supervised and safety briefings are given at the beginning of all sessions. A separate detailed risk assessment is available on request and can be downloaded from the Rare Breeds Centre website.

Hand washing before and after each activity by all staff, and visitors. Adult supervision of handwashing by children is highly recommended.

These activities take place outside or under well-ventilated gazebos/marquees.

With prior arrangement self-guided activities are available and which do not require Rare Breeds Centre staffing, e.g. looking at ponds to view wildlife and make observations. All ponds where this is appropriate to happen have life buoys and must only take place with express permission and prior arrangement with the Rare Breeds Centre. Adult supervision is essential at all times.

Shop

We have a gift shop which is located at the farm entry point. Children must be supervised in this area at all times.

Restaurant Terrace

Eating area used by families and adult supervision of children required at all times.

The area is surrounded by fencing to prevent children wandering off into danger areas or Rare Breeds Centre staff only areas.

Play Parks - Supervision is required at all times

Climbing frames, slides, swings, picnic area. There are drops above 600mm, and in these instances, there are safety surfaces. The surface is generally grass/woodchip or safety material as necessary.

The equipment is checked on a regular basis and has an annual specialist inspection.

Updated by HK 17.06.26



These are unmanned areas. Although these areas are as safe as we can make them, please don't leave your children unsupervised.

- Fort

Supervision is required.

The fort is accessed by means of an earth bank. The bank can get slippery when the ground is wet. Inside the fort children can climb vertical ladders to a higher level and look out over the walls. The ladders have a safety surface below them. There is a slightly increased risk of a fall when a child climbs onto the ladder to come down. Do not allow children to climb up the walls on the inside of the fort. There is a net climb and a slide that goes into the lower level of the fort through small windows. There is a safety surface (woodchip) below the slide and the net and there are grab bars.

- Tube Maze

Supervision is required

The tube maze consists of a series of connected pipes for children to crawl through. There are viewing points to locate any child who cannot find way out. There are entrances/exits on all sides. Low risk inside maze.

Please do not allow children to climb on the equipment, signage is in place to reiterate this. We recommend thorough hand washing before and after playing here.

- Mysterious Marsh Venture Trail

Supervision is required

An outside low level assault course. Professional equipment includes balancing bars, chains, monkey bars, rope swing. This site has a stream running through it, which is quite dry most of the year but can fill during periods of wet weather. Rare Breeds Centre may close the site if the stream becomes too full. Some access is limited by the design of the course.

There are temporary barriers around the drainage ditches in this area, and we strongly recommend that visitors do not ignore these barriers. They are present for your protection.

The course is in the woods and this presents natural trip/slip hazards, for example roots, stumps, loose leaves. Appropriate footwear and supervision is required.

Discovery and Wildlife Gardens

An area dedicated to demonstrating and explaining how we grow domestic fruit and vegetables. Low risk area.

In the discovery garden there is a mound and water feature, which is fenced off, please do not let children climb on the mound/over the fences. In the wildlife garden there is a pond which is fenced. The water is deep enough to cause harm should a child breach the fence. In both gardens, there is the potential for eye injuries if visitors get too close to the plants, please keep to the mown/laid paths.

Butterfly Tunnel

A thermostatically temperature controlled polytunnel where butterflies are free flying amongst the plants.

The tunnel can be very hot and humid so please take care. There is the potential for eye injuries if visitors get too close to the plants, please keep to the laid paths.

Woodland Walks



These are unmanned areas. Although these areas are as safe as we can make them, please don't leave your children unsupervised.

There are three signposted walks around the farm of different duration.

The ground is uneven and can be slippery. There are natural trip hazards, for example roots, stumps, leaves. The surface can get slippery if wet.

There are a number of wooden walkways to assist access for wheelchair users. Sensible footwear is recommended.

Adult supervision is required at all times.

Please note that some mobile services are unavailable from areas of the walk, please phone 112 in an emergency.

Some sections of the woodland walks contain a public right of way, as such the Rare Breeds Centre has little control over the use by horse riders and the occasional vehicle, though in our experience such use is minimal.

Supervision of children around the trails is essential.

Follow the map (available at admissions free of charge), and signposted way marking along the trails to ensure you keep to Rare Breeds Centre land- the route and also areas of private land are clearly signposted.

Ponds / Deep Water

On site and particularly on the farm trails you will pass several ponds and deep water areas.

Ponds are either fenced to prevent public access, or pond banks are clearly visible. Some banks can still be slippery and we advise to keep away from the bank edge. Children must be supervised at all times. All such water bodies have life buoys and deep water warning signage as appropriate.

Falcons Centre - Conference Facilities

The site has a conference centre and is often used for training facilities. It can attract large groups of people who pass through the restaurant terrace.

The conference room has three fire exits. The fire system is maintained to usual standards.

Fire extinguishers are present and tested annually. There are evacuation notices displayed and exit routes signed. COSHH products are kept from general access.

Please discuss health and safety when placing a booking.

Special Events

COT holds many special events.

These are usually at weekends and do not generally conflict with school/group visits but on occasion's preparation or dismantling is going on when the site is open.

We try to limit access but this can mean increased vehicle movement.



School & Group Visits



Rare
Breeds
Centre

We would be pleased to discuss with you any further points that you may have.

Please make sure members of your party always wash hands before leaving the site, eating and after contact with animals or their pens and follow our Animal Contact Advice.